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Martha Santiago

University of South Florida

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A Case Study in Public K-12 Education:
Hispanic Female (Latinas) School Administrators' Perceptions of their Role and
Experiences as Principals within Central Florida

by

Martha Santiago

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
University of South Florida

Co-Major Professor, Arthur Shapiro, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor, Steven Permuth, Ed.D.
William Blank, Ph.D.
Bruce Hall, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

A gradual but significant change in America's demographic composition has occurred during the last few years. Millions of Hispanic students, many of them immigrants, have been absorbed in the nation's schools, turning public institutions into multiracial, multicultural, and to some degree, multilingual sites (Tallerico, 2001; Ferrandino, 2001).

In light of the demographic changes and the important role of school leaders, how is the Hispanic principal in the K-12 public schools reflecting the growth of the Hispanic school population? This research studies perceptions the Hispanic female principal attached to their role and role expectations as a principal.

This qualitative case study interviewed eight female Hispanic principals in Central Florida three times. Seven major themes of perceptions and meanings principals attached to their experiences evolved: strong family support, no pre-conceived self-imposed obstacles, high sense of self-efficacy, token Hispanic, being placed in a high Hispanic population school, no consensus regarding principal roles, had Latina mentors, and utilized parts of Latina culture in their professional practice.

Implications included both strong family support for the Latinas entering a professional field and that the principals did not experience self-imposed obstacles. Both need further research, as does the strong sense that these Latina principals perceived they had entered the American mainstream. The strong sense of efficacy needs further research for its causes. Lack of consensus on principal roles has considerable implication for graduate leadership education, needing further research. Of considerable interest is researching what parts of the Latina culture were utilized in their professional practice, and what implication does this have for professional leadership education generally.

Further recommendations for research include a need to evaluate which district policies are effective in recruiting and retaining of Latina administrators. This research may lead to implementing best practices in districts' hiring practices and retention programs that lead to leadership that is more diverse while addressing the underrepresentation of Latinas in counties and institutions selected.

Chapter I - Introduction

Background of the Problem

Women and Latinas appear to be absent from the study of educational leadership (Edson, 1987; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). The few studies of minority female school leaders conducted since the late 1970s usually appeared in larger studies of women.

Minority females in educational administration are limited in research. Literature focusing on female minorities usually represented African American women, with very little research focus on the Latina principals. This indicates an underrepresentation of the Hispanic female in school leadership positions, as evident in the literature (Mendez-Morse, 2000).

Mendez-Morse (2000) and Spencer and Kochan (2000) identified two possible reasons for the absence of Hispanic females in research studies:

- Few researchers investigated the lives of Hispanic females.
- Few Hispanic women held administrative positions.

Hispanic females were relatively scarce in leadership positions in public schools. Nonetheless, absent from the literature does not mean nonexistent, but may indicate exclusion or neglect, and negates the contributions of Hispanic females (Mendez-Morse, 2000).

It was not until the first sign of desegregation in 1954 with the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 74 S Ct 686 (1954)* that brought about the possibilities of future changes in the representation of minorities in administrative positions (Arias, 2005). The force behind desegregation was to eliminate dual school systems and to have school facilities that were integrated (*Singleton v. Jackson Mun. Separate School District, 419 F. 2d 1211 (5th Circuit, 1969)*).

Even though those benefiting most from the civil rights movement were mostly African American, Hispanics reaped some of the benefits of the civil rights movement as well. It was during the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s that Hispanic American organizations, such as The National Council of La Raza and ASPIRA (which means to aspire in the Spanish language), initiated and gained momentum in seeking civil rights for Hispanics (Allen, 2003).

Desegregation as a part of the larger picture of the civil rights movement developed through different phases and expectations. In the 21st century, desegregation and the civil rights movement have come full circle. This was evident by the decisions from the Federal Courts to renounce their involvement in desegregation, thus giving local school districts the right to determine how to manage student population racially in schools. According to two studies by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, African American and Latino students are now more isolated from their White counterparts than they were three decades ago before the civil rights movement began (Frankenberg & Chungmei, 2002; Orfield & Chungmei, 2007).

The national shift was a result of several major contributing factors such as big increases in enrollment by African American, Latino, and Asian students, continuing White flight from the nation's urban centers, the persistence of housing patterns that isolate racial and ethnic groups, and the termination of dozens of court-ordered desegregation plans (Dayton, 1993; Vasquez, 2007).

The changing racial composition in at least three dozen school districts in the last 10 years can be attributed to a court order, *Freeman v. Pitts*, 112 S. Ct 1430 (1992). The court order states that school districts can be considered successfully desegregated even if student racial imbalances are due entirely to demographic factors, like where children live or continue to exist (Frankenberg & Chungmei, 2002; Frankenberg, Lee & Orfield, 2003). In the absence of desegregation and evidence of less active civil rights organizations, minorities are once more susceptible to the discriminating acts of recruitment for leadership positions (Sanchez & Welsh, 1999). This could pose additional threats to the underrepresentation of the Hispanic female in the administration of public schools. School districts may have to adopt aggressive recruiting efforts to recruit Latina Principals (Beyers, 1997).

Although affirmative action is often cited as contributing to the advancement of women, research on affirmative action, according to Ost & Twale (1989), has also shown no substantial increases in the hiring of traditionally underrepresented groups of women and minorities. The literature has been inundated with rhetoric concerning affirmative action; however, in the area of school administration, particularly the principalship, not only are women noticeably lacking, but minorities are grossly underrepresented (Lovelady-Dawson, 1980).

A thorough analysis of the history of school administrators clearly indicates the underrepresentation of women and Latina administrators. The Educational Resources of Information Center reveals the following national demographic data on school administrators:

- In 1998, 42% of K-8 public school principals were females.
- In 1993-94, 84.2% of the nation's public school principals were White, 10.1% were African American, and 4.1% Hispanic (gender was not differentiated in this demographic data).

The 2003-2004 School and Staffing Survey estimated the total distribution of minority principals in public schools was at 17.6 %, even though the number of minority students was estimated at 39.7% and growing (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006).

Latina principals are undeniably underrepresented compared to White and African American principals (Banks, 2000). However, reasons for this underrepresentation need to be investigated. Banks (2000) recommends further in-depth studies to examine and to explain reasons why Hispanic females continue to be underrepresented.

Banks (2000) and Lovelady-Dawson (1980) recognize the potential benefits of diverse leadership. They maintain that for a free society to prosper and to gain strength it must capitalize on the potential of all its members. Schools are often where students generally begin to comprehend their world and how it functions. Diversity in school leadership provides for students the framework needed to begin understanding and accepting issues of equity and equality (Spencer & Kochan, 2000).

Diversity in school administration also provides the opportunities for minority students to make connections with leaders of their own race and gender and to see role models within their own people.

If meaningful change is to occur in the recruitment of principals for schools, then a thorough analysis of the policies and practices in which gender and race affect the recruitment process must be accomplished to eradicate inequities in the opportunities and the access to administrative positions (Banks, 2000; Spencer & Kochan, 2000; Tallerico, 2001). There is a need for educational systems to focus on policies that reflect diversity, both racial and gender, and the effectiveness of these policies in districts where they are used (Lovelady-Dawson, 1980).

Principal Shortage

A national school leadership shortage in the U.S. is evident in the numbers of principals leaving the profession. Retirement, resignation, and teachers not interested in administrative positions are forces at work in this crisis (Cusick, 2003; Gajda & Militello, 2008). In light of this school leadership shortage, school districts need to be proactive in the recruitment of not only educational leaders in general, but Latino/a school leaders in particular.

An opportune time exists for a conscious effort by school districts to improve the position of the Hispanic female in educational administration (Esparro & Radar, 2001; Tallerico, 2001). In short, women can be a solution to resolving the declining supply of administrative candidates (Spencer & Kochan, 2000; Tallerico, 2001).

During the last few decades a gradual but significant change in America's demographic composition has occurred. Since the early 1990s, the 2000 census reported a 53% increase in the Hispanic population. It is projected that by the middle of the new century, more than half of the U.S. population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (Ferrandino, 2001).

Millions of Hispanic students, many of them immigrants, have been absorbed in the nation's schools, turning public institutions into multiracial, multicultural, and to some degree, multilingual sites in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Antonio, and Miami (Tallerico, 2001; Ferrandino, 2001).

The most recent U.S. Census Bureau News (2008) indicates that the U.S. Hispanic population has already surpassed 45 million Hispanics, hence making it the largest ethnic group in the U.S. By the year 2050, the population is expected to nearly triple from 46 million to 132 million.

Yet, the representation of Hispanic female school leaders does not reflect the increase in the Hispanic student population that is projected to be the largest minority group in the schools (NCES, 2006). Hispanic female school leaders can be role models for students attending schools or districts with large numbers of Hispanic students. Similarly, Hispanic female school leaders can also serve as role models for districts with low Hispanic student population, adding to the importance of diversity in all schools not just schools with high numbers of Latino students.

The traditional leadership patterns are drastically changing. The infamous structure of the “good ole boy network,” which excludes promoting women and Latinas, needs dismantling and replaced with a progressive and equitable procedure (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000; Quilantan, 2004).

Problem

America is facing demographic changes. The United States has entered the 21st century more diverse than ever before (Singer, 2002). It is estimated that by 2025 more than half the population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008).

The Hispanic student population growth is already affecting the nation’s education system. Schools are becoming more diverse. It is a crucial time for school leaders to invest in shaping our nation’s future society. In light of the demographic changes and the important role of school leaders, what is stated in the literature that may provide in-depth information on the role of the Hispanic female principal and possibly increase their numbers in the K-12 public school?

Women in general and Hispanic women in particular add a different perspective to the study of leadership. To investigate the cultural accounts and success stories of Hispanic females in leadership may bring new dimensions and challenges to the patterns and theories that once described leadership (Banks, 2000).

Case studies may provide insight on the expectations and behaviors of Latinas in educational leadership and may identify myths that create barriers that hinder the advancement of Latinas in school administration (Howard, 2001; Yin, 2003).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of the Hispanic female (Latina) principals by examining their perceptions of their experiences as principals. Shakeshaft (2006) mentions that historically, case studies usually center on the male principal or superintendent, where as studies of Hispanic females center around the lives of African American females, consequently we know little of the individual lives of the Hispanic women who occupy the position of principalship. Case studies, then, fill a gap in the body of literature that until recently provided a limited understanding of the lived experience of the Hispanic female educational leaders (Smulyan, 2000).

Information gleaned from lived experience of Hispanic female educational leaders can offer hope and inspiration to aspiring school leaders (Gardiner et al., 2000; Howard, 2001; Smulyan, 2000). Presenting stories from Hispanic and Latino history can be beneficial, educational, therapeutic, and empowering. It is a means of communicating serious matters and hot topics of concern (Howard, 2001; Scheckelhoff, 2007).

Rationale

This study includes Hispanic females who may have experienced rejection, as well as those who quickly reached an administrative position. The use of interviews with Hispanic females who were either rejected several times for an administrative position or who quickly reached their position may provide insights to possible reasons for the underrepresentation of Hispanic females in school administration.

Possible perceptions of tacit assumptions and beliefs held by the majority culture that have kept Hispanic females from acquiring administrative positions could surface in the use of the interviews. This information may assist a district in reviewing policies regarding recruitment and retention of the Latina administrators.

In addition, perceptions regarding social role theory and role conflict theory may explain the status of Hispanic women in leadership positions. Role theory is based on the idea that perceptions of a role define how individuals are expected to behave, how individuals occupying roles perceive what they are supposed to do, and the perceived behavior of individuals (Shapiro, 2000; Toren, 1973). Such attitudes typically range along a continuum from traditional to nontraditional. The “nontraditional” roles are those that do not reinforce or conform to “expected” differences in roles for gender and ethnicity (Harris, 1998).

Social role conflict takes place when one is forced to take on two different and incompatible roles at the same time. Women are taking a more active role outside the home to pursue full time careers in the private and public domains. With this move, women face a new set of challenges involving both family and profession. For example, a female may find conflict between her role as a mother and her role as an employee of a company when her child's demands for time and attention distract her from the needs of her employer.

Exploring these theories in light of Hispanic women’s perceptions may provide possible explanations for the underrepresentation of Latinas in educational leadership.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following basic research question:

What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Three research questions directed the form and content of this study:

1. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?
2. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their role as a principal?
3. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of the non-Hispanic females?

Definition of Terms

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

1. Hispanic and Latino/a: A wide range of ethnic cultures are covered by the term "Hispanic" or "Latino". Both terms can refer to Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Dominicans and South/Central Americans (Mendez-Morse, 2000; Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). Researchers do not differentiate among these different cultural groups. However, Sanchez and Welsh (1999) agree on an opposing viewpoint. They refer to the term Hispanic as the persistent effort of the dominant mainstream as an attempt to categorize and lump people in this category. For this study, the term Latina refers to female Hispanics. Latinas and Hispanics are terms used interchangeably (Aponte, 1999; Mullen, 1997).

2. Mentor: Closely allied with networking as an important part of building support systems for women aspiring to and those in positions of administration (Gupton & Slick, 1996).
3. Leadership: Northouse (2001) defines leadership as a “transactional event that occurs between the leader and his and her followers” (p.3). Shtogren (1999) stresses that leadership has nothing to do with management and everything to do with change.
4. Underrepresentation: For this study, underrepresentation is defined as when minority women do not have adequate entry into the most prestigious leadership positions in K-12 education, and therefore, are not adequately represented in a group (Gardiner et al., 2000).
5. Role Theory: Role theory is based on the idea that a role defines how individuals are expected to behave, how individuals occupying roles perceive what they are supposed to do, and the actual behavior of individuals (Shapiro, 2000).
6. Role Conflict: Role conflict that takes place when one is forced to take on two different and incompatible roles at the same time. Conflict occurs when the demands of roles compete.

7. Status: A position or rank in relation to others as in a social order, community, class, or profession, such as in a school, positions are principal, teacher, student and secretary (Banks, 2000). Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) state that “status and role represent a conceptual elaboration of the ‘ideal patterns which control reciprocal behavior’... a status, as distinct from the individual who may occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties” (p. 12). A role represents the dynamic aspect of status. When an individual puts the rights and duties that constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role. It is through the occupancy of statuses by individuals and their performance of roles that the business of a society is accomplished.
8. Perception: Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) proclaim that the overriding culture in educational administration is andocentric, meaning it is being dominated with norms defined White and male. Even though women have gained entry into educational administration, they are still viewed differently. Oboler’s (1995) in-depth interviews with various Hispanic women provide examples of their perception on how Hispanics are thought of by the mainstream culture.
9. Career Paths: The way in which your career develops that depends on a variety of factors like your personal capabilities, skills, experience and the opportunities.

Method

The method selected for this study is a case study with interviews. A case study is a research process that provides an in-depth description of a particular situation or phenomena. It is a form of inquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam, 1998). It relies on extensive data collection usually over time and can be used to capture rich descriptions and explanations of a phenomenon. There is no single way to conduct a case study and a combination of methods, such as structured and unstructured interviewing and direct observation, can be used.

Case studies do not represent entire populations. The researcher's interest should not be so much in generalizing their findings as in telling a story. When theories are associated with a case study, it defines the research problem (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). In case studies, one is generalizing to a theory based on cases selected to represent dimensions of that theory. The level of depth with which each case is studied allows for theory building and not just theory testing.

The purpose in selecting a sample was to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied. The sample size in qualitative studies is typically small, often a single case. It is to achieve an in-depth understanding of the selected individual or small group. The goal is to select a case that is likely to be "information-rich" with respect to the purpose of the study (Gall et al., 1996).

For the purpose of this study, eight principals were invited by the researcher to participate in the interviews. Prior to the interviews, contact was made to establish the beginnings of an informal relationship that fosters positive interaction. It was important that each principal view the interviews as a pleasant and not an unpleasant task. For the Latina principals, this is an opportunity to share their stories, their perceptions, and experiences as Latina school administrators.

Deference theory calls this type of relationship a ceremonial ritual by which appreciation for the recipient is often conveyed and expects that the recipient will respond out of regard for the person. The response should be spontaneous and not obligatory (Pocock, 1976). Colwell (2007) stated, “Interviews for research purpose may create a social relationship with consequences of importance for the interpretation of data. Such interviews inevitably bring to the surface a relationship between respondent and the researcher, in which the behavior of each is influenced by their perceptions and the appropriate social norms. When an actor perceives that a target actor’s qualities reflect their own valued self-definitions, they impart positive symbolic value to the target. These perceptions evoke sentiments of affinity toward the target actor, which supports the belief that the target deserves respectful treatment” (p. 443).

The following represents the three-interview structure that was used for the principals’ interviews:

- Interview One (life history) – What are the participants’ perceptions on how they came to be a principal? What do they perceive were the difficulties, blocks, successes? (A review of the participant’s life history up to the time they became a principal).

- Interview Two (contemporary experience) – How do they perceive their role as a principal?
- Interview Three (reflection on the meaning) – Given what the participant has said in interviews one and two, how do they make sense of their profession as a principal?

To work more reliably with the words of the participants, each interview was tape recorded with the interviewees' permission to ensure and preserve the word of the participants. The researcher transcribed all the tape-recorded interviews. The data collected from each interview was transcribed and organized by the researcher. Names, location of work, county, school, or any leading information was omitted from the transcribed data.

Once all interviews are completed, the participants had the opportunity to review transcribed interviews to approve, delete, or make changes to the data. This process was completed via email or telephone. The data were kept confidential and results were reported in aggregated terms.

When the interviews are transcribed and feedback from the principals was provided for each interview transcription, the data can then be shaped into a form that can be shared or displayed. The transcribed interviews were coded by labeling passages to identify and determine common themes. As categories emerge, common themes and patterns were identified.

To validate the themes and patterns of the study, a team of peer reviewers commented on the findings. Their role was to review the data to ensure that personal bias would not penetrate the categorizing of themes. Peer examination or review enhances the validity of a study.

Limitations

This study was designed within parameters of the following limitations:

1. The geographic location for this study is limited to the central part of Florida.
2. Only eight Hispanic women were selected for this study, and these eight do not represent all ethnic subgroups of the term “Hispanic.”
3. Current or former school principals from K-12 public schools were selected. Three of the principals were no longer principals when interviewed. This elapsing of time could have an influence on their reflections.
4. Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, personal and professional biases can influence data gathering and interpretation.
5. Since the sample size for this study is small, precautions should be taken not to generalize the findings to a larger population.
6. Deference Effect – Since the researcher is a Latina, this might influence the relationship between respondent and interviewer in which the behavior of each is influenced by the appropriate social norms.

Assumptions

1. Participants are willing and available to participate in the study
2. Participants are truthful in responding to interview questions.
3. Participants are capable of recalling and interpreting their past reactions and experiences.

Summary

America's demographics are changing. The Hispanic population is now considered the largest minority group in the U.S. Millions of Hispanic students, many of them immigrants, have been absorbed into the nation's schools, turning public institutions into multiracial, multicultural, and to some degree, multilingual sites (Tallerico, 2001; Ferrandino, 2001).

A national school leadership shortage in the U.S. is evident in the numbers of principals leaving the profession. Retirement, resignation, and teachers not interested in administrative positions are forces at work in this crisis (Cusick, 2003; Gajda & Militello, 2008). In short, women can be a solution to resolving the declining supply of administrative candidates (Spencer & Kochan, 2000; Tallerico, 2001).

Leadership theory and practice are evolving and the traditional leadership paradigm is being challenged by the complexity of the nation's changing demographics. Scholars are working to broaden the study of leadership to include women and Hispanic women (Banks, 2000).

Hispanic women add a different perspective to the study of leadership. To investigate the cultural accounts and success stories of Hispanic females in leadership may bring new dimensions and challenges to the patterns and theories that once described leadership (Banks, 2000).

The method selected for this study was a case study with interviews. A case study is a research process that provides an in-depth description of a particular situation or phenomena.

Examining the meanings attached to the experiences of female Hispanic administrators in public schools may bring to the surface reasons for the underrepresentation of Latina Principals. This information can offer hope and inspiration to aspiring school leaders and may aid in the recruitment and retention of Latina education administrators (Howard, 2001; Scheckelhoff, 2007).

Chapter II - Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four major sections. The first section provides different views on the status of leadership followed by historical information on the evolution of leadership. The next section details how drastically our nation's demographics are changing, coupled with an unprecedented principal shortage, which can create an opportune time for the Hispanic female to be considered seriously for advancement in educational leadership. The third section looks at the literature and studies that consistently support women and Latinas as successful educational leaders. The last section looks at two theories that provide a framework to understand, and possibly to explain, reasons for the underrepresentation of Latina Principals.

A close analysis of the literature strongly indicates that Hispanic female school administrators have been and continue to be underrepresented throughout school districts in the nation (Banks, 2000; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The Meaning of Leadership

The literature on leadership is quite extensive and attests to the vast interest researchers have shown in this subject. A study completed during the 1970s turned up

approximately 130 definitions of the word leadership (Burns, 1978; Palmer & Hardy, 2000; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003).

The beginning of leadership theories arose from two concepts: (a) the “Great Man” theory and (b) the “Big Bang” idea. The Great Man theory is grounded on the belief that leaders are born, not made. They are called to leadership through some divine intervention based on inheritance or destiny. The Big Bang belief is grounded on the credence that great events made leaders out of otherwise ordinary people. The leader naturally arose from a group because of the situation (Bennis & Nanus, 2003).

Although interest in the topic of leadership has burgeoned in recent decades, the discussion of leadership, in fact, can be traced back to the days of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch (Bass, 1981). The ancient Egyptians, the Chinese, and the Greeks, to name a few, offered advice based on their knowledge and pledged dedication to men seeking leadership positions. The obsession with kings and conquerors goes as far back as biblical times when leaders such as Moses and David were ordained with unquestioning obedience expected from the people; it was widely believed that God had given these leaders the power to rule (Barker, 2001).

It was not until the early 1600s that Machiavelli, for the first time in history, suggested that common people could become princes by virtue of their own abilities and through the skillful application of detailed principles. The removal of leadership from the realm of God and placing it within the sphere of man caused Machiavelli to suffer condemnation from the Church, thus, setting the stage for the plethora of industrial theories of leadership (Barker, 2001; English, 1992).

According to Bass (1981), leadership is a universal human phenomenon. Anthropological studies on primitive groups in Australia, Fiji, New Guinea, and the Congo also concluded that leadership occurs universally among all people regardless of their culture.

Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth. Burns (1978; Palmer & Hardy, 2000) concludes that to understand leadership one must understand the essence of power, since leadership is, in effect, a unique form of power. From this point, leaders have power and wield it to effect change in others. Power shows up as many faces and takes many forms. Power can be manifested through wealth, authority (like the police officer's badge), sex appeal, and charisma. As much as leadership is a form of power, it is also a separate and vital process in itself. This not to say that leaders are not considered power holders. Actually, all leaders are potential power holders, but not all power holders are leaders (Burns, 1978).

Some leadership definitions view leadership as the focus of group process. The leader is at the center of group change and activities, and represents the will of the group. Others believe that leadership encompasses personality perspectives, which refers to leadership in terms of specific traits or characteristics that individuals possess, which triggers a reaction in others to accomplish tasks (Northouse, 2001; Farahbakhsh, 2007).

Northouse (2001) defines leadership as a “transactional event that occurs between the leader and his and her followers” (p. 3). Shtogren (1999) stresses that leadership has nothing to do with management and everything to do with change. Shtogren states that, “Due to the recent radical changes experienced within the last few years, good leadership

is needed in organizations that can proactively change systems, people, and for companies, products” (p. 2).

Shtogren (1999) quoting Warren Bennis from his book, *Leaders*, addresses five myths that have helped conceptualize leadership theories:

Myth 1 Leadership exists at the top of an organization.

(Leadership is needed at every level)

Myth 2 Leadership is a rare skill.

(Everyone has leadership potential)

Myth 3 Leaders are born, not made.

(Leadership can be learned)

Myth 4 Leaders are charismatic.

(Some are; most are not)

Myth 5 The leader controls, directs, prods, manipulates.

(Leadership is not so much the exercise of power itself as the empowerment of others).

Ensign (1923) focuses on the leadership of Socrates, Quintilian, and Vittorino, whose academic accomplishments for their respective eras established what we recognize today as the role of a school principal. The unique relationships these educators shared with their pupils are comparable to the familiar roles of a high school principal. It is for this reason that the oldest type of educational administrative position is known as the high school principalship.

Leadership definitions should do more than just identify leaders and indicate the means by which they acquire their positions. Definitions should also take into account the maintenance and continuation of leadership.

Historical Perspective on Leadership

In its early stages, the position of the principal was not clearly defined. This position emerged and evolved in response to the growing needs of the society (Pipho, 2000). Societal changes and needs, such as, an increase of student enrollment, of new teachers, of services provided by the schools, and an increase in graded school curriculum, helped cultivate the role of the principal.

Whitaker (1998; 2001) acknowledges that the principal's role is growing increasingly unclear. It seems that because the sophistication of the position and the political and societal demands continue to increase, principals are being asked to assume new professional roles for which there are no clear definitions. The national focus on reshaping and redefining schools in the restructuring process only augments ambiguities that occur in the principal's role.

After the Civil War, schools in cities were built to accommodate larger bodies of students, and superintendents could no longer fulfill the State Board's mandates. Teaching principals were released of their teaching responsibilities, and hence recognized as the head of the school assuming some of the superintendent's responsibilities (Spain, Drummond, & Goodlad, 1956).

Pipho (2000) acknowledged that with the growth of school districts, building administrators were employed with the primary responsibility of administering a single

attendance unit; this building administrator became known as the school principal. Thus, began the formal stages of what is known today as the principalship.

The supervisory functions of the principal were inadequate. No training or preparation for the functions of a supervisory leader seemed to be available. In reality, the hiring of the principal rested on the emphasis leaders placed on promptness and accuracy concerning mechanical duties, such as clerical duties. They were not risk-takers, but concerned themselves with details and routine.

Hart and Bredeson (1996) delineated some of the principal's responsibilities during this time: 58.8% record keeping and recording, 23.5% organization and classification of students, 11.8% maintenance of equipment and the school building, and 5.9% discipline and care of students.

The emergence of the supervising principal attributes its beginnings to the year 1921 when the movement to professionalize the job of principalship was made by the newly formed professional organization, The Elementary Principal Association, transpired. Principals, moving from a leadership concerned with clerical duties to a leadership concerned with the supervision of the improvement of education, the training of teachers, and the improved quality and quantity of instructional materials, posed tremendous challenges (Pierce, 1935). This new role required the organization of the learning activities and functions of the schools (Gross & Herriott, 1965).

As with any new responsibilities, principals found themselves struggling with the duties and functions of a supervisor. Many had varying degrees of supervisory competency, as discovered by Gray (1918) of the University of Chicago in a school survey he conducted. The survey simply asked, What is the most important part of your

work in the supervision of this school? Four principals documented the following answers:

Principal A – Routine affairs – feels that if teachers in his school are free from routine responsibilities they can direct more of their energy toward the improvement of instruction.

Principal B – Majority of time observing instruction in classrooms – the most important part of his work is the improvement of the techniques of teaching.

Principal C – Testing – devotes four hours a day to the giving of formal and informal tests and to the making of the tables, which summarize the results of these tests. The results show strengths and weakness of programs and allows for making necessary changes to the program of study.

Principal D – Cheerleader – cheer and encourage the teachers. It is when teachers are buoyant in spirit that they can do effective classroom teaching.

It is evident that each principal viewed supervision from different angles. It shows each principal focusing on what he considered important in the supervisory role. Gray (1918) called for a defined role for principals. Nonetheless, principals, slow to embrace a supervisory role, retained the role of a managerial principal.

Gross and Herriot (1965) concluded that “City principals were by now well entrenched as administrators, formally answerable for the conduct of their schools. They were line officers directly responsible to central administration for carrying out administrative and instructional policies. Some principals were already aware of and attempted to exploit the opportunity to provide leadership to their schools; however, the great majority of them apparently did not” (p. 3).

According to Pierce (1935) prior to the 1900s, most women principals served in primary schools or in girl's departments within the grammar schools. Women did not serve as principals of grammar schools, which were considered the "real" administrative power held by men whose duties were to supervise the women. All high school principals were men.

Despite this era's philosophy and movement toward women in the profession, the only women allowed to work in the school system were single, widowed, or married women with disabled husbands. No married women were allowed to enter the profession (Reich, 1968). If a single woman principal married while working in that position, she was allowed to stay in the profession.

From the 1890s to the end of World War I, school principals gained momentum and grew in power. It was not until after the 1920s that a great impetus for the principalship to emerge as a position of status occurred. In 1928, women held over half of all principal positions. Women held superintendencies in major cities, too (Lovelady-Dawson, 1980). With the formation of two national organizations, the National Elementary School Principal Association and the Elementary Principal Association, emphasis was placed on high professional standards and intensive training for position preparation.

These organizations began formal studies of the role, duties, salary, and the preparation of the principals. Some of the reasons for the enormous advancements of the principalship rested on industrialists who relied on the school system to provide them with trained workers and the demand the labor unions placed on parents and companies to make sure that kids attend schools, thus withholding children from the labor market.

It was also during this period that millions of immigrants relied upon the schools as the only means of integrating their children into the American society. Equally, educational leaders focused on transforming immigrant newcomers and other “outsiders” into individuals who matched their idealized image of what an “American” should be (Pipho, 2000).

Following World War II, the administrative balance began to change. Many men returned from the armed services and began seeking employment in school settings. Women steadily lost administrative ground in public schools. In the 1940s, approximately 41 percent of elementary principals were women, in the 1950s, 38 percent, in the 1960s, 22 percent, and in the 1980s, less than 20 percent (Lovelady-Dawson, 1980).

Demographic Changes

America is facing demographic changes. The United States has entered the 21st century more diverse than ever before (Singer, 2002). Initially it was estimated that by 2025 more than half the population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (Singer, 2002; HACR, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

The U.S. Department of Commerce News (2003) shows that the Hispanic population reached an all-time high. From April 2000 to July 2002, the Hispanic population increased from 35.3 million 38.8 million.

The most recent report from the U.S. Census Bureau News (2008) indicated that the Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple, from 46.7 million to 132.8 million during the 2008-2050 period. Its share of the nation's total population is projected to double, from 15 percent to 30 percent. Thus, nearly one in three U.S. residents would be Hispanic. The official population estimates indicate that the Hispanic community is the nation's largest minority community.

America is more ethnically, racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse than ever before (Ferrandino, 2001; Prewitt, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008). California and Texas are leaders in revealing the changing demographic patterns that eventually will affect the entire nation (NAESP, 2000). California Department of Education reported that by the year 2006 the percentage of students enrolled in California public schools by race and ethnicity, Hispanic/Latino students reached 47.6% of the student population.

The Hispanic community has grown by nearly 60%. Economic and demographic profiles of Hispanic communities in California and Texas projected an increase, respectively, from near 10 million and near 6 million to over 12 and 8 million by the year 2015.

According to the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (2002), Hispanic school-aged children will become the largest group of minority children in the United States. The Hispanic student population growth from 1990 to 2006 accounts for 60% of the total growth in public schools as recorded by the U.S. Census Bureau News (2008) and the Pew Hispanic Center (2008).

The high Hispanic growth significantly affects the nation's education system in the following ways:

- English is not the primary language of the child
- Students are more likely to be from low-income families
- Children lack access to high-quality preschools

This change has had a tremendous impact in our schools (Fry & Gonzales, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). Millions of Hispanic students, many immigrants, have been absorbed into the nation's schools, turning public institutions into multiracial, multicultural, and to some degree multilingual sites.

There are approximately 10 million Hispanic students in the nation's public schools. This equates to one-in-five public school students in the U.S. are Hispanic. All urban and most suburban and rural schools in America will experience an increase in the Hispanic student population, making it the largest minority group in elementary school (U.S. Commerce News, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008; Pew Hispanic Center, 2008).

Data readily reveals that the enrollment is expected to continue to grow for decades. A population projection by the US Census Bureau shows that the Hispanic school-age population will increase by 166% by the year 2050 moving from 10 million to 28 million. In 2050, there will be more school-age Hispanic students than school-age non-Hispanic white children (Fry & Gonzales, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008).

Most Hispanic families live in large cities (US Census Bureau, 2004), such as, but not limited to, Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Tampa, and, most recently, Orlando, San Antonio, Dallas, and San Diego. Because of the unfavorable economic and social conditions found in large cities, Hispanic families find themselves moving out of major cities to settle in mid-size cities and large towns, creating local, as well as national demographic shifts (Brookings Institute Center, 2001; HACR, 2002). An example of such a move from the Hispanics is reported in Indiana where Latino students in K-16 education grew substantially during the years 2003-2004. The projection for the years 2005-2015 is that the Latino population will increase by more than 15 percent and from 2015 to 2025, the Latino population is expected to increase by 20 percent. Indiana is identified as an “emerging” state due to the substantial increase in the Hispanic student population within the past few years (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008).

Hispanic growth poses tremendous challenges for school principals and there is no doubt that school leaders face challenges like never before. Principals are now required to demonstrate leadership capabilities in the current context of high expectation and accountability (Bottery, 2004).

In light of these demographic trends, how is the Hispanic female administrator in the K-12 public schools reflecting the growth of the Hispanic student population? The NAESP (1998) ten-year study and the National Center for Education Statistics (2002) revealed the following national demographic data on school administrators:

- In 2000, 44% of all principals in the public schools were women. Only 10% of the total number of principals represented were African American and 4% were identified as Hispanic.

- In 1998, 42% of K-8 public school principals were females.
- In 1993-1994, 84.2% of the nation's public school principals were White, 10.1% were African American, and 4.1% were Hispanic (Gender was not differentiated in this demographic data).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2006) provided updated characteristics of elementary school principals. The results of the survey show that the number of public elementary schools principals grew from 54,000 in 1993-1994 to 61,000 in 2003-2004, approximately 6,000 new principals.

The number of Hispanic school principals increased from 2,000 in 1993-1994, to 3,000 in 1999-2000, and to 4,000 in 2003-2004. However, because the numbers of White, non-Hispanics increased as well, there was no substantial change in the proportion of the Hispanic group.

With the United States Census (2004) reporting that over 14.8% of the total U.S. population identifies themselves as being of Hispanic origin, a greater representation of Hispanic administrators is needed in the public school to equate with the demographic population in the country (Byrd-Blake, 2004).

The increase of the nation's Hispanic student population is not reflected in the representation of Hispanic school leaders. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2005), the number of minority teachers is not a representation of the number of minority students. While Hispanic students comprise 20% of public school students, only 6% of public school teachers are Hispanic.

The growth of Latina Principals in K-12 public schools needs to mirror the growth of the Hispanic student population. Hispanic students need to observe and interact with leaders who are representative of their cultural groups. Diversity in leadership is important not only because it provides role models for minority children, but also because it lets students see that leadership positions are not merely the province of White men (Sanchez, Thornton, & Usinger, 2008).

Latina principals, through their personal, professional, cultural, and social accomplishments, create a bond that encourages and inspires Hispanic students to meet academic, social, and cultural challenges that lead to personal change (Mendez-Morse, 2004).

Latina Principals not only need to reflect the increasing makeup of the Hispanic student population, but also provide all children the opportunity to experience and respect gender and racial differences in school leadership positions (Ferrandino, 2001; Mendez-Morse, 2004).

Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force (2004) statistical projections indicate that while the percentage of Hispanic students in public schools is expected to rise, unless action is taken on the local, state, and national level, school districts should strive to actively recruit Latina Principals. The lack of diversity in leadership is real and exists throughout the educational community (Esparro & Radar, 2001; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Principal Shortage

National reports indicate that a great number of schools and districts are experiencing a shortage of qualified principal candidates (Pounder & Crow, 2005, Gajda & Militello, 2008). An exploratory study performed by The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, 1998) focused on the shortage of qualified candidates for principal vacancies in the United States. This study revealed that the quality of principal candidates was as much of a concern as the quantity of applicants when looking for prospective administrators. The number of highly capable applicants may be dwindling (Spencer & Kochan, 2000; Gajda & Militello, 2008).

The state of Michigan completed a study of the school principal shortage (Cusick 2003) that mirrors the study completed by NAESP (1998) five years earlier. Michigan reported that the number of principal positions decreased by 33% to 50% across the state. The study refers to the principal shortage dilemma affecting the state. It concluded that some the problems recruiting principals in school districts throughout the nation are:

- The continued retirement of the baby-boomer principals
- The demands from government and parents
- Lack of interest in teachers to pursue administrative positions - the principal position is not attracting prospective administrators due to the demands, added responsibilities of the job, and pay
- Large numbers of principals resigning from their position leaving behind vacancies that cannot be easily filled
- Increase of student enrollment and student diversity

A survey sent out to women administrators in Alabama provided 14 reasons why principals left the profession. Principals were asked in the survey to indicate reasons why they were leaving. The number one reason for leaving the profession was to assume a better position in another profession (Spencer & Kochan, 2000; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Two studies from the American Association of Secondary Administrators (2000) concluded that within the next ten years, retirements would create about 1,000 school administrative openings. Gajda & Militello (2008) estimate that 40% will retire in this decade and that the number of positions needing to be filled will grow 20% in the next five years. With concerns of where future leaders of the nation's school system will come from, the question arises: Will more women have the opportunity to enter the ranks of administration (Manuel & Slate, 2003)?

The occurrence of this phenomenon is creating new possibilities for the advancement of the Hispanic women (Scheckelhoff, 2007). It unleashes great opportunities for Hispanic females to gain in a profession in which they continue to be underrepresented (Richard, 2000; Mendez-Morse, 2004).

It is clear that those persons in charge of making recruitment placement and promotion decisions can make decisions to include Hispanic females and not just those with whom they are more closely identified. This factor creates an environment conducive to women obtaining administrative positions (Cusick, 2003).

Hill and Ragland (1995) conducted 35 interviews of selected women educational leaders who, based on their experiences, predicted trends for women in public school administration. The overwhelming prediction made by the interviewees included the vision of more opportunities for women in a variety of areas and at earlier points in their career, and more success for women in administrative positions in the very near future.

Studies completed by Blackman & Fenwick (2000) and Boris-Schacter & Lager, (2006) indicate that a number of women taking leadership positions in elementary schools has risen over the past 10 years; however female presence in secondary schools and district superintendency remains disproportionately low (Thurman, 2004).

Determining Underrepresentation

A close analysis of the literature strongly indicates that Hispanic female school administrators have been and continue to be underrepresented throughout school districts in the nation (Banks, 2000; Cusick, 2003 Mendez-Morse, 2004).

The literature focuses on identifying reasons for the underrepresentation of Latina Principals in public schools (Banks, 2000; Gardiner et al., 2000). According to Gupton and Slick (1996), the underrepresentation of women can be attributed to women's lack of aspiration for administrative positions even though they hold certification and degrees to qualify them for these positions, inadequate training and educational opportunities, insufficient support systems for and among women, family responsibilities, and mobility problems.

In K-12 education, females comprise 83% of the elementary and 54% of the secondary teaching populations, yet they constitute only 52% of the principalship in elementary schools and 26% of the high school positions (Spencer & Kochan, 2000).

The career paths, personal characteristics, and motivational orientations of women who have broken through the “glass ceiling” of school administration are largely different from those of men. Women have influenced and made notable contributions throughout the history of education (Smulyan, 2000; Scheckelhoff, 2007). Research also supports the fact that females are as effective in their leadership roles as men are (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006).

Even though females have made significant gains, specifically minority females, the statistics presented are alarming, especially when the present teaching force accounts for 73% females (Cusick, 2003). NCEs reports that although significant change in the characteristics of elementary school principals occurred there remains a gap with secondary principals.

There is a greater disparity when accounting for the Hispanic male in education, however; Hispanic women are even more scarce (Banks, 2000; Byrd-Blake, 2004). Researchers report the significant underrepresentation of women and Hispanic women as high-level academic leaders (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Ferrandino (2001) indicated that an obvious mismatch exist when the Hispanic student population continues to increase; yet African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans combined account for only about 15% of principals in elementary schools. In 1983, 2.4% of all K-12 principals were considered Latino. In 2001, that number increased to 5.7%, and in 2004, increased to 6% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

Men definitely represent the roles of school district superintendents. Female representation in superintendency has fluctuated in the past years, yet the number of female superintendents has not been equitable with the number of males. In 1928, 1.6% of the nation's superintendents were females. It only increased to 7.1% by 1993 and today, females comprise a mere 12% of superintendents nationwide (Manuel & Slate, 2003; Quilantan, 2004). Addressing the underrepresentation of the Hispanic female is crucial if we are to achieve diversity in school leadership positions (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

The underrepresentation of Hispanic female leaders in school administration mirrors other professions as well. The number of Latinas employed in management, professional, and related occupations: 1,864,000, which is 3.6% of all people employed in management, professional, and related occupations.

According to Catalyst (2008), a New York City based research and advocacy group for women in business, there is a new way to look into the future and predict the number of women in senior management ranks – just count the current number of women on corporate boards. Companies with 30% women board directors in 2001 had, on average, 45% more women corporate officers by 2006, compared to companies with no women board members. This is definitely moving in the right direction even though there is still more to do to increase female leaders in senior management.

The Hispanic female is known as the invisible Latina in politics simply because of the neglect or are discounted in political leadership and participation in electoral and community politics. Even with the small advancements the Hispanic female has experienced in politics, very few articles on women's political participation and leadership exists (Montoya, Hardy-Fanta, & Garcia, 2000; Prinderville, 2002). Hispanic female underrepresentation is also found in the traditionally male-dominated religious institutions (Bono, 2002), and the field of medicine (AAMC, 2002).

Women as Educational Leaders

A growing body of research attests to the outstanding leadership potential of women in all administrative positions (Mendez-Morse, 2004). Research also indicates that women who attempt to enter into educational leadership positions encounter obstacles ranging from sex-role stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination in spite of the various legislative attempts to ensure equal opportunities (Smulyan, 2000; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Myths about women in leadership continue to be a critical aspect in the selection of school administrators. For example, a perception that women are not tough enough to handle the political environment or discipline problems of a high school remains strong. Stereotyping and bias about women's backgrounds, experiences, and interests produced unfavorable attitudes about their ability to function in certain situations and in particular positions (Byrd-Blake, 2004; Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

As early as the late 1800s, women were found in leadership positions. Carrie Chapman Catt, the first woman superintendent in the United States in the school district of Mason City, Oregon, served until the late 1800s. During the period 1900-1930, women enjoyed the “golden years” as activities in the National Women’s Party promoted social and economic advantages that brought favorable changes for women, especially for those who aspired to the superintendency (Shakeshaft, 2006).

In 1928, two-thirds of the county superintendencies in eleven mid-western and western states and 1.6% of the national district superintendencies were held by women (Gribskov, 1980).

It was after 1928, and especially after World War II, that women’s role in educational administration began to decline. Men prepared themselves to become administrators and women turned to homemaking and raising families (Jones & Montenegro, 1990).

Very little movement occurred for women in school administration during the 1950s to the 1970s even though the Women’s Liberation Movement drew attention to the underrepresentation of women in school administration (Hackney, 1998).

Hackney’s (1998) study focuses on organizational cultures and how women, who have historically been overlooked for administrative positions, perceive these organizations. The participants of this study, 24 women, were involved in the initial interviews, and a subculture of 10 women, who held positions at the entry levels of educational administration, participated in the final interview. Ethnographic interview questions were designed to probe into the participants’ perceptions of the organizational culture in terms of personality-organizational congruence, organizational attitudes

toward aspiring women, the participants' feelings of performance, self-esteem, compromise necessary for success, power, organizational control, inclusion, exclusion, equity, and discrimination.

Three major themes on the women's perception of their organization emerged from the data analysis: validation, inclusion, and authenticity. In validation, the women perceived how the organization recognized their importance. Inclusion referred to the sense of belonging to the organization, the sense of teaming with members of the organization. Authenticity referred to the organization practicing what it professed to believe.

A second set of themes emerged from the study, suggesting ways that these women dealt with conditions present in their organization:

- Internal Standard/Strengths/Beliefs – Who I am and what am I about.
- Sense of Mission – They were doing what they were doing for the children.
- Making inroads into the organization – To work twice as hard and twice as much.
- Proactive preparation of Self – Do what you have to do to prepare yourself for what may come.

When women's need for validation, inclusion, and authenticity are met by the organization, it is reflected in the women's expression of performance, self-esteem and in higher scores of the Performance-Self-Esteem Scale (PSES). The opposite was found to be true, also.

Hackney's study determined that egalitarian cultures do not exist in abundance and because of this, he theorized that women would take one of three paths in their careers to deal with uninviting cultures in their professional experiences:

- They become satisfied with staff level position and retreat from the higher-level administrative arena.
- They give up aspirations of power and leadership and return to classroom teaching.
- They find a balance between their feminine and professional identities, buy into the “female as deficient” notion, work harder, and play the games to achieve.

Latinas: Educational Leaders

Demographics support the diversification of academic leadership and demonstrate the growing need for it (Cusick, 2003; Scheckelhoff; 2007). Because of the need to find educational leaders that can work through the complexities and the new expectations in education, recent investigations and studies have sought to help identify factors that contribute to or cause the underrepresentation of Hispanic females in school administration (Aponte, 1999; Byrd-Blake, 2004; Scheckelhoff, 2007).

Hill and Ragland (1995) provide the following list of interwoven and imposing barriers that have created an educational system in which historically men have held leadership positions:

- Male dominance of key leadership positions – typically men have controlled the highest administrative jobs within school districts.

- Lack of political savvy – men dominating gate keeping; “good ole boy” network.
- Lack of career positioning – position is clearly discriminatory in job announcement requesting qualifications that women cannot meet because of close ranks.
- Lack of mentoring – to increase women’s political and career-positioning knowledge.
- Lack of mobility – mobility is a bigger consideration for women than for men.
- Internal barriers and bias against women – discrimination exists in every culture to varying degrees of intent, severity, cruelty, and damage. Classifying groups as inferior and weak has been comforting and satisfying to the self-image of others.

More specifically, a number of explanations have been commonly offered and accepted for the disproportionate number of Latinas who hold administrative positions:

- Minority women are not motivated to enter administration.
- Hispanic leaders (superintendents) are atypical to their ethnicity and gender.
- Lack of qualifications for the position.
- Cultural relationships with men (dominated by a husband or father).
- Domestic role (housewife and mother first).
- Limitations for work and education.
- Discouragement or lack of support for any deviation of cultural expectation.

Over the years, school administration tends to favor men over women, to hold men as the ideal to which women are continually compared, thus stereotyping women as ineffective leaders. It is important that women and Hispanic women have equal access to all positions for which they have equal qualifications (Whitaker & Vogel, 2005).

In a study conducted by the American Educational Research Association, Gorena (1996) examined Hispanic women holding senior level administrative positions in colleges or universities and their perceptions of factors that positively influenced or hindered their advancement to leadership positions.

Sixty-eight Hispanic women participated in the survey, *Hispanic Women in Higher Education Administration: Profile 1991: A National Study of Factors Which Influence or Hinder Advancement of Hispanic Women to Leadership Positions in U.S. Colleges and Universities*. The 16-page survey includes 66 questions and statements. The respondents were asked to circle those factors that they perceived might have positively influenced or hindered their career advancement. The factors were listed according to five categories: Personal/Professional, Family, Support, Institutional, and Other.

Table 1

Factors Favorably Influenced or Hindered Advancement

Factors Favorably Influenced Advancement	Factors Hindered Advancement
Personal/Professional - Education, training, goal setting, networking, knowledge of mainstream system, knowledge of the advancement process.	Traditional Hispanic culture, values, Gender,
Family - Personal economic status, parental economic status, children	Discrimination, ethnicity, household/child caring duties and other family responsibilities.
Support - Family, friends, colleagues, peers, spouses, significant other, non-Hispanic administrators, *institutional policies	*Institutional policies.
Institutional - Internal recognition, internal personal contact, *appointments/responsibilities, and external contacts	*Assignments and responsibilities
Other - Non-Hispanic males and females mentors, Affirmative Action	Discrimination

Notes.

*Institutional policies were perceived by an equal number of respondents to both positively influence and hinder advancement. Possible explanations for these selections may relate to the particular institution with which the respondents were affiliated, its needs, location and expectations.

*Assignment/Responsibilities were perceived by some respondents to have positively influenced advancement and were perceived as not applicable and as hindering advancement by other. This finding may indicate respondents with unsatisfactory experience within these areas.

The study provides information about the perceptions of Hispanic women in senior levels at higher education institutions of the factors that positively influenced or hindered their advancement. A review of this data revealed that Hispanic women in this study appeared to be no different from other women in their perceptions of factors that may positively influence or hinder advancement.

Additionally, it is recommended that this study's findings may be used by higher education institutions and other entities to reevaluate their recruitment, hiring, promotion, tenure policies, and guidelines to ensure that they are objective in terms of gender equity and ethnic/minority representation, and for developing strategies to use in the training and development of Hispanic women and leadership positions.

Ohde (1991) investigated the socialization and enculturation process of minority women within leadership positions in educational administration. The study focused on how cultural and ethnic values and orientations may affect a minority woman's leadership role, the interactions she has with others, and the development of her self-image as a professional and as an individual. This study revealed the following about minority women:

- A set of strongly held values guide and direct these women.
- They are raised in a close, loving family that nurtures a set of values.
- Their age influences career options.
- Language and religion are ties that continue to bind them to their ethnic heritage.
- They have strong fatherly influence.
- They accept the role of spokesperson for their culture.
- They have an emotional toughness to deal with discrimination.
- They view themselves as instructional leaders.
- They understand the importance of hard work to prove administrative competencies.

The study of Hispanic female leaders is crucial for aspiring leaders who need to embrace the successes of Hispanic women who do not adhere to the stereotype or succumb to the factors that hinder advancement (Mullen, 1999). Success stories, coupled with scholarly research, emphasize Hispanic struggles, challenges, and failures, in their school, career, community and society.

Theories

A theory is an explanation for a certain set of observed phenomena in terms of a system of constructs and laws that relate to these constructs and to each other (Gall et al., 1996). Theories serve several useful purposes.

First, theories identify commonalities in otherwise isolated phenomena. Second, the laws of a theory enable the researcher to make predictions and control phenomena. Third, the theory might grow as it is shown to explain more phenomena or as it incorporates more constructs to explain phenomena (Gall et al., 1996).

In qualitative studies, researchers usually try to generate theories that help them understand their data. Merriam (1998) said that qualitative research is designed to build inductively rather than to test concepts, hypotheses, and theories. Because of this, many mistakenly believe that theory has no place in a qualitative study. This is far from the truth. It is hard to imagine a study without a theoretical framework. Merriam (1998) defines a theoretical framework as, “The orientation or stance that you bring to your study. It is the structure, the scaffolding, the frame of your study” (p. 45). The following theories guided this study:

Role theory is used in this study to help explain the status of Latinas in leadership. In sociology, status equals a position in a social system: Principal, teacher, and custodian. This theory provides a basis for examining role socialization and for explaining the behaviors of people in occupational roles such as principals.

Role theory is based on the idea that perceptions of a role define how individuals are expected to behave, how individuals occupying roles perceive what they are supposed to do, and the actual behavior of individuals (Shapiro, 2000; Toren, 1973).

A role is a dynamic enactment, one's interpretation, of the expectations surrounding one's position. A role consists of the occupant or actor breathing life into a position (Shapiro, 2000).

According to Eagly's (1987) social-role theory, stereotypes of men and women (or any subgroup), are derived, at least in part, from observing individuals in their societal roles. From observing the sexes in these varied roles, people derive gender-role expectation for other, as well as, their own sex-type behaviors.

The extent to which people adopt a role congruent with what they have observed to be appropriate to their sex, sex difference and accompanying stereotypes become self-perpetuating. As roles change, then beliefs about women and men will change accordingly (Deaus & Kite, 1993).

Role differs from status, in that status is a position or rank in relation to others as in a social order, community, class, or profession; such as in a school, positions are principal, teacher, student and secretary (Banks, 2000). Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) state that “status and role represent a conceptual elaboration of the ‘ideal patterns which control reciprocal behavior’... a status, as distinct from the individual who may occupy it, is simply a collection of rights and duties” (p. 12). A role represents the dynamic aspect of status.

When an individual puts the rights and duties that constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role. It is through the occupancy of statuses by individuals and their performance of roles that the business of a society is accomplished.

Occupational roles are a strong determinant of the traits ascribed to women and men. Individuals with higher-status jobs are perceived to have more agentic qualities than those individuals in lower-status occupation (Deaus & Kite, 1993).

Conflicts between the expectations of the role of a leader and the role of a female occur throughout history and continue to exist in most cultures (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Acting in ways that challenge traditional roles may lead to conflict or stress for women administrative aspirants (Smulyan, 2000). For example, expected role practices of women within partnering (spouses) and mothering can clash with the demands made on them as an educational administrators (Grogan, 1996).

Attitudes toward women's roles in society go back many decades in North America. Since 1936, interest in attitudes towards women's role in society is evident in the literature. The study of women's role in the 1970s, which focused on the rights and roles of women, differed greatly from the study of the women's role in the 1990s, which focused on attitudes on women as managers (Loo, 1998).

Hispanic women need to be understood, not only from an organizational perspective, but also from within their cultural and ethnic demands, which often contribute to role conflict. Role conflicts can occur whenever an individual is required simultaneously to conform to a number of expectations that are mutually exclusive, contradictory, or inconsistent with their cultural expectations (Lipham, 1988).

The Getzels-Guba (1957) model helped to explain the conflicts minority women may experience from an organizational perspective. This model provides the framework for many studies of the socialization of school administrators. Getzels and Guba offered the following:

1. The nomethetic leader is involved with the roles and expectations that define normal dimensions of an activity.
2. The ideographic leadership is associated with the needs of the group members and defines the personal dimensions of the group activity.
3. The synthetic leadership combines the two.

Since educational administration is embedded with the values, attitudes, and expected behaviors of White males, the organizational culture and climate can itself cause role and personal conflicts for minority women.

These theories provide a framework to understand and possibly to explain reasons for the underrepresentation of Latina Principals. Examining minority women's unique perspectives provides further explanations for the underrepresentation. Making connections of factors within the organization, social, and culture heritage that can influence a woman's choice of career, as well as, her advancement within that career further explains specific restraints that exclude women and minorities from leadership positions.

Situational Theory - Okamura's (1981) model of situational ethnicity suggests that an individual's self-perception of his/her own ethnicity guides one's behavior and even imposes (self) limits on selected actions, becoming part of a self-fulfilling prophecy of accomplishments or defeats.

Situational theorists suggested that different situations require different leadership skills and techniques. If leadership is not innate and not based on certain leadership behaviors, then it must depend on the situation. Leadership is not inside the individual but a function of the occasion and it changes to meet the demands of the expected role. In other words, the leader is the instrumental factor through which a resolution to the situational problem is achieved (Kenji & Moura E Sa, 2001).

Leadership is dependent on the abilities and skills required at the time to solve social problems existing in times of stress, change, and adaptation (Bass, 1981). Even though a great number of leaders have emerged during crises (situations), and which probably would not have done so otherwise, many theorists maintain that a situation is not in itself sufficient to account for leadership. Countless adverse situations have occurred that do not bring forth persons of leadership capabilities. This theory examines

whether the leader changes to fit a situation, or if necessary, a change in the situation is necessary to correspond with the leader. In other words different situations demand different kinds of leadership.

Career Paths of Hispanic Women

School administrators generally come from the ranks of teachers (Wesson, 1998). The most common career pathway is teacher, elementary principal, central office or teacher, secondary principal, and central office (Manuel & Slate, 2003). Part of the problem is the result of the low numbers of Hispanic women in the teaching population (Byrd-Blake, 2004).

The National Collaboration on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) reports NCEES statistics from 2003 indicating that the number of minority teachers nationwide is not representative of the number of minority students. For example, the data show that 90% of public school teachers were White, 6% African American, and fewer than 5% of other races. The data also revealed that 40% of schools had no teachers of color on staff.

States across the nation, recognizing the urgent need to recruit and retain Hispanic teachers, implement a variety of programs and policies that complement traditional recruiting methods. According to the National Collaboration on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) one “career ladder” approach is the Para educator (often referred to as paraprofessional or teacher’s aide) outreach program, which targets and recruits Para educators to become fully licensed teachers.

Although some occupational barriers have fallen, the U.S. work force is still sex-segregated and women persist in pursuing jobs that are low status and low paying, with few or no opportunities for advancement (Frankenberg et al., 2003). Women continue to be underrepresented in many career fields, particularly mathematics, the sciences and engineering. Further, the career aspirations of young women continue to focus on stereotypically female occupations, selecting occupations from a more restricted range of options (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

Studies examining the occupational pursuits of Hispanic women have relied upon a gender model, or one that uses personal characteristics and family situations as predictor variables. While a number of Hispanic women grow up with rigid, traditional gender-role norms and expectations that influence achievement strivings, there is not much empirical research to evaluate how this translates to achievement behavior (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

Major barriers and major facilitators of women's career choices are defined in terms of their effects on women's self-actualization in their career choices. Barriers are seen as variables or forces that can lead or related to the tendency to make gender-stereotypic, traditional female choices. Facilitators are factors related to broadened career options and higher educational and career achievements (Curillo & Brown, 2003).

Table 2 shows a summary of some of the major barriers and facilitators to women's career development:

Table 2

Summary of Major Barriers to, and facilitators of, Women's Career Development

Barriers	Facilitator
Environment	
Gender role stereotypes Occupational stereotypes Gender Bias in Education Barriers in higher education Lack of Role Models The Null environment Gender-Biased Career Counseling	Working Mother Supportive father Highly educated parents Girls schools/Women's Colleges Female Models Proactive Encouragement Androgynous upbringing Work experience
Individual (Socialized)	
Family-Career conflict Path Avoidance Self-esteem Self-Efficacy Concept Causal Attributions Expectancies for Success	Late Marriage or Single No or Few Children High Self-Esteem Strong Academic self- Instrumentality Androgyny

The following points concerning the barriers and facilitators are important:

- Both barriers and facilitators can be environmental or individually based.
- A given factor can be both a barrier and a facilitator, depending on whether it is present or absent.
- The nature and effect of some barriers and facilitators influencing women's career development are "transhistorical," while others change with historical and social changes.

The focus on barriers and facilitators, environmental and individual or socialized, is useful not only for understanding the still-restricted nature of women's career choices but also for designing appropriate interventions to broaden those choices. Barriers for candidates of color must be identified and reduced (National Collaboration on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004).

Most studies of American women's career choices examine African American women. Research on Hispanic women has begun to burgeon in the past few years. Hispanic women, like African American women, suffer the disadvantages of being both women and a minority, yet the Hispanic women are even more rigid and traditional in sex-role norms and expectations than the African American women (Christman & McClellan, 2008).

Latinas in this county are very much in need of educational, economic, and counseling assistance because they are at an even greater disadvantage occupationally than the already disadvantaged Anglo American women (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

Hispanics women may be unaware of the barriers in their career pathways, which limit their ascending the educational hierarchy simply because they are allowed only limited participation in educational administration. Most have been denied the knowledge of these dynamics and the means for becoming involved in them (Lovelady-Dawson, 1980). Valverde (1980) asserted that the principalship and higher administrative positions are usually filled subjectively, using vague criteria.

Blackman and Fenwick (2000) recognize that even though females have made significant gains, specifically minority females, the statistics presented of women in leadership positions are alarming, especially when 73% of the present teaching force is female.

According to Grogan (1996), women see themselves as role models for other administrative aspirants, establishing a nurturing relationship that gives women a validating role to counsel women into administration. As more Hispanic women attain professional positions, their influence extends (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Mendez-Morse (2004) explains how mentoring impacts career path and choices for Hispanic women. Careful attention to adequate planning for career advancement through formal education, coupled with a variety of positive strategies such as seeking out and learning from several mentors, assists many Hispanic women in attaining the position sought after.

The importance of Hispanic women having mentors – either female or male and Hispanic or non-Hispanic – in order to make significant advances in administrative careers, is just as important as Hispanic women being mentors to others who typically have few mentors from whom to draw support. The need exists for building a community of mentors, particularly amongst Hispanic women, if Hispanic women are to succeed.

An obvious part of the problem with Hispanic women's lack of a support system is due to the low numbers of women in executive positions in education (Gardiner et al., 2000). Perceptions of difference, different experiences or styles of leadership are not the problems; it is prevailing attitudes and assumptions concerning women in leadership. It is agreed that mentors are essential for women aspiring to educational leadership.

Summary

Over the past decade, research on Hispanic females in educational administration has centered primarily on the documentation of their numbers and on demographic profiles. Recent research sets out to investigate and probe the reasons for the exclusion of Hispanic women from school leadership positions (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkison, 1986).

Most of the research for Hispanic women relies on the research conducted on African American women (Banks, 2000). The high number of female teachers and the low number of female administrators is an example of the reality of the underrepresentation of women, especially the Hispanic women. In the review of research on the underrepresentation of Latina Principals, two major national issues – principal shortage and demographic changes – have emerged during the last decade that could unleash great opportunities for Hispanic women to gain status in a profession in which they are extremely underrepresented (Richard, 2000).

Research also suggests that the low number of female administrators is not due to the women's lack of qualification and certification, or that their career ambitions are not equal to those of men, nor is it because women lack adequate leadership characteristics. Simply put, women, especially Hispanic women, do not have the same opportunities as men. School administration tends to favor men and hold them up as the "ideal" to which women and Hispanic women are expected to measure up (Banks, 2000).

Research discredits and contradicts popular myths that are used to justify the underrepresentation of Hispanic women, such as, social-role conflicts, cultural expectations and limitations, and lack of interest to pursue administrative positions. Even though minority women embody a two-status role – one related to gender and one related to ethnicity – they have positive perceptions of themselves and their ability to do their jobs given the opportunity (Banks, 2000; Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

Chapter III - Methods

Problem

America is facing demographic changes. The United States has entered the 21st century more diverse than ever before. It is estimated that by 2025 more than half the population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (Singer, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008).

The Hispanic student population growth is already affecting the nation's education system. Schools are becoming more diverse. It is a crucial time for school leaders to invest in shaping our nation's future society. In light of the demographic changes and the important role of school leaders, what is stated in the literature that may provide in-depth information on the role of the Hispanic female principal and possibly increase their numbers in the K-12 public school?

Women in general and Hispanic women in particular add a different perspective to the study of leadership. To investigate the cultural accounts and success stories of Hispanic females in leadership may bring new dimensions and challenges to the patterns and theories that once described leadership (Banks, 2000).

Case studies may provide insight on the expectations and behaviors of Latinas in educational leadership and may identify myths that create barriers that hinder the advancement of Latinas in school administration (Howard, 2001).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of the Hispanic female (Latina) principals by examining their perceptions and experiences as principals. Shakeshaft (1989) mentioned that historically, case studies usually center on the male principal or superintendent or on the lives of the African American female principals, consequently very little is known of the role of Hispanic females who occupy the position of principalship. Case studies, then, fill a gap in the body of literature that until recently provided a limited understanding of the lived experience of the Hispanic female educational leaders (Smulyan, 2000).

Information gleaned from lived experience of Hispanic female educational leaders can offer hope and inspiration to aspiring school leaders (Gardiner et al., 2000; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Howard, 2001; Smulyan, 2000). Presenting stories from Hispanic and Latino history can be beneficial, educational, therapeutic, and empowering. It is a means of communicating serious matters and hot topics of concern (Howard, 2001).

It was also a purpose of this study to identify their perceptions of barriers and possible solutions encountered during their advancement.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following basic research question:

What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Three research questions directed the form and content of this study:

1. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

2. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their role as a principal?
3. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Research Design

The method of study was qualitative. A qualitative approach allows for rich possibilities of inquiry that provide a clearer and more complex understanding of people's reported experiences and observations that can contribute to the topic of study (Suter, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Gall et al., 1996).

Qualitative research in education is presently undergoing rapid change (Gall et al., 1996). This is evident in the proliferation of new journals, books, and professional associations representing different traditions of qualitative inquiry. Some examples of qualitative methods are:

- Ethnography, which is observing people interacting in social settings and activities or in their cultural context.
- Phenomenology, which is the essence or the structure of an experience, known as a phenomenon.
- Ethnomethodology; which is the method in which people makes sense of their social world.
- Grounded theory, known as a theory that must emerge from the data, or a theory that is grounded in the data.

- Case study research, which is the most widely used, yet most challenging. It deals with an in-depth study of an individual unit where that unit is approached as an example of some larger phenomenon.

Qualitative research plays a discovery role. It focuses on the study of cases rather than of populations and samples (Gall et al., 1996). Thus, qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam, 1998).

Merriam (1998) explained some key philosophical assumptions in qualitative research using case study methods:

- It is based on the view that individuals interacting with their social world construct reality.
- The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- It usually involves fieldwork – the researchers must go to the people.
- It primarily employs an inductive research strategy – builds rather than tests concepts, hypotheses, or theories.
- The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive – words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey the findings.

In order to identify with and possibly gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the Hispanic female principals, the research design involved case study.

Case Study

Yin (2003) affirmed that case study is a rigorous method of research. Case study research has several advantages as an approach to qualitative research. It can be used to study a wide range of educational phenomena and it is capable of detecting many aspects of experience that may prove to be important variables in subsequent quantitative studies.

Case studies are the preferred methods for the “how” and “when” questions in use, when the researcher has little control over the events, and when the focus is on a phenomenon within some real life context (Yin, 2003). Case studies have the potential to deepen our understanding of the research phenomenon, because they allow for a longitudinal approach. The design of case studies relies on extensive data collection usually over a period. The use of case studies often generates useful ideas within the rich descriptions of the data, prompting readers to look at old problems in a new way.

The need for case studies comes from a desire to understand complex social phenomenon. It allows the investigator to maintain real life events (Yin, 2003). Most researchers understand there are limitations in attempting to comprehend people’s actions or feelings just through a method of observation (Schutz, 1967; Seidman, 1998).

Case studies do not represent entire populations. Care should be taken to make sure not to generalize beyond cases. The researcher’s interest should not be so much in generalizing their findings as in telling a story. The case study is not methodologically invalid simply because selected cases cannot be presumed to be representative of entire populations. Put another way, one is generalizing to a population based on a sample, which is representative of that population. Usefulness may be more important for case studies than wide generalization (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002).

When theories are associated with a case study, it defines the research problem (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). In case studies, one is generalizing to a theory based on cases selected to represent dimensions of that theory. The level of depth with which each case is studied allows for theory building and not just theory testing.

Single studies as well as multiple studies are often used in case studies. There are no upper or lower limits to the number of cases to include in the study. It is appropriate for a researcher to study a single case as well as multiple cases. It is the research question, the type of question that is being studied, that should influence the number of cases for the study (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002).

The use of a single case study occurs when a particular case is critical or when an explanation for an established theory is needed in research. In multiple case studies, we study or ask the same questions of people or organizations and compare to each other to draw conclusions. Whether using a single case or multiple cases, it is the researcher's responsibility to justify the selection of every case study.

Triangulation is considered as one of the most important characteristics of case study. Triangulation consists of collecting data through different methods or even different kind of data for the same phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Merriam, 1998).

Triangulation produces a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrait of the object under study. It helps reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation and bias that might result from relying exclusively on any one data-collection method, source, analyst, or theory.

Interviews

Interviewing provides a context of people's behavior and may allow the researcher to understand more fully the meaning of the behavior. The purpose of interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to "evaluate" as the term is normally used, but the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 1998).

At the heart of interviewing, research is interested in other individuals' stories because they are of worth (Seidman, 1998). The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information (Merriam, 1998).

Patton (1990) stated that, "We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 196).

This requires that the researcher develop a relationship with each of the interviewees that is founded on trust, mutual respect, and care for one another's personal and professional well being (Smulyan, 2000).

In our “interview society,” the mass media, human service providers and researchers increasingly generate information by interviewing (Silverman, 1997). Looking at methodical forms of information collection, it is estimated that 90% of all social sciences in investigations use interviews in one way or another. Interviewing is undoubtedly the most widely applied technique for conducting systematic social inquiry (Silverman, 1997).

Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It allows the researcher to capture interviewee’s experiences and thoughts that would probably never become known. It is necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to duplicate. Interviews are special forms of conversation that provide a way of generating empirical data about the interviewee’s reaction to the social world.

There are various types of interviews to use. The word “interviewing” covers a wide range of practices. There are tightly structured, survey interviews with preset, standardized, and normally closed questions (Gall et al., 1996; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998). There are also open-ended, apparently unstructured, anthropological interviews that might be seen, almost, as a friendly conversation (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998).

Table 3

Interviewing Structure Continuum

Highly Structured/ Standardized	Semi-structured	Unstructured/Informal
Wording of questions predetermined	Mix of more and less structured questions	Open-ended questions
Order of questions Predetermined		Flexible, exploratory
Oral form of a survey		More like a conversation

Merriam's (1998) chart (Table 3) represents a continuum that is based on the amount of structure of an interview. At one end of the continuum fall highly structured, questionnaire-driven interviews; at the other end are unstructured, open-ended, conversational formats (p. 73).

For this study, the interviews leaned more toward a highly structured and standardized process. Five female administrators who were invited as volunteers to participate in generating questions for the interviews predetermined the order and wording of the questions. Peer reviewers organized the questions under each research question by determining if there are connections with the interview questions and the research questions.

The interview conversation can be a potential source of bias, error, misunderstanding or misdirection, and a persistent set of problems if not controlled. The technical literature on interviewing stresses the need to keep the interaction strictly in check to maximize the flow of valid, reliable information while minimizing distortions (Silverman, 1997).

The interview conversation is a pipeline for transmitting knowledge. This means knowledge is created from the actions undertaken to obtain it. The interview is not merely a neutral conduit or source of distortion, but instead a site of producing reportable knowledge itself (Silverman, 1997).

Validity and Reliability

All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Interviews are a form of measurement and, as such, must meet the same standards of validity and reliability that apply to other data-collection measures in educational research.

Validity is defined as, “The appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of specific inferences made from test results” (Gall et al., 1996, p. 249). Cronbach and Meehl (1955) stated that the purpose for validity is to provide a rationale and a procedure for the validation of tests that purport to measure hypothetical psychological traits.

Messick (1989) maintained that, “validity is an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores or other modes of assessments” (p. 13).

Merriam (1998) defined both internal and external validity in qualitative research. Internal validity deals with the questions of how research findings match reality. How congruent are the findings with reality? External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations.

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated will it yield the same results? To trust research is especially important to professionals in applied fields, in which practitioners intervene in people's lives (Merriam, 1998).

Gall et al. (1996) referred to Robert Yin's two types of validity criteria and one reliability criterion to judge the quality of research:

- Construct validity – the extent to which a measure used operationalizes the concepts being studied.
- External validity – the extent to which the findings can be generalized to similar cases.
- Reliability – the extent to which other researchers would arrive at similar results if they studied the same case using exactly the same procedures as the first researcher.

Validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to the study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented (Merriam, 1998).

Merriam (1998) suggested several strategies that can be used to enhance the validity and reliability of a study. To validate a study finding on corroborative evidence, researchers use the process of triangulation. A process of using multiple data-collection methods, data sources, analysts, or theories to check the validity of case study findings, to vary in some way the approach used to generate the findings that the researcher seeks to corroborate.

Triangulation helps to eliminate biases that might result from relying exclusively on any one data-collection method, source, analyst, or theory.

- Member checks – refers to taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible. This can be done continuously throughout the study.
- Long-term observation at the research site or repeated observation of the same phenomenon – gathering data over a period in order to increase the validity of the findings.
- Peer examination – asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge.
- Participation or collaborative modes of research – involving participants in all phases of research from conceptualizing the study to writing up the findings.
- Researcher’s bias – clarifying the researcher’s assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the onset of the study.

To reduce bias from this study, the researcher used the following data collection strategies:

- Member check – the researcher requested that each administrator interviewed review their transcribed interviews to make comments, request clarifications, make changes, or delete any part of the transcription that they did not agree with.
- Long-term observation – each interview was scheduled within two weeks of the prior interview or according to the interviewees’ schedules. All interview transcriptions were completed before the next interview took place.

- Peer examinations – A University of South Florida (USF) Educational Leadership program doctoral cohort participated as peer reviewers or jury of experts for the study. This group commented on procedures used for data analysis as well as on the study’s findings.
- Researcher’s bias – Since the researcher was closely connected to the study, providing views and clarifications helped to expose possible research bias.

Generalizability has plagued qualitative researchers for quite some time (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). The issue of generalizability centers on whether it is possible to generalize from a single case, or from qualitative inquiry in general. A strategy used to determine general applicability is to use many cases to study the same phenomenon. The use of predetermined questions and specific procedures for coding and analyzing enhances the generalizability of findings (Seidman, 1998; Merriam, 1998).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher had great interest in the themes that evolved from this study, but being too close or sensitive to the study could have developed problems with researcher bias. The researcher was vested in this study since Hispanic principalship is an area of expertise as a result of the many years as a school administrator. The researcher was also keenly interested in the study’s implications to share recommendations with school districts regarding policies that may assist with reducing the underrepresentation of Hispanic females as school principals.

It was with keen interest that the researcher observed the procedures of the recruitment policies for qualified Hispanic principals in the K-12 setting to meet the challenges of the underrepresentation of Hispanic females (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006). The reason for this personal interest was that the researcher is a former Hispanic principal in her school district. In fact, and sadly enough, for 15 years she was the only Hispanic female principal in her district at a time when it was important for the district to look at policies and procedures of the recruitment of Hispanic female principals to meet the student demographic challenges of today.

With this in mind, the researcher entered this study with an open mind. Controlling personal bias was of great concern and utilizing proper procedures to prevent bias from infiltrating the study needed to be implemented. The researcher's personal perceptions and experiences as a principal were allowed to influence the data.

To assure that personal bias did not affect the study, the researcher addressed the following question: How do I control biases? To thwart contaminating influence from the study, the researcher sought peer reviewers or jury of experts to examine, validate, and provide feedback related to the methods, themes, and findings of the study. This process allowed the researcher to draw from the group's critical meanings, interpretations, and findings. It allowed the researcher to examine how objectively, how impartial, and the level of integrity that was dedicated to the study by not allowing personal bias to contaminate the research.

Utilizing peer reviewers at various stages of the study to identify any personal biases that could have contaminated the interpretation of data enhanced internal validity. It also enhanced the validity of findings, capturing the reality of the phenomenon studied. Lastly, peer reviewers confirmed that the researcher was a valid and reliable primary instrument (Yin, 2003).

Interview Process

The three-interview structure selected for this study incorporated features that enhanced the accomplishment of validity (Seidman, 1998). It placed participants' comments in context. It encouraged interviewing participants over the course of one to three weeks to account for idiosyncratic days and to check for the internal consistency of what was said (Seidman, 1998).

By interviewing a number of participants recommended to the researcher by colleagues, district personnel, or college professors to participate in this process, their experiences and comments were connected and checked against each other. The goal of the three-interview structure process was to capture how the participants understood and made meaning of their experiences and perceptions.

The following represented the three research questions that correlated with the three-interview structure. These research questions were generated to assist in gathering information that speaks to the basic research question, What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Interview one. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal? The first interview established the content of the participants' experience on how they came to be a principal. It was a time to review their life history to the time they became a principal. The questions reflected on the difficulties, successes, and motivations that took place in their lives.

Interview two. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their role as a principal? The second interview allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. How do they view their role as a principal and how do they perceive that others view them as a principal? It was a time to reflect on how and why they approach their principalship duties in the manner they do.

Interview three. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females? The third interview encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as they worked toward the principalship and how they could use these experiences for prospective Latina principals. It was also at this interview where principals reflected on their perceptions and experiences compared to the non-Latina principals.

If the interview structure works and makes sense to the researcher as well as to the interviewees, then it has gone a long way toward validity (Seidman, 1998). Even though interviewing as a research method is a powerful way to gain insight into issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives constitute the phenomenon, there are limitations in the interviewing process that need to be considered and understood by the researcher (Seidman, 1998).

Interviewing takes a great deal of time, and sometimes, money. The researcher has to conceptualize the project, establish access and make contact with participants whom they possibly have never met, work with schedules, interview them, transcribe the data, work with the materials, and then share what was learned.

Contrary to the belief of new researchers, this method should not be considered easier than another method. Any method of inquiry worth anything takes time, thoughtfulness, energy, and money, but interviewing is especially labor intensive (Seidman, 1998).

Generating Questions

Five female administrators, employed in the same county as the researcher, that represented diversity in race/ethnicity (African American, Anglo, Hispanic), cultures (African American, Anglo, Hispanic), and leadership backgrounds (principal, assistant principal, or district administrator), were invited as volunteers to participate in generating interview questions.

The following criteria were used in the selection:

- The administrator is known and respected by the researcher.
- The administrator is presently employed as a school administrator in a K-12 setting or a former school principal working in a county administrative position.
- The administrator has a minimum of three years of administrative experience.

Once volunteers accepted the task, the researcher held a brief meeting with each volunteer to make a presentation of the study, provide the purpose and background information, and discuss the process for generating questions. Volunteers were asked to generate, but were not limited to, at least five questions. According to Seidman's (1998) recommendation, "Leading questions, questions that influence the direction the response takes, will be avoided and open-ended questions, that establish territory to be explored while allowing the participant to take any direction she wants, will be utilized" (p. 69).

If the researcher could not meet with each of the five volunteers due to unforeseen reasons and after three attempts to meet failed, the researcher mailed the presentation and requested that the volunteer generate at least five questions.

Each participant had up to two weeks to complete the task. To facilitate the process, each volunteer received a self-addressed and stamped envelope to mail the questions to the researcher. The researcher was available by telephone to answer questions relating to the process or any of the information provided.

Utilizing these procedures allowed for questions that the researcher might have overlooked and enhanced the validity by eliminating biases that might have resulted from relying on one data collection method.

Every volunteer generated at least five questions. The researcher had 25 questions to use for the interviews. No unanticipated situations affected the number of questions generated by the volunteers.

If unforeseen circumstances had resulted in not enough questions being generated, the following list of questions was gleaned from the literature (Gulley, 1995; Mendez-Morse, 1999) and would have been used:

- What contributions do you believe Hispanic women make in the field of administration?
- What factors do you perceive influence Hispanic women's success?
- What do you perceive Hispanic women must do to succeed as an administrator?
- What do you perceive needs to be done to further the advancement of Hispanic women in school administration?
- What do you perceive should be the skills or experiences important to becoming a school principal?
- What was your experience prior to applying for a principal's job?
- How do you perceive your work as a principal?
- What are your perceptions of how you became a principal?
- How do you make sense of your profession as a principal?

This procedure validated the questionnaire for the in-depth procedures.

Peer Review

The use of peers to assess the work of fellow scholars in the field of medicine goes back at least 200 years (Kronick, 1990). Seidman (1998) defined peer examination or reviewers as asking colleagues to comment on the findings. He also stated that peer examination or review enhances the validity of a study.

Jefferson, Alderson, Wager, & Davioff, (2002) also stated that peer examination or peer review raises the quality of the end product and provided a mechanism for rational, fair, and objective decision making.

This process provided an opportunity for peers who are considered as “experts” in a given research area to provide critical and quality review that enhanced the integrity of the research. It should be noted that anything that was potentially challenging a belief was subject to a peer review.

Peer review is not only used for manuscripts submitted for publication, but according to Givell (2006), the whole fabric of research funding, academic careers and the futures of research groups, departments and whole institutions depends on the examination and assessments of peers.

Unlike a peer review of a manuscript, where it is documented that the large number of manuscripts being evaluated affect the quality of the examination, the peer review for this study was performed in a group setting. The researcher was present to answer questions, discuss issues, and build consensus in the careful evaluation of the questions.

A USF cohort that met on a monthly basis was invited to serve as peer reviewers. This group’s expertise lies in examining and evaluating research study to provide quality work. The peer reviewers’ task was twofold, first to provide critical and valuable review of the questions generated by the five principals, and second to select questions that were to be used for the principal interviews. This procedure assured a quality in the questions that were used for the interviews. Grivell (2006) referred to this as a filter to separate the wheat from the chaff.

The first list of questions generated by the five principals was presented to the peer reviewers without any type of revision and in no particular order. Each question was reviewed and discussed among the peers to determine the following:

- Was the question a leading question that influences the direction the response would take?
- Was the question an inappropriate question, irrelevant to the topic?
- Was the question an open-ended question that establishes territory to be explored while allowing the participant to take any direction she wants (Seidman's 1998)?

Once the questions were reviewed, the researcher took the revisions and rewrote them according to the recommendations established by the peer reviewers. The researcher then emailed revised interview questions to the peer reviewers to verify changes.

At the second meeting, the revised questions were presented to the group to ascertain that questions were neither leading, biased, nor held prejudice. After questions were reviewed and discussed, peer reviewers formed three small groups. Each group was labeled group number 1, 2, and 3 to match the three-interview structure. Each group was responsible for selecting questions that best fit in each interview. Questions fell into each group based on how well the interview questions would answer their corresponding research question. Participants from each group determined what connections or bonding the interview questions had with each of the research questions. Each group (groups 1, 2, and 3) received and reviewed the results from the other groups and provided feedback.

The last part of the peer review process was to discuss and evaluate if the questions selected for each group of interviews represented the domain as a whole. In other words, did these questions help answer the research question: What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals? In addition, the group once more checked to ensure that questions were free from certain prejudices, biases, or were not leading questions.

Once all steps of the peer review process were completed, the researcher proceeded with a debriefing session for a critical and constructive review of the process. The peer reviewers comments and questions on the peer reviewing process such as, “This is an excellent procedure to enhance validity in a study”, “Why did you choose only five female principals to help generate questions?”, and “Going through this process helps me understand the importance of peer reviewers in a study”, generated great discussion.

Selection of Sample

The sample size in qualitative study typically is small since the purpose of selecting a case, or cases, is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Gall et al., 1996).

The selection of sampling reflected purposeful sampling strategy, which concentrates on selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study of the phenomenon (Gall et al., 1996; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998). Purposeful sampling is not designed to achieve population validity. The intent is to achieve an in-depth understanding of selected individuals, not to select a sample that would represent accurately a defined population (Gall et al., 1996).

The selection criteria are essential to begin purposeful sampling, also referred to as criterion-based selection (Merriam, 1998). The researcher first created a list of attributes essential to the study and then proceeded to find or locate a unit matching the list (Merriam, 1998). The established criteria for purposeful sampling directly reflected the purpose of the study and guided in the identification of the information-rich cases (Merriam, 1998).

A purposeful sampling of eight Hispanic female school administrators from the central part of the state of Florida was used for this study. Eight Hispanic female leaders, who have advanced through the ranks of teacher and assistant principal and who are at different stages of their careers, were selected.

The selection of these eight Hispanic female leaders to participate in this study was based on “typical” and “networking” sampling. Based on Seidman (1998) and Merriam (1998) the size of sampling is not determined on numbers, but on the fact that when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units, the research has reached the point of saturation of information. The researcher can determine if saturation has been reached with the selected sampling or continue with purposeful selection until saturation or redundancy is reached (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998).

If redundancy had been evident after the sixth interview and the process itself was becoming laborious rather than pleasurable, the researcher would have determined that saturation had been reached, and since no new information was forthcoming would have brought the interview process to closure (Seidman, 1998). The remaining two interviewees would then have been contacted by telephone informing them that it was not necessary to interview them.

The sample began with a “typical” selection, recommended by university professors, colleagues, or referrals from School Boards in Orange, Lake, Hillsborough, and Osceola counties. The “networking” sampling relies on interviewees and school principals to refer the researcher to other participants who are information-rich and can therefore be good examples for the study (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998).

Criteria for the selection of the sample were:

- Principals who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latina by demographic ethnicity.
- Must have been a school principal for a minimum of three years.
- Former school principal working in a district administrative position.

Once names were provided, the researcher sent each perspective participant a letter explaining the study and invited them to be volunteers. To expedite the process, they were asked to email the researcher their interest, or lack of, in being part of this study. The researcher followed-up with those willing to participate in the study with a phone call.

The researcher scheduled a short, approximately 15 minute, first-time meeting to meet the interviewee, explain in more detail information about the study, answer interviewee’s questions, and schedule the first of three interviews.

Limitations on the selection of participants reflected the geographic distance from one county to another in the state of Florida. Because the researcher was based in Central Florida, to minimize traveling and increase personal safety, selection of the participants was limited to counties in the Central Florida region. The countries of origin of the eight principals were Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Data Collection

The word “interviewing” covers a wide range of practices (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998). This study used the three-interview series for the in-depth case studies interviewing process. The major task was to build upon previous answers to questions rather than to explore the participants’ responses. The goal was to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study (Seidman, 1998).

Dolbeare and Schuman (1982) designed the series of three interviews that characterized this approach and allowed the interviewer and participant to plumb the experience and place it in context. The first interview established the content of the participants’ experience. The second interview allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. The third interview encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them (Seidman, 1998).

Seidman (1998) stated that participants’ behavior becomes meaningful and can be understood better when placed in the context of their lives and in the lives of those around them. A short, one-time interview does not allow sufficient time for the interviewer to explore contextually the meaning of an experience.

The first interview dealt with the interviewees’ perceptions regarding how they came to be principals. The researcher asked the participants to tell as much as possible about themselves in light of the topic up to the present time. It was during this time that they reconstructed early experiences of family, friends, school, social environment, and any situation they experienced in their past before becoming a school administrator. This interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

The purpose of the second interview was to focus on how they perceived their work as a principal. Questions dealt directly with current experiences in their position and what is actually done in their job. An excellent method to elicit details was by encouraging participants to share stories about particular experiences in their jobs. This second interview lasted approximately 60 minutes depending on each principal.

The third and last interview focused on reflections as a way of understanding their experiences. Participants were asked to reflect on the perceptions of their profession as a principal. It was during this time that emotional and intellectual connections were made in the participant's work and life. It also required participants to look at how factors in their lives interacted to bring them to the present situation.

This last interview was only successful because the foundation for it was established in the two earlier interviews. Participants were asked about their perceptions and experiences relating to their career path. This process also took approximately 60 minutes and was carried out approximately two weeks from the second interview.

Adhering to the structure of the three interviews, exploring the past to clarify events, describing concrete details of present experiences, and reflecting upon what they are now doing, served a purpose both by itself and within the series.

The data collected from each interview were transcribed and organized by the researcher. Seidman (1998) suggested that even though there is no right way to organize the research process and the materials it generated, every moment spent on proper organization saved hours of frustration. The researcher set up a system for filing copies of consent forms, transcripts of interviews, and notes of decisions made during the process.

To work more reliably with the words of the participants, each interview was tape-recorded, with the interviewees' permission, to transform the spoken word into a written text for further study (Seidman, 1998). By preserving the words of the participant, original data were always available to check for accuracy and to ensure accountability to the data if ever the researcher was accused of mishandling an interview. Two separate tape recorders were available at all interviews in anticipation of technical difficulties. Prior to the actual interviews, an audio quality test was conducted to guarantee the recorder picked up quality sound.

Transcribing interview tapes was done using a transcribing machine that had a foot pedal and earphones. The researcher transcribed her own tapes to get to know her interviews better. The process took about four to six hours to transcribe a 60-minute tape.

The data collected from each of the interviews were kept confidential (this means no one saw the data other than the interviewer) and results were reported in aggregated terms. The researcher ensured that names, location of work, county, school, or any leading information was omitted from the transcribed data.

Participants had the opportunity to review and approve their own words from the interview transcripts. Since the participant had the right to know what and in what form the materials from the interviews would be shared with the public, she could decide to ask the interviewer not to use certain parts of the materials (Seidman, 1998).

Time Frame

Each interview took approximately 60 minutes. The purpose of the interview was to have each participant reconstruct her experiences, put it in the context of her life, and reflect on the meaning. The length of each interview was discussed with each participant before the interviews took place.

The three interviews were scheduled two weeks apart to allow enough time for participants to think about what was discussed at the interview, but not too much time between interviews that could possibly have lead to a loss of connection between the participant and the interviewer. In addition, the three interviews, over a period of six weeks, allowed the interviewer time to establish a positive relationship that took into consideration any extreme behavior displayed during any of the interviews.

There were alternatives to the structure of the interview process. As long as the structure of each interview was maintained, variations in the interview duration and spacing made allowance for unforeseen circumstances that necessitated flexibility on the part of the interviewer.

Pilot Study

To determine if this research structure was appropriate for the study of the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attached to their experiences as principals, a pilot study was conducted. The data gleaned from the pilot study provided important information that assisted in revising the research method.

Conducting a pilot study allowed time to become familiar with the complexities of the interviewing process, prepared for the labor-intensive job of interviewing, and alerted the researcher to deficiencies or biases of her own interviewing techniques that would either support or detract from the process (Seidman, 1998).

Some examples of what was learned from the pilot study were communication problems, evidence of inadequate motivation on the part of the respondent, and clues that suggested the need for rephrasing questions or revising the procedure. A pilot study helped to identify threatening questions and evaluate methods that were the best at establishing rapport with the participant (Gall et al., 1996).

One Latina principal was selected to participate in the pilot study. Prior to the interviews, contact was made to establish the beginnings of an informal relationship that fostered positive interaction. The Latina principal participated in three separate interviews scheduled at her convenience.

The following represented the three-interview structure that correlated to the three research questions. These questions assisted in gathering information that spoke to the basic research question, What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Interview one. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal? The first interview established the content of the participants' experience on how they came to be a principal. The questions reflected on the difficulties, successes, and motivations that took place in their lives as principals. It was a time to review their life history to the time they became a principal.

The principal who participated in the pilot study shared her perceptions and experiences on how she became a principal by answering the following questions:

1. Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know.
2. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?
3. What was your motivation in becoming a principal?
4. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?
5. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?
6. Did you have a role model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?
7. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?
8. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?
9. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?
 - a. How about specifically with Latinas?
 - b. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?
10. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal?

Please elaborate.

11. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?
 - a. If you were, how do you feel about the placement?
 - b. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?
12. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming principal based upon your ethnicity?
13. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?
 - a. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

Interview two. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their role as a principal? The second interview allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. How did they view their role as a principal and how did they perceive others viewed them as a principal? It was a time to reflect on how and why they approached their principalship duties in the manner they did.

The principal who participated in the pilot study shared perceptions and experiences of her role as a principal by answering the following questions:

1. Share with me as much as you like or can about your role as a principal.
2. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?
3. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?

4. How do you perceive others, and by others I mean the majority culture, view you as a principal?
5. As a Latina principal, do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently than your non-Latina peers?
6. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?
7. As a Latina principal, what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices?
8. As a Latina principal, have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

Interview three. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females? The third interview encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as they worked toward the principalship and how they could use these experiences to assist prospective Latina principals. It was also at this interview where principals reflected on their perceptions and experiences compared to the non-Latinas principals.

The principal who participated in the pilot study shared her perceptions and experiences of her career path by answering the following questions:

1. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.
2. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

3. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?
4. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?
5. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experience, or observe in others as you worked in school principalship?
6. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?
7. Due to your culture and ethnicity, were there any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

After each interview, a short debriefing took place to ensure that the structure of the interview, the questions, flow of the questions, and clarity of the questions were met with approval from the principal.

The interviews were tape recorded to preserve the word of the participant. The data collected from each of the interviews were kept confidential (this means no one saw the data other than the interviewer) and results were reported in aggregated terms. The researcher ensured confidentiality would be maintained. The name, location of work, county, school, or any leading information was omitted from the transcribed data.

The participant in the pilot study reviewed and approved her words from the interview transcripts. Since the participant had the right to know how the transcribed interviews would be shared with the public, she could decide to ask the interviewer not to use certain parts of the interviews (Seidman, 1998).

Once all three interviews were conducted, the participant reviewed and approved the transcripts, and, changes were made as needed. The researcher proceeded with the study by scheduling interviews with the selected Latina principals.

Analyzing Data

Seidman (1998) recommended that before generating any analysis of the transcripts, all interviews needed to be completed. This deterred from imposing meaning from each individual interview. After reviewing and transcribing each interview, as necessary a list of some follow-up questions was generated from the interview to use during the next interview.

Transcribing interview data took approximately four to six hours per interview. Initially this was a time-consuming process; however, transcribing the interviews augmented the meaning of the interviews.

Generating any in-depth analysis of the transcribed interviews required that all interviews with the Latinas principals were completed and the principals had an opportunity to review all the transcripts and provide feedback, if necessary. Requesting feedback from the principals allowed them the opportunity to delete, change, and add to the transcription according to what they felt needed to be shared.

Before and after each interview, the Hispanic female principals were reminded that the researcher would tape-record and transcribe each interview and the transcriptions would be emailed to them for review. After reviewing each interview, the principals were encouraged to email changes, recommendations, or ask the researcher to further explain what they read. This procedure took two weeks for each interview and was completed before the next interview occurred. Only after every interview was completed, transcribed, returned to the principal for feedback, and feedback applied, would the researcher proceed with the next step, coding.

Once the interview process was completed, the material was shaped into a form that could be shared or displayed. Two analytic procedures used for the coding process were making comparisons and asking questions. These two procedures were used to reach the goals of conceptualizing and categorizing data through open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Breaking down and conceptualizing meant taking apart a sentence or a paragraph, and giving each discrete incident, idea, or event, a name, something that stood for or represented a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was accomplished through asking questions, for example, What is this? What does it represent? Incidents were compared so that similar phenomena would be given the same name.

The use of various charts, graphs, and matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1984) to organize excerpts from the transcripts to the categories (coding), or crafting a profile or vignette (Seidman, 1998) of a participant's experiences were effective ways of sharing, analyzing, and interpreting the data.

As categories emerged, the researcher began searching for common themes and patterns among the excerpts within those categories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) the process of grouping concepts that seemed to pertain to the same phenomena was called categorizing categories. The researcher then began labeling the passages that were marked as interesting (Seidman, 1998). Labeling took place when the researcher considered some of the following questions:

- What was the subject of the marked passages?
- Were there words or a phrase that seemed to describe them?
- Was there a word within the passage itself that suggested a category into which the passage might fit?

Merriam (1998) referred to Guba and Lincoln's (1981) four suggested guidelines for developing categories that were both comprehensive and illuminating. First, the number of people who mentioned something or the frequency with which something came up in the data indicated an important dimension. Second, the audience determined what was important, that is, some categories appeared to various audiences as more or less credible. Third, some categories stood out because of their uniqueness and were retained. Fourth, certain categories revealed areas of inquiry not otherwise recognized or provided a unique leverage on an otherwise common problem.

To validate the themes and patterns of the study the researcher once again approached the doctoral cohort from USF and invited them to participate in the study as peer reviewers. Their role was to review the data to ensure that personal bias did not penetrate the categorizing of themes. Once the cohort agreed to the process and after all interviews were completed, presentations of the analysis findings were made during the groups' monthly meetings.

Interpreting Data

Interpretation of the data was not just letting the categorized thematic excerpts or profiles speak for themselves. It went beyond this initial step to a more comprehensive one. It was important to ask what had been learned from the total process. Some questions taken from Seidman (1998) to assist in formulating the interpretation of the data were:

- What connective themes were there among the experiences of the participants interviewed?
- How do I understand and explain these connections?
- What do I understand now that I did not understand before the interviews?
- What surprises have there been?
- What confirmed previous instincts?
- How were interviews consistent with the literature? How inconsistent? How did they gone beyond?

The last question used in the interpretation of data was as follows: What meaning, or what was learned from this work? The answer to this question lead to topics or themes that required further research, or resulted in proposing connections among events, structures, roles, and social forces in peoples' lives. Researchers call such proposals "theories" (Seidman, 1998).

Summary

America is facing demographic changes. The United States has entered the 21st century more diverse than ever before (Singer, 2002). It is estimated that by 2025 more than half the population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (Singer, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008).

In light of the demographic changes and the important role of school leaders, what is stated in the literature that may provide in-depth information on the role of the Hispanic female principal and possibly increase their numbers in the K-12 public school?

This study examined the Hispanic female administrators' perceptions of their role and experiences as principals. To investigate the cultural accounts and success stories of Hispanic females in leadership brought new dimensions and challenges to the patterns and theories that once described leadership (Banks, 2000).

A qualitative study approach allowed for rich possibilities of inquiry by way of case study (Seidman, 1998). Through this approach, the researcher was able to capture and understand the perceptions and experiences of the administrators.

In order to identify with and possibly gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the Hispanic female principals, the research design involved case study. Case studies provided insight on the behaviors of Latinas in educational leadership and identified myths that created barriers that hinder the advancement of Latinas in school administration (Howard, 2001). Case studies have the potential to deepen our understanding of the research phenomenon, because they allow for a longitudinal approach. The use of case studies often generates useful ideas within the rich descriptions of the data prompting readers to look at old problems in a new way.

Case studies do not represent entire populations. Care should be taken to make sure not to generalize beyond cases. The researcher's interest was not focused so much in generalizing the findings as in telling a story. Single studies as well as multiple studies are often used in case studies. There are no upper or lower limits to the number of cases to include in the study.

Triangulation is considered as one of the most important characteristics of case study. It consists of collecting data through different methods or even different kinds of data for the same phenomenon. The level of depth with which each case is studied allows for theory building and not just theory testing. When theories are associated with the case study, it defines the research problem (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Three separate interviews with each participant took place over a six-week period. In three, 60-minute interviews, participants explored and shared past experiences, described present experiences, and reflected on what they are doing as a way of understanding their experiences.

The first research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?, was the focus for interview one. The first interview established the content of the participants' experience on how they came to be a principal. It was a time to review their life history to the time they became a principal. The questions reflected on the difficulties, successes, and motivations that took place in their lives.

The second research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?, was the focus for interview two. The second interview allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurred. How did they view their role as a principal and how did they perceive that others viewed them as a principal? It was a time to reflect on how and why they approached their principalship duties in the manner they did.

The third research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?, was the focus for interview three. The third interview encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as they worked toward the principalship and how they would use these experiences for prospective Latina principals. It was also at this interview where principals reflected on their perceptions and experiences compared to the non-Latinas principals.

The selection process took the form of purposeful sampling of eight Hispanic female school administrators, a representation of K-12 administrators in the central part of the state of Florida. Five female administrators were invited to participate in the process of generating questions for the interviews. These five administrators were a representation of diverse culture, ethnicity, and leadership background and experiences. After a thorough presentation of the study in which information was provided, each participant generated five or more questions they decided were essential to ask the Hispanic female administrators participating in this study.

The above course of action for generating questions produced sufficient questions for the study, avoiding requiring the researcher to select questions from the literature that related to the Hispanic female in leadership (Mendez-Morse, 1999).

Peer review process was used to examine, review and comment on the questions generated by the principals. Peer reviewers also discussed and provided guidance on the process of generating the questions for the study. This process enhanced the integrity of the research. The peer reviewers were a USF cohort group who met monthly as a learning focused group.

A pilot study was conducted. The data gleaned from the pilot study provided significant information that assisted in revising the research method as well as detecting biases of the researcher. Conducting a pilot study allowed time to become familiar with the complexities of the interviewing process, prepared the researcher for the labor-intensive job of the interviewing relationships, and revealed deficiencies or biases of the interviewing techniques that either supported or detracted from the process (Seidman, 1998).

To analyze the data Seidman (1998) recommended that before generating any analysis of the transcripts all interviews needed to be completed. Transcribing interview data took approximately four to six hours per interview. Only after every interview was completed, transcribed, returned to the principal for feedback, and feedback applied, did the researcher proceed with the next step, coding.

Coding is breaking down and conceptualizing a sentence or a paragraph, and giving each discrete incident, idea, or event a name, something that stands for or represents a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As categories emerged, the researcher began searching for common themes and patterns among the excerpts within those categories. The process of grouping concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomena is called categorizing categories. The researcher began labeling the passages that were marked as interesting.

The use of various charts, graphs, and matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1984) to organize excerpts from the transcripts to the categories (coding), or crafting a profile or vignette (Seidman, 1998) of a participant's experiences were effective ways of sharing, analyzing, and interpreting the data.

Interpretation of the data was not just letting the categorized thematic excerpts or profiles speak for themselves. It was important to ask what was learned from the total process. Asking questions assisted in formulating the interpretation of the data. The answers to these questions lead to topics or themes that required further research, or resulted in proposing connections among events, structures, roles, and social forces in peoples' lives.

Chapter IV - Findings

Problem

America is facing demographic changes. The United States has entered the 21st century more diverse than ever before (Singer, 2002). It is estimated that by 2025 more than half the population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (Singer, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008).

The Hispanic student population growth is already affecting the nation's education system. Schools are becoming more diverse. It is a crucial time for school leaders to invest in shaping our nation's future society. In light of the demographic changes and the important role of school leaders, what is stated in the literature that may provide in-depth information on the role of the Hispanic female principal and possibly increase their numbers in the K-12 public school?

Women and Hispanic women add a different perspective to the study of leadership. To investigate the cultural accounts and success stories of Hispanic females in leadership may bring new dimensions and challenges to the patterns and theories that once described leadership (Banks, 2000).

Case studies may also provide insight on the expectations and behaviors of Latinas in educational leadership and may identify myths that create barriers that hinder the advancement of Latinas in school administration (Howard, 2001).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of the Hispanic female (Latina) principals by examining their perceptions or their experiences as Hispanic female principals. Shakeshaft (1989) mentioned that historically, case studies usually centered on the male principal or superintendent or on the lives of the African American female principals, consequently very little is known of the role of Hispanic females who occupy the position of principalship. Case studies, then, fill a gap in the body of literature that until recently provided a limited understanding of the lived experience of the Hispanic female educational leaders (Smulyan, 2000).

Information gleaned from lived experience of Hispanic female educational leaders can offer hope and inspiration to aspiring school leaders (Gardiner et al., 2000; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Howard, 2001; Smulyan, 2000). Presenting stories from Hispanic and Latino history can be beneficial, educational, therapeutic, and empowering. It is a means of communicating serious matters and hot topics of concern (Howard, 2001).

It was also a purpose of this study to identify their perceptions of barriers and possible solutions encountered during their advancement.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following basic research question:
What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Three research questions directed the form and content of this study:

1. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

2. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?
3. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Principal Interviews

A purposeful sampling of eight Latina school principals, or former school principals, a representation of K-12 administrators in the central part of the state of Florida, was used for this study.

The selection of the eight Latina Principals was based on networking sampling. The networking sampling relied on the interviewees and school principals to refer the researcher to other participants who are information rich and can therefore be good examples for the study (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1998).

Most of the eight principals selected for the study were referred by colleagues or by the interviewees themselves. All the Latinas interviewed were not currently employed as elementary principals. Five of the Latinas were principals in K-6 public schools and three of the Latinas, who were former K-12 public school principals, were employed as assistant superintendents, area superintendents, and associate superintendents in their counties.

All principals came from two Central Florida counties: Orange and Osceola. Principals approached in Hillsborough County to participate in the study declined the invitation or never responded to the researcher's various emails or phone calls. Lake County did not have Latina principals employed in any of their schools.

According to Seidman (1998) and Merriam (1998), sampling is not determined on numbers, but on the fact that when no new information is forthcoming from the principals the research has reached saturation. In spite of the small sampling size, the research never reached saturation or redundancy. The interview process proved to be pleasurable with the sharing of new information and insights until the very end of the interview process.

Each principal or former principal selected for this study voluntarily participated in three separate interviews for approximately 60 minutes depending on how much the principals shared about their perceptions and experiences. The researcher developed unique relationships with each of the interviewees. A sense of respect and pride for the researcher and for the topic of study was evident in our “casual” conversations, whether conducted before or after the interviews.

Interview one. The principal focused on research question #1: What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on how they became a principal? The principals shared their perceptions and experiences on how they became a principal by answering the following questions:

1. Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know.
2. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?
3. What was your motivation in becoming a principal?
4. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?
5. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

6. Did you have a role model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?
7. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?
8. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?
9. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?
 - a. How about specifically with Latinas?
 - b. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?
10. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal?

Please elaborate.

11. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?
 - a. If you were, how do you feel about the placement?
 - b. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?
12. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming principal based upon your ethnicity?
13. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?
 - a. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

Interview two. The principals focused on research question #2: What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal? The principals shared perceptions and experiences of their role as a principal by answering the following questions:

1. Share with me as much as you like or can about your role as a principal.
2. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?
3. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?
4. How do you perceive others, and by others I mean the majority culture, view you as a principal?
5. As a Latina principal, do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently than your non-Latina peers?
6. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?
7. As a Latina principal, what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices?
8. As a Latina principal, have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

Interview three. The principals focused on research question #3: What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females? The principals shared their perceptions and experiences of their career path by answering the following questions:

1. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.
2. How many Latina principals are in your school district?
3. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?
4. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?
5. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experience, or observe in others as you worked in school principalship?
6. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?
7. Due to your culture and ethnicity, were there any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

Pilot Study

The pilot study proved to be extremely beneficial. It provided an opportunity to become familiar with, and reflect on, the complexities of the interviewing process. A principal from an elementary school in Central Florida volunteered to participate in the pilot study. No special selection process was implemented for this principal to participate in the pilot study.

After a ten-minute presentation of the study, the principal accepted the invitation to participate in the study without trepidation. The principal scheduled all three interviews within two weeks apart. All interviews were held at the principal's office.

To capture the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals, the following three research questions directed the form and content of the pilot study.

1. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?
2. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?
3. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

At the end of each interview, a five to ten minute debriefing took place to analyze and discuss any evidence of inadequacy in the interview process. The following was an example of questions asked of the principal:

- Were the questions clear enough?
- Was there a good flow to the questions?
- Did any question make you feel uncomfortable?
- Would you remove any question?
- How were the researcher's interviewing techniques?
- Do you have any recommendations for the interviewer?
- Was the time frame comfortable for you?

There were neither key communication problems nor evidence of inadequacy in the pilot study. However, the following issues needed attention:

- Time frame – The first dealt with the 90-minute time frame for each interview. The pilot principal had great reservations with the time allocated for the interviews. She wanted to aim for only 60 minutes for each interview instead of the 90 minutes proposed in the study. The study did show that 90 minutes for each interview was not necessary and that each interview took approximately 45 to 60 minutes.
- Flexibility – Principals are extremely busy educators fielding dozens of problems throughout the day. It was intensely true when the principal in the pilot school was interrupted constantly and each interruption was considered critical to office personnel. This was great preparation for future interviews. For example, in one school the principal informed me that a fire drill was scheduled for that morning and we would have to participate in it. Another Latina principal was called to a district function just before the interview was to take place, and the researcher had to accompany her to the function and the interview resumed after the event.
- Communication – The principal did mention that before the first interview began, the interviewer did not take the necessary time to build a relationship with the interviewee. This was well noted since building rapport or establishing an informal relationship fosters positive interaction with the participant; an integral piece of the interviewing process. The researcher needed to do some kind of initial question, thought, or ice breaker that would encourage candid conversation to make both principal and the researcher comfortable with one another.

- Rephrasing questions – There was only one question that the Latina Principal had problems understanding the question and this allowed the researcher to revise the question.

Several positive comments about the questions and the interview process were shared with the researcher. Examples of some statements made by the principal during our debriefing were,

- “The questions are in good order because it led from one thing to another and that is good...it flows and that helps.”
- “Great questions.”
- “I think you need to work on the question about stereotypes. Make it a little clearer. Maybe some type of leading information.”
- “I like the way you clarified that other question about the Latina principals – that clarification helped.”
- “It seems as we were having a conversation - It flows very well.”

The interviews were tape recorded to preserve the word of the participant. The principal reviewed and approved the interview transcripts before the analyses of any data collected. All transcribed interviews were kept confidential.

Data Collection

Each principal participated in three separate interviews scheduled approximately two weeks apart. The following represented the three research questions that correlated with the three-interview structure. These research questions were generated to assist in gathering information that speaks to the basic research question, What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Interview One - What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal? The first interview established the context of the participants' experiences and perceptions on how they became a principal. The questions used allowed the principals to reflect on and share stories about their experiences and perceptions.

Interview Two - What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal? The second interview allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurred. Interview Three - What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females? The third interview encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience held for them.

Before any in-depth analysis of the transcribed interviews took place, all three interviews with Latina principals were completed. Following this procedure deterred from imposing meaning from each individual interview. The feedback from the principals allowed them the option to delete, change, or add to the transcriptions. In other words, each principal reviewed and provided feedback to the researcher after each interview.

At the start and the end of each interview, the principals were reminded that interviews would be transcribed and emailed to them for review. Once transcribed, the principals emailed changes, recommendations, or clarifications of what they had read.

This process was followed after each interview and with each principal, yet not one principal made any recommendations for the researcher or requested that any changes be made to the transcripts. One principal made a phone request that the transcripts to be emailed again since the original transcripts were misplaced and she wanted to have her copies of the transcribed interviews.

Another principal emailed asking for clarification on the usage of initials on the transcriptions. The principal was reminded that initials referred to people's names and due to confidentiality and anonymity, full names were removed from the transcripts. Once the explanation was given, the principal remembered that omitting names was part of the procedure explained before and after each interview.

This procedure took approximately two weeks to complete and was completed before the next interview occurred. After all interviews were transcribed, returned to the principal for feedback, and feedback applied to the transcription, the next step was coding; to begin breaking down and conceptualizing a sentence or a paragraph and giving each discrete incident, idea, or event a name – something that stands for or represents a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The data collected from each of the interviews were kept confidential and the results were reported in aggregated terms. The researcher ensured that names, location of work, county, school, or any other leading information were omitted from the transcribed data. All interview tapes and transcribed interviews were well organized and filed in a secure location. For added security, all interviews were also saved on the computer and a computer flash drive.

Data Analysis

Major and secondary themes charts. Guba and Lincoln (1981) provide the following four suggestions for the procedure of coding and developing categories when analyzing data:

- The frequency of which something arises.
- The audience may determine what is important.
- Categories stand out because of their uniqueness.
- Categories may reveal areas of inquiry otherwise not recognized.

These suggestions provided the foundation needed to begin searching for common themes or patterns among the answers to the interview questions. Using color markers, the researcher began going through the verbiage looking for key words, key phrases, and key sentences to determine themes that are highly relevant to the research questions.

Some questions that were considered to assist with the labeling were:

- What is the subject of the marked passage?
- Are there words or phrases that seem to describe them?
- Is there a word that suggests a category?

- How often does a word or phrase occur throughout the answer?

Once the data were analyzed and interpreted, categories emerged and common themes unfolded, providing insights into the perceptions and experiences of the Hispanic females principals. Charts provided an effective means of organizing all themes.

Themes were selected based on frequency and placed from highest to lowest. Frequency was determined by the number of times a principal mentioned a word, phrase, or a sentence. The first number of the frequency represented the number of responses out of eight possible responses. For example, a frequency number of 6/8 means that six of the eight principals interviewed mentioned or stated the same thought or focused on the same point. A frequency number of 8/8 signified that all eight principals mentioned the theme.

A general chart was developed but not displayed. This chart's purpose was to help organize all the themes and assisted with the arrangement of data that would be shared or displayed in the major themes charts as well as in the secondary themes charts. This eliminated redundant information. All themes with frequencies of 8/8 to 1/8 were organized in this chart.

The purpose of the major themes chart was to organize and share themes considered as major themes based on the frequency of which something came up in the interviews. Themes with a frequency of 8/8 to 4/8 were considered as major themes and exhibited in the major themes charts.

The purpose of the secondary themes charts was to organize and share themes that were considered as secondary once the themes emerged. All themes with a frequency of 3/8 to 2/8 were organized and displayed in these charts.

Categories with a frequency of 1/8 were reviewed to determine if there were any unique statements or some special incident that needed to be reported that could provide special insight into the study. These themes were listed only on the general chart.

Themes in the major and secondary themes charts were color coded only for organizational purposes. This helped to facilitate their location within the transcribed interviews.

The following themes charts reflect the responses given by eight Latina administrators within the context of the following basic research question: What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Each Latina administrator participated and responded to the three research questions that correlated with the three-interview structure. Each principal was interviewed three separate times and each interview generated two charts, a major themes chart and a secondary themes chart.

Research Question #1 (Interview #1) – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on how they became a principal?

Research Question #2 (Interview #2) – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on their role as a principal?

Research Question #3 (Interview #3) – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Table 4

Major Themes Chart for Research Question #1 (Interview #1)

What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
1			
Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know about you.	8/8 – Latinas mentioned their place of birth	8/8 – Latinas mentioned why and how they came to live in Florida	7/8 – Latinas shared about their educational career paths and experiences getting to the principalship
2			
When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?	8/8 – Latinas knew that one day she wanted to be a principal	5/8 – Latinas held positions outside of classroom when they decided they wanted to be a principal	
3			
What was your motivation in becoming a principal?	8/8 – Latinas referred to individual motivation to becoming a principal		
4			
What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?	8/8 – Latinas mentioned that an administrator or principal influenced them - pink	4/8 – Latinas mentioned that a family member influenced them - blue (grandmother, husband, mother)	
5			
How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?	8/8 – Latinas said that the parents were very supportive - peach	4/8 – Latinas said the husband was very supportive - lilac	
6			
Did you have a role model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?	6/8 – Latinas said they had an educator that was a role model - pink		
7			
As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?	8/8 – Latinas expressed that they felt the system was very supportive - red		

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
8			
What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?	8/8 - Latinas held different perceptions of the principalship		
9			
Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?	8/8 – Latinas stated that they will not discourage Latinas to go into administration - red	5/8 – Latinas stated, Yes felt their prestige changed with the Latino community - blue	
10			
Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.	6/8 – Latinas felt that their ethnic background was an asset - red		
11			
Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?	4/8 – Latinas felt they were placed at a school with a lot of Latinas - red	4/8 – Latinas felt that they were not place at a school with a high number of Latinas – blue	
12			
What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?	7/8 – Latinas felt they had no preconceived limitations - purple	6/8 – Latinas made a statement that they had no doubt that they could do the job of a principal	
13			
What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had In acquiring your position?	8/8 –Latinas definitely believe English Language mastery played a major role in acquiring the principalship – blue	8/8 – Latinas did not have a Spanish accent – red	4/8-Latinas believed that people that speak with an accent are not valued - peach

Note. Themes for each question are placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 4. Major Themes Chart for Research Question #1 (Interview #1) illustrates themes related to the research question #1: What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal? This chart's two parts organized the interview questions and the themes that emerged for each question. The interview questions are on the left hand side of the chart and the themes are listed across from each question. The chart has 13 questions listed and 37 themes placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequencies.

For example, question #1–Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know–holds the following themes: Latinas mentioned place of birth (8/8); Latinas mentioned why they came to live in Florida (8/8); and Latinas mentioned how they moved through their career paths leading to the principalship (8/8).

Themes were placed across the chart based on the highest number of responses to lowest with the frequency ranging from 8/8 to 4/8 responses. According to Seidman (1998), the number of people who mention something or the frequency with which something arises in the data indicates an important dimension. For example, a response of 8/8 means that all eight of the Latinas interviewed responded the same. A response of 4/8 means that four of the Hispanic female principals out of eight responded the same.

Some themes that emerged from research question #1 were:

- They always wanted to be a principal.
- Their parents and family were very supportive.
- A principal or administrator influenced them.
- They had an educator that was a role model or a mentor.

These themes indicated how principals perceived their family members' sacrificial support of their endeavors. Family members provided the emotional and physical means essential for the Latinas to move forward in pursuing the principalship. They also stated that an educator, whom they either worked with or knew well, influenced them to become a principal. Some of these educators became role models or mentors for the Latina principals.

Table 5

Secondary Themes Chart for Research Question #1 (Interview #1)

What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
1 Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know about you.			
2 When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?	2/8 – Latinas felt the present administration wasn't doing a good job – blue		
3 What was your motivational in becoming a principal?	2/8 – Latinas stated that being in charge/authority /influence motivated them - orange	2/8 – Latinas stated that helping students and making a difference motivated them – blue	
4 What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?	2/8 – Latinas stated that either colleagues or teachers influenced them to be a principal – purple	2/8 – Latinas stated that impacting students in the system influenced them to be a principal – orange	
5 How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals	2/8 – Latinas mention their children were very supportive – green		
6 Did you have a role model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?	3/8 – Latinas said they had a Latina role model – red	3/8 –Latinas said that they had a Non-Latina role model – green	2/8- Latinas stated that educators of other ethnicities were their role-models -purple
7 As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?			

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
8 What were your perceptions of the principalship before one?	2/8 –Latinas perceptions of a principal was of being in charge of every-thing – red	2/8 – Latinas thought being a principal was going to be easy – pink	
9 Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?	3/8 – Latinas stated that their status changed in the educational community – green	3/8 – Latinas stated that there was no change in status or with the Latinas/os colleagues – red	
10 Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.	2/8 – Latinas feel that their ethnic background was a limitation – green		
11 Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?			
12 What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?			
13 What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?			

Note. Themes for each question are placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 5. Secondary Themes Chart for Research Question #1 (Interview #1)

illustrates secondary themes that emerged relating to the research question: What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

Questions for the interviews are listed on the left-hand side of the chart and secondary themes are listed across the chart from highest to lowest frequencies. The frequency range for secondary themes range from 3/8 to 2/8 in responses.

The frequency range covered three out of eight possible responses to two out of eight possible responses. Even though the frequency 3/8 and 2/8 were considered low, according to Seidman (1998) people who mention something or the frequency with which something arises in the data indicates an important dimension, therefore secondary themes were considered when analyzing and interpreting the data.

Secondary themes were not ignored or considered insignificant when the data were analyzed. It was important to organize and display secondary themes such as:

- Either colleagues or teachers influenced them to be a principal.
- They had a Latina role model.
- Their status changed in the educational community.

Table 6

Major Themes Chart for Research Question #2 (Interview #2)

What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
1 Share with me about your role as a principal	8/8 – Latinas expressed different feelings and experiences to their role as principal		
2 What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina Principal?	8/8 – Latinas shared gratifying experiences - yellow	4/8 – Latinas stated that the most gratifying experiences are the connections with the Hispanic population: teachers, parents, community	
3 Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal?	8/8 – Latinas indicated that that they felt they were qualified or capable of doing the job – blue	5/8 – Latinas said no self-imposed obstacles	
4 How do you perceive others (majority culture) view you?	5/8 – Latinas shared positive comments on how others view them		
5 As a Latina Principal do you perceive you deal with situations differently than your non-Latina peers	5/8 – Latinas stated that the influence of their culture was a major factor in dealing with situations differently – blue		
6 Do you feel you have additional pressures to improve your job or role performance as a Latina principal?	7/8 – Latinas stated that they feel additional pressures to perform – red		
7 As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices?	5/8 – Latinas stated multiple experiences they feel are based on prejudices		

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
7			
As a Latina principal, have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?	5/8 – Latinas stated that they did not have any hindrance experiences from Latina colleagues		

Note. Themes for each question are placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 6. Major Themes Chart for Research Question #2 (Interview #2) illustrates major themes that emerged for research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?

This chart follows the same organizational pattern found in the secondary themes chart for research question #2. Questions for the interview are listed on the left-hand side of the chart and major themes are listed across the chart ranging from highest to lowest frequencies. The frequency range for secondary themes is 8/8 to 4/8 responses.

The chart organized themes from the disaggregated data. How Hispanic female principals viewed their role as a principal was the focus. Interestingly, the Latina principals expressed various perceptions of the role of a principal. They also expressed that working with children and making connections with the Hispanic population is most gratifying in their role as a school principal. It was expressed by all eight principals that they felt they were they were qualified or capable of doing the job of a principal.

Latina principals also felt that they had additional pressures to perform and that they deal with situations differently than non-Latinas.

Table 7

Secondary Themes Chart for Research Question #2 (Interview #2)

What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
1			
Share with me about your role as a principal.			
2			
What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina Principal?	2/8 – Latinas stated that being a role model to students/girls and parents is gratifying – purple	2/8 – Latinas stated that working with children-seeing success is gratifying – blue	
3			
Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal?	3/8 – Latinas stated that Yes, there were self-imposed obstacles		
4			
How do you perceive others (majority culture) view you?	2/8 – Latinas focused on negative comments related to how others view them – red		
5			
As a Latina Principal, do you perceive you deal with situations differently than your non-Latina peers?	3/8 – Latinas stated that they didn't know whether non-Latinas dealt with situation differently – red		
6			
Do you feel you have additional pressures to improve your job or role performance as a Latina principal?			
7			
As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices?	3/8 – Latinas stated that they did not have experiences based on prejudices – purple		

Questions	Themes		
	1	2	3
8			
As a Latina principal, have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?		3/8 – Latinas stated they had hindrance experiences with other Latina colleagues.	

Note. Themes for each question are placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 7. Secondary Themes Chart for Research Question #2 (Interview #2)

illustrates secondary themes that emerged for research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?

This chart follows the same organizational pattern found in the secondary themes chart for research question #1. Questions for interview #2 are listed on the left-hand side of the chart and secondary themes are listed across the chart ranging from highest to lowest frequencies. The frequency range for secondary themes is 3/8 to 2/8 responses.

The principals reflected on perceptions that dealt with self-imposed obstacles and experiences based on prejudices. They also expressed that they had experienced some hindrances with other Latinas who wanted to climb the career ladder and possibly viewed them as obstacles. Latina principals were not aware or did not know whether non-Latinas dealt with situation differently than they did. Other secondary themes that evolved through the interviews focused on how the Latinas felt others viewed them and that to be known as a role model for students and parents pleased them.

Table 8

Major Themes Chart for Research Question #3 (Interview #3)

What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Questions	Themes			
	1	2	3	4
1				
Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas	5/8- Latinas said they chose the principalship to provide more of an impact beyond the classroom			
2				
How many Latinas principals are in your school district?	8/8- Latinas did not know how many how many Latina Principals were in their school district			
3				
Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she helped you?	6/8 – Latinas did have some type of mentoring from a Latina or a Latina mentor			
4				
Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?	5/8 – Latinas did not feel there were any self-imposed obstacles			
5				
What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?	8/8 -Latinas expressed they dealt with some form of stereotypes as a principal			
6				
What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?	8/8 -Latinas expressed that they can contribute an overall sense of: being a role model, a mentor, encourager, and supporter as a principal			

Questions	Themes			
	1	2	3	4
7				
Due to your culture ethnicity, were there any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latinas?		5/8 - Latinas stated that they did perceived obstacles in their career paths that were different from non-Latinas		

Note. Themes for each question are placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 8. Major Themes Chart for Research Question #3 (Interview #3) illustrates major themes that emerged for the research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

This chart follows the same organizational pattern found in the major themes charts for research question #1 and question #2. Questions for the interviews are listed on the left-hand side of the chart and major themes are listed across the chart ranging from highest to lowest frequencies. The frequency range for secondary themes is 8/8 to 4/8 responses.

The chart illustrates major themes that emerged from the interview data that focused on the Latina's career path and how it may have differed from non-Latinas. Themes that emerged were that the Latinas wanted to provide a greater impact beyond the classroom and that they were sometimes stereotyped as principals. They also perceived that they had obstacles in their career paths that were different from the non-Latina principals.

When asked how many Hispanic principals were in their districts, they expressed uncertainty and gave an approximation. They expressed that they are unique in that they can contribute as role models, mentors, encouragers, and supporter to aspiring principals.

Table 9

Secondary Chart for Research Question #3 - (Interview #3)

What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Questions	Themes			
	1	2	3	4
1				
Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas	3/8 – Latinas believe they are good role-model for kids and parents	2/8- Latinas believe that Latinas are underrepresented when it comes to administration.	2/8 – Latinas believe that Principalship is a great profession	
2				
How many Latinas principals are in your school district?				
3				
Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she helped you?	2/8- Latinas stated they never had a Latina mentor them or a Latina mentor			
4				
Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?	3/8 – Latinas felt there were self-imposed obstacles			
5				
What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?				
6				
What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?				

Questions	Themes			
	1	2	3	4
7 Do to your culture ethnicity where there any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latinas?		3/8– Latinas did not perceive any obstacles in their career paths that were different from the non-Latina		

Note. Themes for each question are placed across the chart based on highest to lowest frequency.

Chart 9. Secondary Themes Chart for Research Question #3 (Interview #3)

illustrates secondary themes that emerged from the research question, What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

This chart follows the same organizational pattern found in the secondary themes charts for research question #1 and question #2. Questions are listed on the left-hand side of the chart and secondary themes are listed across the chart ranging from highest to lowest frequencies. The frequency range for secondary themes is 3/8 to 2/8 responses.

Peer review for major and secondary themes charts. A USF doctoral cohort of approximately ten members, joined by the Chair of the doctoral committee, was approached to explore the possibility of participating as peer mediators, also known as jury of experts, for this study. Members of this group agreed to study all three sets of charts to validate themes and patterns used by the researcher. It was important to determine if the charts provided a clear and concise blueprint for the themes generated for each research question.

The jury of experts participated in a short presentation of the procedure for generating the themes and how they were organized. Following the presentation, much discussion took place on the theme selection process, themes chart organization, and allowed time for questions and answers. This process provided members of the group with an in-depth understanding of the process used and how themes were generated.

Each chart was examined individually and when needed, the peer reviewers referred to the principals' transcribed interviews. For example, when the term "token" Hispanic was brought up for discussion, in order to clarify or augment the group's understanding of the term, the researcher referred to the transcribed interviews to read the principals' experiences or perceptions related to the term "token" Hispanic. Another peer reviewer questioned if there were any outliers that needed to be discussed, and yet another mentioned how the principals did not agree on what their perceptions were on the role of a principal.

The information gleaned from the group's discussion enhanced the validity of the study. Careful attention to the study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, interpreted, and the way in which the findings were presented, increased the validity of this study.

Summary of major and secondary themes. The process of organizing themes generated another set of charts that illustrate how the major and secondary themes were categorized and combined. These charts were labeled as major and secondary and they show themes with the highest frequency closest to each research question.

Table 10

Major Themes Chart (Summary)

Research Question #1 (Interview #1) What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?	Research Question #2 (Interview #2) What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?	Research Question #3 (Interview #3) What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?
8/8 – Latinas stated that their parents were very supportive of their educational goals	8/8 – Latinas stated different opinions of the Principal role – no one agreed on what the perception of the principal's role is.	8/8 – Latinas responded that they were not sure how many Latina principals were in their district
8/8 – Latinas stated that the district's support system was effective	8/8 – Latinas responded to a difference of how Latinas perceived others (majority culture) view them	8/8 – Latinas expressed they dealt with some form of stereotypes
8/8 – Latinas did not have a Spanish accent	7/8 – Latinas agreed that they had additional pressures to improve job performance	8/8 – Latinas expressed that they can contribute an overall sense of: being a role model, a mentor, encourager, supporter
8/8 – Latinas held different perceptions of the principalship	5/8 – Latinas stated that there were no self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal. Those that said yes did not state that they felt they were not qualified or capable of doing the job	6/8 – Latinas stated that they had a Latina "informal" mentor
8/8 – Latinas stated that mastery of the English language definitely played a role in getting the principalship.	5/8 – Latinas stated that they deal with situations differently than non-Latinas. It is a "culture" factor when dealing with situations differently.	5/8 – Latinas said they chose the principalship to provide more of an impact beyond the classroom.
8/8 – Latinas do not discourage Latinas to go into administration	5/8 – Latinas expressed that they did not experience any hindrances from their Latinas colleagues. The word supportive was evident three times in the answers.	5/8 – Latinas stated that they did perceive obstacles in their career that were different from non-Latinas
8/8 – mentioned that an administrator or principal influenced them	5/8 – Latinas expressed they have experienced prejudices.	5/8 – Latinas did not feel there were any self-imposed obstacles.
8/8 – Latinas knew that one day she wanted to be a principal	4/8 – Latinas stated that the most gratifying experiences are the connections with the Hispanic population: Teachers, parents, community	
8/8- Latinas mentioned their place of birth		
8/8 – Latinas referred to individual motivation to becoming a principal.		
7/8 – Latinas talked about their educational career paths and their experiences		

Research Question #1 (Interview #1)	Research Question #2 (Interview #2)	Research Question #3 (Interview #3)
What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?	What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?	What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?
6/8 – Latinas said they had an educator that was a role-models		
5/8 – Latinas did not perceive that there status or prestige change when they became a principal		
5/8 – Latinas were already in positions outside of the classroom when the Latinas decided to pursue the principalship		
5/8 – Latinas perceived their status or prestige changed with Latinas/os		
4/8 – Latinas stated that family member influenced them to pursue the principalship (grandmother, husband, mother		
4/8 – Latinas said the husband was very supportive of their educational goals		
4/8 – Latinas felt they were placed at a school with a lot of Latinas/Latino students		
4/8 – Latinas felt that they were not place at a school with a high number of Latinas		
4/8 – Latinas believed that people that speak with an accent are not valued		
4/8 – Latinas stated that their principals influenced them to pursue the principalship		
4/8 – Latinas stated that district administrators influenced them to pursue the principalship		
4/8 – Latinas agreed that their ethnicity was an asset in getting a principalship		
4/8 – Latinas had some preconceived limitations to becoming a principal		
4/8 – Latinas did not have any preconceived limitations to becoming a principal		

Note. Themes for each question are placed below the research question based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 10. Major Themes Chart (Summary) provides the themes for each of the research questions. The chart is divided into three columns, one for each research question. Each research question correlates with the first, second, or third interview. For example, the first column illustrates research question #1 and immediately below, the reader will find interview #1 within parentheses. This should help the reader understand which research questions correlates with which interview.

Each column was labeled with research question #1, research question #2, and research question #3. Responses given within the context of the three general research questions are listed under each column. Every theme listed in the first column relates to the responses given to the first research question – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on how they became a principal?

Themes listed in the second column relate to the responses given to the second research question – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on their role as a principal? In the third column, everything listed relates to the responses given to the third research question – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Frequency of responses are an indication of an important dimension (Seidman, 1998), themes were placed below each research question based on response frequency going from highest (8/8) to the lowest (4/8).

Table 11

Secondary Themes Chart (Summary)

Research Question #1 (Interview #1) What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?	Research Question #2 (Interview #2) What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?	Research Question #3 (Interview #3) What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?
3/8 – Latinas agreed that their ethnicity was both an asset and a limitation to getting a principalship	3/8 – Latinas stated that Yes, there were self-imposed obstacles	3/8 – Latinas said that they chose the principalship to be a good role-model for kids and parents
3/8 – Latinas stated that Non Hispanic Educators served as role-models	3/8 – Latinas stated they had hindrance experiences with other Latinas	3/8 – Latinas did not perceive any obstacles different from the non-Latina
3/8 – Latinas stated that Latina educators served as role-models	3/8 – Latinas that stated that they didn't know whether non-Latinas dealt with situation differently	3/8 – Latinas felt there were self-imposed obstacles
2/8 – Latinas didn't realize the amount of responsibility of the job	3/8 – Latinas stated that they did not have experiences based on prejudices	2/8 – Latinas stated that Latinas are underrepresented when it comes to administration.
2/8 – Latinas were motivated the to pursue the principalship to help students/make a difference	3/8 – Latinas stated that they did not have experiences based on prejudices	2/8 – Latinas stated that principalship is a great profession
2/8 – Latinas perceived the principalship was going to be an easy job	2/8 – Latinas stated that being a role model to students/girls and parents is gratifying	2/8 – Latinas stated that they did not have a Latina Mentor
2/8 – Latinas stated that what motivated them to pursue the principalship was to be in charge/have authority /influence others	2/8 – Latinas stated that working with children- seeing success is gratifying	
2/8 – Latinas felt the present administration wasn't doing a good job		
2/8 – Latinas were concerned they were viewed as "token" Hispanic		

Note. Themes for each question are placed below the research question based on highest to lowest frequency.

Table 11. Secondary Themes Chart (Summary) provides the themes for the three research questions. The chart is divided into three columns, one for each research question. Each research question correlates with the first, second, or third interview. For example, the first column illustrates research question #1 and immediately below the

reader will find interview #1 within parentheses. This should help the reader understand which research questions correlates with which interview.

Each column is labeled with research question #1, research question #2, and research question #3. Responses given within the context of the three general research questions were listed under each column. Every theme listed in the first column relates to the responses given to the first research question - What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

Themes listed in the second column relate to the responses given to the second research question -What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal? In the third column, everything listed relates to the responses given to the third research question -What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Frequency of responses are an indication of an important dimension (Seidman, 1998), themes were placed below each research question based on response frequency going from highest (3/8) to the lowest (2/8).

Peer Review

The USF doctoral cohort of approximately ten members, joined by the Chair of the doctoral committee, participated as peer mediators, also known as jury of experts, to review the organization of the summary charts for major and secondary themes.

Members of this group viewed both charts to validate the themes and patterns utilized by the researcher. The charts provided a clear and concise blueprint of responses given within the context of the three general research questions.

Members of the cohort were asked to study the format of the charts, examine themes, and ultimately comment or question the development of the charts or the process used to generate themes. Some comments provided by the peer reviewers reflected on how the chart was developed and organized. Specifically, they wanted to know how the charts were formulated and what were the procedures used to generate the charts. They also questioned what “aha” did I find with the results of the interviews. The discussion provided a deeper understanding and validated the procedures used to generate and organize the themes.

Central Themes

A behavior construct is a broad construct that can be made of lots of restricted or limited constructs. Some of the constructs are very essential to the meaning of the broader construct. Other constructs are also relevant to the broad construct but are more secondary themes, helping to round out the answer to the behavior construct. Still other constructs may be partially relevant or partially not relevant to the behavior construct.

In studying the themes generated through the interviews, it was essential to question which of these themes make up the central meaning of each research question. Some themes naturally emerged first, because they seemed to be more critical to understanding the research question. These themes are referred to as major themes and therefore, were discussed first when sharing about the themes.

Other themes were found to be secondary in nature and were discussed next when sharing about the themes. Since the themes were selected based on how the themes relate to the research questions, this process did not place themes in order of frequency from highest to lowest.

Research Question #1 (Interview #1). What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

For research question #1, the following themes were identified to be closest to the research question and are essential to the meaning of how the interviewees perceived that they became a principal (themes are not placed in order by response frequencies):

1. Interviewees stated that their parents were supportive of their educational goals.
2. Interviewees mentioned that an administrator or principal influenced them.
3. Interviewees stated that educators served as role models to the Latinas.
4. Interviewees always knew they wanted to be a principal.
5. Interviewees were already in positions outside of the classroom when they decided to pursue the principalship.
6. Interviewees did not have any preconceived limitations to becoming a principal.

Themes that are secondary to the construct help to round out the answer to the behavior construct. The following themes were identified to support how the interviewees perceived that they became a principal:

1. Interviewees stated that the district's support system was effective.

2. Interviewees stated that mastery of the English language definitely played a role in getting the principalship.
3. Interviewees stated that family members influenced them to pursue the principalship (grandmother, husband, and mother).

Research Question #2 (Interview #2). What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?

For research question #2, the following themes were identified to be closest to the research question and are essential to the meaning of the interviewee's perceptions of her role as a principal (themes were not placed in order by response frequencies):

1. Interviewees stated different opinions of the principal's role – no one agreed on what is the role of the principal.
2. Interviewees stated that there were no self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal. They stated they felt qualified or capable of doing the job.
3. Interviewees agreed that they had additional pressures to improve job performance.
4. Interviewees stated that they deal with situations differently than non-Latinas. It is a "culture" factor when dealing with situations differently.

Themes that are secondary to the construct help to round out the answer to the behavior construct. The following themes were identified to support the Latina's perceptions of her role as a principal:

1. Interviewees expressed they have experienced prejudices.
2. Interviewees stated that the most gratifying experiences are the connections with the Hispanic population: teachers, parents, community.

Research Question #3 (Interview #3). What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

For research question #3, the following themes were identified to be closest to the research question and are essential to the meaning of how the interviewees perceived their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females (themes were not placed in order by response frequencies):

1. Interviewees expressed that they can contribute an overall sense of being a role model, mentor, encourager, and supporter.
2. Interviewees stated that they had an informal Latina mentor- the mentor was not assigned to the interviewee by the district.
3. Interviewees stated that they did experience obstacles in their career that were different from non-Latinas.
4. Interviewees did not feel there were any self-imposed obstacles.

Themes that are secondary to the construct help to round out the answer to the behavior construct. The following themes were identified to support the perceptions of the interviewee's career path and how it might differ from that of non-Latinas:

1. Interviewees said they chose the principalship to provide more of an impact beyond the classroom.
2. Interviewees expressed that they dealt with some form of stereotypes.

Peer Review of Central Themes

The cohort group once again participated as peer mediators or jury of experts for the development of the central themes. Members of this group agreed to study all three sets of central themes to validate the themes and the procedure utilized by the researcher to generate the central themes. It was important to determine if the major themes selected were essential to the meaning of the broader construct and if the secondary themes selected helped to round out the answer to each research question.

The reviewers asked for clarifications on some answers to questions, such as, why a father was not supportive of the daughter's career change, and why a Latina principal expressed concern about being placed at a school with a large Hispanic student population. Feedback provided from the group focused on the theory of self-efficacy and how it applied to the interviewees. One member questioned, "How would this study differ in Miami or Lower California," encouraging to continue researching this topic in different regions of the nation with different Hispanic cultures. The information gleaned from the group's discussion enhanced the validity of the study.

Interpretation of the Data

Interpretation of the data is a time to make sense of the perceptions and experiences of the Latina principal. This information was categorized by themes based on frequency of responses. Once categories of themes were charted, it was essential to begin the inquiry process to determine what was learned from this process.

Seidman (1998) assisted in formulating questions to use in the interpretation of the data:

- What connective themes are there among the experiences of the participants interviewed?
- How do I understand and explain these connections?
- What do I understand now that I did not understand before the interviews?
- What surprises have there been?
- What confirms previous instincts?
- How have the interviews been consistent with the literature? How inconsistent? How have they gone beyond?

The last question used in the interpretation of data was as follows: What meaning, or what was learned, from this work? The answer to this question may lead to topics or themes that require further research, or may result in proposing connections among events, structures, roles, and social forces in peoples' lives.

Summary

This study focused on the perceptions and experiences of Latina principals in schools with K-12 student population. Eight Latina administrators were interviewed. Five of the eight administrators serve as school principals.

Three of the eight administrators interviewed were former school principals; however, they currently serve as district administrators. Seven of the eight Latina principals interviewed currently serve or were former principals of a K-5 school. Only one of the eight served as a former High School principal. All Latina principals work and live in the central part of Florida.

A pilot study was conducted before the interviews took place. An elementary school Latina principal agreed to be part of the pilot study. Conducting a pilot study was essential for this study. The data gleaned from the pilot study provided significant information required to assist in revising the research method as well as eliminating biases as a researcher. Several positive comments about the interview process were shared with the researcher. The pilot study concluded that there were neither key communication problems nor evidence of inadequacy. However, the following minor issues needed attention:

- Time frame
- Flexibility
- Communication
- Rephrasing questions

All issues resulting from the pilot study were reviewed and changes made prior to beginning with the remainder of the interviews. Since no major setbacks were evident with the pilot study, the principal's interviews were included as part of the remaining Hispanic female administrators' interviews.

Once the pilot study was completed, the researcher scheduled interviews with the Hispanic principals. In spite of their hectic schedules, the principals expressed eagerness to participate in the interviews. Each one expressed a sense of pride to be part of this study. They recognized the value this study brings to Latinas aspiring to become principals.

All principals were interviewed three separate times with interviews length ranging from forty-five to sixty minutes. All interviews took place at the principals' schools or at their school district office. All interviews were tape recorded to capture the principal's full meaning of their stories.

The interviews were transcribed within a two-period week. Once each interview was transcribed, the researcher emailed it to the corresponding principal. Each principal reviewed their transcriptions in order to make changes, provide additional information, and clarify information presented in the transcriptions. This process was carried out by means of emailing; however, the principals were also encouraged to discuss the transcribed interviews via telephone, if they found this process easier. Since no corrections, deletions, or clarifications were requested by the principals, the interview transcriptions were emailed to the principals for review.

The data collected from each of the interviews were kept confidential and the results were reported in aggregated terms. The researcher ensured that names, location of work, school, or any other leading information were omitted from the transcribed data. In addition, all interview tapes and transcribed interviews were well organized and filed in a secure location. For added security, all interviews were also saved on the computer and computer flash drive.

Charts were created to help organize and communicate themes that are both comprehensive and informative. Response frequency is an indication of an important dimension and was used to determine major and secondary themes. Every research question generated two charts; a major themes chart and a secondary themes chart. The major themes chart for each research question cataloged all the major themes based on response frequency going from highest (8/8) to the lowest (4/8). The secondary themes chart for each research question cataloged all secondary themes based on response frequency going from the highest (3/8) to the lowest (2/8).

Peer reviewers were approached to study the format of the charts and to examine the themes. The information gleaned from the group's discussions was used to enhance the validity of the study.

Once the peer group approved the researcher's themes, a major themes chart and a secondary themes chart were developed to organize and list the themes. The charts were divided into three columns labeled with research question #1, #2, and #3. Thus, in the major themes chart, themes listed in the first column relate to the first research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal? Themes listed in the second column relate to the second research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal? In the third column, themes listed relate to the third research question, What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

A behavior construct is a broad construct that can be made of lots of restricted constructs. Some constructs were essential to the meaning of the broader construct, therefore were considered first when discussing the broader construct. These constructs were considered in this study as major themes. Other themes are relevant yet secondary in nature. Secondary themes supported or rounded out the meaning of major themes.

It was essential to question which themes make up the central meaning for each of the three research questions. Placing themes in order based upon response frequency was no longer necessary. What mattered was how significant or relevant themes were to the research questions. Themes identified as major themes were discussed first.

Themes that emerged next were secondary themes. These themes were not essential to the research questions. They helped round out the answers to the research questions. Secondary themes were addressed and discussed after discussing major themes.

Interpretation of the data was not only to categorize themes, but a time to capture the thought of the Latina principals as they shared their perceptions and experiences as school principals. It was important to ask what meaning or what was learned from this work? The answer to this question may lead to topics or themes that require further research.

Chapter V - Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

During the last few decades a gradual but significant change in America's demographic composition has occurred. Hispanic students, many of them immigrants, have been absorbed in the nation's public schools, turning public institutions into multiracial, multicultural, and to some degree multilingual sites (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Yet, the representation of Hispanic female school leaders does not reflect the increase in the Hispanic student population (Manuel & Slate, 2003).

In this study, the Latina's perceptions of their opportunities and barriers encountered during their advancement may offer hope and inspiration to Latinas who aspire to be school principals. This study includes Hispanic females who have experienced rejection as well as those who quickly reached an administrative position. The use of interviews with Hispanic females may provide insights to possible reasons for the underrepresentation of Hispanic females in school administration.

Possible perceptions of tacit assumptions and beliefs held by the majority culture that may have kept Hispanic females from acquiring administrative positions could surface in the use of the interviews. In addition, perceptions regarding role theory or role conflict may shed some light on the Hispanic female in her leadership position.

Exploring the perceptions of their experiences of the role of the Hispanic female may provide explanations for the underrepresentation of Latinas.

Problem

America is presently facing demographic changes. The United States has entered the 21st century more diverse than ever before. It is estimated that by 2025 more than half the population will be made up of minorities, mainly Hispanics (Singer, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau News, 2008).

The Hispanic student population growth is already affecting the nation's education system. Schools are becoming more diverse. It is a crucial time for school leaders to invest in shaping our nation's future society. In light of the demographic changes and the important role of school leaders, what is stated in the literature that may provide in-depth information on the role of the Hispanic female principal and possibly increase their numbers in the K-12 public schools?

Women and Hispanic women add a different perspective to the study of leadership. To investigate the cultural accounts and success stories of Hispanic females in leadership may bring new dimensions and challenges to the patterns and theories that once described leadership (Banks, 2000).

Case studies may also provide insight on the expectations and behaviors of Latinas in educational leadership and may identify myths that create barriers that hinder the advancement of Latinas in school administration (Howard, 2001).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of the Hispanic female (Latina) principals by examining their perceptions and experiences as principals. Shakeshaft (1989) mentioned that historically, case studies usually center on the male principal or superintendent. Studies of Hispanic female principals center around the lives of African American female principals, consequently very little is known of the role of Hispanic females who occupy the position of principalship. Case studies, then, fill a gap in the body of literature that until recently provided a limited understanding of the lived experience of the Hispanic female educational leaders (Smulyan, 2000).

Information gleaned from lived experience of Hispanic female educational leaders can offer hope and inspiration to aspiring school leaders (Gardiner et al., 2000; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Howard, 2001; Smulyan, 2000). Presenting stories from Hispanic and Latino history can be beneficial, educational, therapeutic, and empowering. It was a means of communicating serious matters and hot topics of concern (Howard, 2001).

It was also a purpose of this study to identify their perceptions of barriers and possible solutions encountered during their advancement.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following basic research question:
What are the perceptions and meanings that Hispanic female administrators attach to their roles and experiences as principals?

Three research questions directed the form and content of this study:

1. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

2. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?
3. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Statement of Method

The method of study was qualitative. A qualitative approach allows for rich possibilities of inquiry that provide a clearer and more complex understanding of people's reported experiences and observations that can contribute to the topic of study (Suter, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Gall et al., 1996).

Qualitative research plays a discovery role. It focuses on the study of cases rather than of populations and samples (Gall et al., 1996; Suter, 2006). Case studies can focus on a single person or a single group, drawing conclusions only about that participant or group and only in a specific context. It is a form of inquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam, 1998). It relies on extensive data collection, usually over time, and can be used to capture rich descriptions and explanations of a phenomenon. There is no single way to conduct a case study and a combination of methods, such as structured and unstructured interviewing and direct observation, can be used.

Case studies are usually fascinating to read, can provide useful ideas within the description, and may also stimulate the reader to look at old problems in new ways. This study endeavored to interpret, illustrate, challenge, and expand views of the experiences of school administrators by vicariously seeing, hearing, and understanding the perceptions and experiences of eight Hispanic school administrators.

Gathering and Organizing the Data

All interviews were organized into three sets of interviews labeled: Interview One, Interview Two, and Interview Three. Each interview represented a research question. In other words, research question one correlated with interview one, research question two correlated with interview two, and research question three correlated with interview three. All three sets of interviews were tape recorded with the approval of the Latina principal in order to capture each principal's true words, feelings, and experiences.

All interviews were transcribed within the two-week time frame and before the next interview could take place. Each principal's transcribed interview was emailed providing an opportunity for review and approval of the transcripts. Once all interviews were completed, the data were organized to begin with the data interpretation.

Applying Guba and Lincoln's (1981) four suggested guidelines for developing categories, the researcher began searching for common themes or patterns among the answers to the interview questions. Using color markers, the researcher worked through the verbiage looking for key words, key phrases, key sentences that were highly relevant to the research question.

Some questions that were considered to assist with the labeling were:

- What is the subject of the marked passage?
- Are there words or phrases that seem to describe them?
- Is there a word that suggests a category?
- How often does a word or phrase occur throughout the answer?

Charts were created to help communicate themes that were both comprehensive and informative.

Every research question had three charts for developing categories or themes. The first chart cataloged all the general themes found when the data was aggregated. General themes surfaced based on Guba and Lincoln's (1981) four suggestions for developing categories. Themes were selected based on frequency and placed from highest to lowest. In addition, the themes were color coded to assist in locating the color themes highlighted in the transcribed interviews.

A behavior construct is a broad construct that can be made of lots of restricted or limited constructs. Some of the constructs are very essential to the meaning of the broader construct. These are known as major themes. Other constructs are also relevant to the broad construct but are more on the secondary side. These themes help round out the answer to the behavior construct. Still other constructs may be partially relevant or partially not relevant to the behavior construct.

In studying the themes generated through the interviews, it was essential to question which of these themes make up the central meaning of the research questions. Some themes naturally emerged first, because they seemed to be more critical to understanding the research question. This process does not place themes in order of frequency from highest to lowest.

Findings

Interpretation of the Data. Interpretation of the data did not let the categorized thematic excerpts or profiles speak for themselves. It went beyond this initial step to a more comprehensive one. It looked at themes generated through the interviews to question which of these themes make up the central meaning of the research questions. Which of these themes seemed to be more critical to understanding the research question?

The research questions became similar to a behavior construct, which is a broad construct that consists of lots of restricted or limited constructs. Some of these constructs are very essential to the meaning of a broader construct, yet other constructs, even though they are relevant, are more on the peripheral side, helping round out the answer to the behavior construct. Still other constructs were partially relevant or partially not relevant to the behavior construct.

To validate the categorized themes and the data interpretation, a group of peer-reviewers assessed the data after each interview and after each phase of interpretation to ensure that personal bias did not gain access into the categorizing of the themes.

Themes for research question #1 (interview #1). What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on how they became a principal?

Major Themes:

Supportive Family

Latinas stated that their parents and family members were supportive of their educational aspirations. Family support seemed to be of great importance for the Latinas. It was evident in what they said and how they expressed themselves that parental support was invaluable to them as they pursued their education. This support allowed them to reach their administrative goals and become principals.

Family connections are an integral part of a Latino's life. Family is important to Latinos and the eight principals interviewed were no exception when they shared experiences about their family. Family relationships seem to permeate their personal and professional life. One Latina principal stated, "They just don't understand...I think some people think that it is crazy (the support from the family) but I couldn't have done it without their help." Examples of activities family members did to support the Latina principals were cooked, cleaned, took care of the kids, proofread materials, and due to working long hours, called to make sure they were okay.

When the Latina principals spoke about their family and their family support, it was evident in their facial expressions that they spoke of something that emotionally affects them. They expressed with pride how supportive different members of their family, such as a mother, grandmother, husband, or children were and how that played a major role in shaping their career path in administration.

This finding agrees with the survey conducted by the American Educational Research Association, in which Gorena (1996) examined the perceptions of factors that positively influenced or hindered the advancement of Latinas to hold senior level

administrative positions in colleges or universities. The Latinas were asked to circle factors that they perceived might have positively influenced or hindered their career advancement. The factors that were considered to favorably influence advancement were the support of the family and spouses.

As the Latina principal shared about their family support, they spoke of family members individually, such as, my mother, my father, my husband, my children, my grandparents. One Latina stated, “I could not be who I am today if it were not for my mother and her support.” Another Latina principal firmly declared, “My family was 100 percent supportive!” Yet, another principal affirmed, “The principalship comes at a sacrifice and the sacrifice is experienced mostly by the family.”

One principal shared that her former husband was not supportive of her educational goals. She stated, “My husband at that time was not very supportive. He thought that going into administration was crazy because there was no money behind it.” She quickly affirmed that her current husband was totally the opposite. He encouraged her to pursue her administrative goals.

Another Latina principal relates her sad story of her father’s lack of support not for education, but because she decided to change her college major from engineering to education. She regretfully stated, “...my father did not speak to me for a couple of months – he really wanted me to go that other route (engineering). He felt that I had more to contribute in that area. It is not that he didn’t value education, but he felt it (engineering) had more prestige.”

Administrators Influenced Them To Become A Principal

Administrators or other principals influenced the Hispanic principals to pursue the principalship and also served as their role models. According to Wesson (1998), school administrators generally come from the ranks of teachers. The Latina principals interviewed came from the ranks of a teacher and most acknowledged that they chose administration as a continuation of their career path based on the influence of a principal or district administrator. The principals or district administrators were either male or female and White, African American, or Hispanic.

Principals and district administrators also served as role models for the Latina principals. The role models were male, female, White, African American, and Hispanic. One principal states, “Mrs. X always found ways to build me up outside of the classroom. Also a district administrator was always talking about my strengths and what it would take for me to really follow my dreams.”

Another Latina principal declared, “Mr. X is just a phenomenal leader and so is Dr. D and Dr. O, and at the end all of those people really mentored me throughout the process and mentored me...you know, honing my skills and seeing where I would best fit.”

No Preconceived Limitations

Latinas did not have any preconceived limitations to becoming a principal. The Latina principal’s self-perception of her ability to perform as an effective principal was not an issue for her in her role. She knew that she would do a great job as a principal. It was obvious that they had an educational and career goal in life, to become a school

principal. They were highly motivated and sought guidance from colleagues in the field to provide them with the information they needed to succeed.

They obtained the administrative position they were striving for while coping with the multitude of challenges or limitations other people imposed upon them. Why did they succeed? They succeeded because they refused to believe they would fail. It is apparent that the combination of action and absence of perceived limitations has allowed these women to reach one of their goals in life.

High Self- Efficacy

It appeared that a strong sense of self-efficacy was common among the Latina principals. Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy theory as, “people’s belief about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave.”

One of the conclusions in a study conducted by McCormick, Tanguma, and Lopez-Forment (2002) in which they extended self-efficacy to the leadership domains was that women reported significantly lower leadership self-efficacy than men.

This study’s conclusion could not be extended to Latino principals since they were not participants of this study, however low efficacy was not present when the Latina principals shared their feelings, thoughts, as well as experiences regarding their capabilities to successfully perform leadership tasks and overcome obstacles they confronted as Latina Principals.

It is important to understand that self-efficacy and self-confidence are not the same (Ketelle, 2005; McCormick et al., 2002). According to the authors, “self-confidence is a general sense of competence and has been considered a personal trait not subject to change.”

Statements that provide examples of self-efficacy are: “I didn’t have any limitations. According to me, I was O.K. Because I have always been assertive, I was a go-getter, and I could do this, you know. So, I never doubted myself on doing things. But you have to know yourself and what you can do.” Another gently states, “I don’t think I have any. You know I think that attitude is 90% of everything. I think I always go in and if there is something that I think I want to do and I can do and God takes me there and opens that door and I am going to be successful.” Yet another states, “You have to be sure of yourself to say whatever...I know what I am doing.” And another, “You focus on your vision and your goals...”

In spite of the Latinas self-efficacy, they expressed mixed feelings concerning placement at a school with a large Latino student population. Principals expressed that they were pleased to serve as a principal in a school with a large Latino student population. They deemed it both gratifying and rewarding, and a positive placement for both Latino as well as non-Latino students.

The Latina principals also believed that Latino parents benefited from the placement. They felt as though they were able to serve the parents in a unique way. One Latina principal says, “I just feel like I am an extension of this community.” Another stated, “I think that it is very important that when my parents walk in they feel at home.

That the person they need to communicate with...can speak their language and that makes them feel so much at ease – they are not trying to speak English.”

Just as the Latina principals share with ease about being the principal of a school with a large Latino population, they also expressed concern that it was not the only reason they were placed in a school. It was imperative to know that the main reason they were placed in a school was because they were the most qualified leader for the job.

Secondary Themes:

Wanted to be a Principal

Latina principals always knew they wanted to be a principal. Most of the Latinas were already in positions outside of the classroom when they decided to pursue the principalship. They pursued a resource position or their principal encouraged a move from a teaching position to work as a resource teacher.

In the resource positions, the Latinas encountered opportunities that exposed them to experience various administrative responsibilities. This motivated them to pursue and complete the states and county’s administrative requirements for the principalship. It seems that this step may be accepted as a movement up the career ladder for teachers aspiring to be a school administrator.

District’s Support System was Effective

Latinas acknowledged that the district’s support system was effective for them at different times during their career. One Latina stated, “I learned you just have to pick up the phone and call.” Another stated, “They have been like a family to me.” Hackney

(1998) referred to this as the organization meeting the women's need for validation, inclusion and authenticity.

English Language Important

Latinas stated that mastery of the English language definitely played a role in getting the principalship. The Latina principals believed that mastery of the English language plays a critical role. A principal sums it up by stating, "You can't be a principal without being able to read, write and speak in an educated fashion, professionally."

Themes for research question #2 (interview #2). What are the Hispanic females' perceptions on their role as a principal?

Major Themes:

Different Opinions of Role of a Principal

Latina principals stated different opinions of the principal's role. Latina principals did not have a common perception of the role of the principal. Everyone expressed a different concept of the role. This goes along the lines with the literature that states that approximately 130 definitions of the term leadership exists (Burns, 1978; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003).

Latina principals' perceptions of the role of a principal included terms such as, a CFO, autonomous, lonely position, communicator, mentor, decision maker, building relationships, and instructional leader.

The variation in the perceptions of the principal's role may be a result of the relationship they experienced with their principal when they were teachers or assistant principals. This type of relationship provided a positive or negative perspective of the role of a principal.

For example, a principal stated that when she was a teacher she disapproved of the way her principal ran the school and decided that she could do better. Naturally, her perception of the role of the principal was impacted by what she observed in her principal's actions.

Even though the Latina principals differed in their perceptions of the role of the principal, the responses demonstrated pride in the role of the principalship. One principal summarizes it by stating, "So the role of the principal, I would say, is a lot more than what people think it is, but it is probably the best job. I know it is the best job I have ever had."

No Self-Imposed Obstacles

Latinas stated that there were no self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal. It appears that a strong sense of self-efficacy is common among the eight Latina principals. Bandura (1977) noted that how a person responds to difficult circumstances and how resilient they are when facing adversity can determine the level of success as a leader.

Ketelle (2005) stated that we know little about self-efficacy as it relates to school leadership. As the Latina principals revisited and related prior leadership experiences, it was evident that they approached difficult situations with assurance that they can

overcome them and be productive. Bandura (1982) suggested that the more awareness a principal develops of leadership role experiences, the greater the potential for the development of self-efficacy.

Their perception of self-efficacy had contributed to their success as a leader. This was evident in the fact that three of the eight Latina principals interviewed had made career advancements to district administrative positions ranging from area superintendent to assistant superintendent districts.

These Latina principals were successfully meeting the demands and responsibilities of an administrator (Ketelle, 2005). They set for themselves challenging goals, high expectations, and successfully worked through the demands of the new administrative role.

Additional Pressure for Job Performance

Latinas agreed that they had additional pressures to improve job performance. Many of the Latinas began answering this question with strong affirmation, “Of course, of course” or “Absolutely”.

The principals mentioned three reasons for feeling the additional pressures: ethnicity, self-imposed, and because of the nature of the job. One Latina principals stated, “...because when people think of Mrs. X, when they think of her role as a Latina, that she is one of the best principals...”

Another principal affirmed, “...there weren’t many Hispanic principals and not many minority administrators, so when you got a position, people sometimes assumed you got the position because you were a minority and so it wasn’t good enough to do a

good job. You had to do a great job and you had to make sure that people did not perceive you as weak and that you were not leaning too much on someone.”

This principal strongly revealed, “I will say that any female, first of all, has to prove herself above man, then you put on top of that, Hispanic, so there is additional pressure. Then, you put yourself as being petite. So, a petite, Hispanic, woman, yes, feels pressure.”

When reflecting on her pressures, a principal stated, “...it would be something that I would probably say is self-imposed.” However, she connects it with her ethnicity and “token” Hispanic. She openly declared that, “I want to prove myself because of the naysayers – people who just say; well she is a “token” Hispanic. She is just there to satisfy a quota.”

As the Latinas shared about their additional pressures to improve their job performance, it was evident that they harbored no regrets for their career decisions. They expressed their experiences with a strong sense of determination to continue to excel in their administrative responsibilities as well as to continue to pursue administrative opportunities.

Principals Deal with Situations Differently

Latinas stated that they deal with situations differently than non-Latinas. The principals acknowledged that being bilingual, biliteral, and, most especially bicultural, plays a big role when dealing with situations that involve students, parents, and staff. For this reason, they perceived they dealt with situations differently than Non-Latinas.

Two Latina principals mentioned, “When I look at students I see “kids” or children that can learn, no matter what – holding high expectations for them.” In other words, the principals did not see African American, White, or Hispanic students stigmatized by the system due to race, color, or socioeconomic status.

One principal recognized that the Latino culture played a major role in the way they dealt with situations, especially with the Latino community. “It is a “cultural thing” says one of the principals. “Culture comes in to play sometimes because you are more sensitive to Hispanic students, parents and community.” Another Latina states, “I think my culture makes me more passionate than let say someone that is non-Hispanic. We have a different culture...more of a connection and emotional bond, and a physical bond.”

Principals also call attention to the fact that they are asked often to serve on committees probably because of their culture or background experiences in order to assist with district issues or planning. “Coming from a different place, I bring a different flavor to what I am working with, and I think that is positive,” a Latina Principal proudly announced.

A look at role theory or situational ethnicity might shed some light on the Latina principals’ perceptions on how culture plays a major role in the way they deal with situations. Situational theory presumes that different leadership styles are better in different situations, and that leaders must be flexible enough to adapt their style to the present situation. A good situational leader is one who can quickly change leadership styles as the situation changes (Cohen, 1978).

Role theory looks at how individuals in a leadership role perceive what they are supposed to do and actually dictates the expected behavior (Shapiro, 2000). Latina principals shared how easy it is for them and how quickly they can adopt a variety of strategies when dealing with various cultures in the schools. They see this as their role as a principal. The only phrases that they assumed could come close to how they felt and how best to explain this phenomenon is “It is all about culture.”

Secondary Themes:

Have Experienced Prejudice

Some of the Latinas expressed they have experienced prejudices and continue to experience prejudices, which is mostly generated by the staff or parents. The disapproval mostly occurred when the Latina principals were first assigned to a school and were not well known by the staff or the parents. The prejudice experienced by some of the Latinas was based on ethnicity and gender. For example, a principal laughed when she reminded me that she was a Hispanic, woman, and had curly hair.

The Latinas did state that once the school staff, parents, and community observed the quality in their leadership capabilities, approval and respect evolved. However, staff members who could not overcome their prejudices left the school and parents who could not accept a Latina as a principal transferred their children from the school. “These kind of people,” said one principal, “are prejudiced against any minority. I think anyone who is different will experience difficulty in a mainstream situation.”

Latina principals learned how to work through it. They learned to live with those experiences. “They (prejudiced people) don’t see that a measurement of success is not

defined by your last name or the color of your skin. It is defined by the kind of person you are and the job you do,” stated one of the Latina principals.

It is important to reveal that one principal who stated that she did not experience prejudice used the words “lucky” and “fortunate” when explaining her position. She stated, “I have been very fortunate I haven’t experienced any prejudice with neither staff, parents, community, nor partners in education with which we have worked in this district. I am just lucky that way.”

The term “token” Hispanic was mentioned by a principal who strongly felt that this term is a direct form of prejudice when Latinas are selected for a principalship position. “People’s comments made either to you or other individuals, such as, ‘You are only hired because they needed another Hispanic administrator, not because they needed another administrator’ really hurt,” stated a principal.

Connections with Hispanic Population

Latinas stated that the most gratifying experiences are the connections with the Hispanic population: teachers, parents, and community. Making connections and building relationships with teachers, parents, and with the community is especially important to the principals. This is facilitated by being able to speak the language and culturally relate to them. “To be able to communicate with parents and talk to them in Spanish is a great feeling,” said one principal as she related a gratifying experience she recently enjoyed.

The principals also shared that Hispanic parents enjoy having a Latina as a principal. They feel that parents can come to them at any time to speak to them and to hear their concerns since they can express themselves in Spanish.

As Latina principals, teachers and parents see them as role models, above all when they discover that the principals publicly and unashamedly speak Spanish. As someone told a principal, “It’s you? You speak Spanish and you don’t mind?”

Themes for research question #3 (interview #3). What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Major Themes:

Can Contribute as a Role Model and Mentor

Latinas expressed that they can contribute an overall sense of being a role model, a mentor, encourager, and supporter. The Latina principals realized as they participated in the interviews and reflected on their answers or stories that it would have been impossible for them to be successful making it up the career ladder if it were not for an individual, who recognized their leadership potential and invested the time needed to help her realize their professional goals.

The mentors provided the guidance and support that these Latina women needed. Some of the mentors were already in the principalship, while others were family members, district administrators, college professors or teachers. Some mentors were Latinas, but many were not. Mentors were also Anglos and African Americans.

The principals recognized that they too had a responsibility to be a mentor, a role model, an encourager to prospective school administrators. “It’s giving someone else the confidence they need; to show them what perseverance looks like.”

Recognizing that their school systems lacked in the number of Latina principals, they expressed the need and desire to seek and reach out to Latina teachers and assistant principals in order to provide the support needed as they journeyed through the career path of a school administrator. One principal says, “In schools, it is dominated by women, but when it comes to administration it is dominated by men and the higher you go the more men there are.”

Students, especially Latina students, need to see and have positive relationships with Latina role models in the schools. One principal affirmed, “Children need to see themselves in all of us.” Another principal said, “Hispanic principals need to be a role model to all children but especially to young girls.”

Had a Latina Mentor

Latinas stated that they had a Latina mentor while working towards the principalship. Latina principals enjoyed the benefits of a mentor as they worked toward the principalship. The type of mentorship referred to by the principals cannot be confused with a formal, usually mandatory form of mentorship provided by some districts for the beginning principal.

This type of mentorship was informal. Someone, usually another principal, district administrator, or college professor, recognized the Latina principal’s leadership qualities, took special interest, and mentored her, ensuring success. Some mentors were

Latinas, but others were not. A combination of Anglos and African Americans also served as mentors for the Latina principals.

The Latina principals acknowledged that they too had a responsibility to be a mentor, a role model, an encourager to prospective school administrators. One principal shared how in the course of the interviews she realized how important it is for the Latina principals to be proactive in the recruitment and mentoring of future Latina principals.

Experienced Obstacles that were from Non-Latinas

Latinas stated that they did perceive obstacles in their career that were different from non-Latinas. Prejudice fuels the obstacles that Latina principals perceived different from the non-Latinas. In the life of the Latina principalship, obstacles are seen when,

- Opportunities are not given to the Latina principal
- A Latina principal is overlooked for a position or an assignment
- A Latina principal is placed in a school because of her ethnicity
- Male principals dominate in administration, especially in High School
- When you are prejudged based on your surname
- Speaking Spanish publicly is considered unpatriotic

Comments shared by the Latina principals provide a glimpse to the obstacles imposed by the mainstream.

- “It is sad when I am viewed not as equal as an administrator because I am Hispanic.”
- “Oh yes, you were appointed assistant because we are short and we need Hispanics and that is why you were chosen.”

- “They let me get into a bilingual position because I was Hispanic and had the background. But to go on, they didn’t.”
- “There is always the obstacle of whether you are knowledgeable or not.”

One principal ended her story with, “How they (mainstream) view us is also considered an obstacle. It almost seems that we have to prove ourselves twice as hard as someone else. I always have to prove myself a little bit harder than the person next door.”

The Latina principals confront the obstacles using two different approaches. They accepted the obstacles and managed it the best way they can, not letting it interfere with their work, career, and future aspirations. One principal calls it “overcoming prejudice.” Secondly, they relied on their support system or group (family, friends, principals, district personnel) to rally round them as they overcame the obstacles.

No Self-Imposed Obstacles

Latinas did not feel there were any self-imposed obstacles. Self-imposed obstacles were not an issue for the Latina principals. They knew that they could do the job of a principal and perform extremely well. There were personal situations that concerned them, but not self-imposed obstacles.

One of the situations that was of concern dealt with being a mother and having a career. This situation created a high level of guilt that, if not careful, would have interfered with her job performance or could have caused her to abandon her career.

However, the real issue did not deal with self-imposed obstacles, but only obstacles that seem to be imposed by the mainstream. Obstacles imposed by others can

take the appearance of a stereotype or prejudice. One principal states, “No, no self-imposed obstacles. I think that sometimes there are other people who have said things, but for myself? No, I just see myself moving. I would say, ‘Oh that is something I think I want to do. I think I would be good at it and I am just going to do it’ and I do.”

Token Hispanic

The phrase “token” Hispanic came up various times during the conversations. According to the Latinas, this term symbolizes a Latina placed at a school as a principal in order that the school district can meet a quota in placing minority principals. In other words, the Latinas felt the district needed to or had to place a Latina in an administrative position. This perception evolved based on several comments district and school personnel made to the principals after they were placed at a school.

One principal adamantly said, “I want to be given the same opportunities as everyone else.”

Placed in High Hispanic Schools

Latina principals had mixed feelings about being placed at a school with high numbers of Latino students. The principals did not mind being placed in a school due to the large Hispanic student population. They were very proud. Their concern rested on the fact that they needed to make sure that because a school had a high number of Latinos that was not the main reason why they were placed at the school. It was equally important to know that they were placed at a school first because of their qualifications, and second because of the high Latino population.

The Latina principals also expressed the importance of being appointed to a school with a student population comprised of a low number of Latino students. Such a placement acknowledges that their leadership abilities should be recognized and valued for all students, not just for Hispanics.

Secondary Themes:

Provide an Impact beyond classroom

Latinas said they chose the principalship to provide more of an impact beyond the classroom. Making a difference in the lives of students, parents, and staff members echoed throughout the interviews with the principalship. Latina principals began their career as classroom teachers. They loved teaching and everything about teaching. These women came to a crossroads in their career where they knew they wanted make a greater impact on students, teachers, and parents. Leaving the classroom was the next step in the career path before reaching the principalship.

As a teacher resource, dean, staffing coordinator, or counselor, the principals were able to reach out to a larger student population and assist parents with issues that directly affect students.

Dealt with Stereotypes

Latinas expressed they dealt with some form of stereotype. Stereotyping often leads to prejudice and bigotry when people do not have all the information needed about a group. When they have misinformation, this tends to lead to stereotyping. The press, television, and books have also contributed to the dilemma of stereotyping.

Stereotyping often leads to unfair discrimination and persecution when the stereotype is unfavorable. This is evident with the Latina principals as they worked toward the principalship. One principal confessed that when people referred to the Latinos as always being late to events she would get offended and would find herself in a defensive position.

Another stated, “They just saw me and they saw my physical traits...they think that most of us (Hispanics) aren’t bright...so to see me ‘oh she’s here, well, she’s the token Hispanic’.” Although there are a great number of people who see the truth about the Latina principals, there are many people who choose to believe the bad stereotypes.

Conclusions

Many themes developed throughout this study are of great importance to the study of the perceptions and meanings Latina principals attach to their experiences. However, four major themes echoed throughout the three research questions as the principals reflected and shared their thoughts during the interviews. The four themes are organized by the three research questions and more themes.

Research Question #1. What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on how they became a principal?

Theme: Family Support

Family is important for a majority of the Hispanics. Family support is the key factor in these Hispanic females achieving their goal to become school principal. This

unconditional support is what motivated and encouraged the Latinas to pursue their educational degree and enter the principalship even when the tasks seemed insurmountable. This was evident in the life of the Latina principals as they shared family stories and experiences that highlighted the special bonding that connects family members. Husbands, children, and parents demonstrated devout support as the Latinas worked toward their chosen vocation.

Research Question #2. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their role as a principal?

Theme: No self-imposed obstacles

The Latina principals experienced no self-imposed obstacles. The self-efficacy theory can be applied to this study. Self-efficacy determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave to meet the demands of a specific task (Bandura, 1994). The Latinas were not concerned with self-imposed obstacles – they knew they were highly qualified to do the job. It did not even cross their minds whether they qualified or were capable of performing the job of a principal. The theme that strongly resonated throughout each interview is the theory of self-efficacy.

Latina principals found themselves determined to overcome obstacles, usually placed by others, confronted while successfully performing leadership duties. They had no doubt in what they could achieve and how far they could succeed in their chosen career. They had strong purpose and they moved forward with their plans and dreams.

Research Question #3. What are the Hispanic females' perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

Theme: Token Hispanic

The term "token" Hispanic, referred to the impression that a Latina principal was placed at a school supporting these two caveats: First, that Latina principals were selected for and placed at a school to meet a district minority-hiring quota; and second, that Latina principals were selected for and placed at a school due to the high Latino student population. Latina principals related that they experienced prejudice from staff, parents, some district personnel, and community members. These were difficult experiences for them, and it was reflected in their emotions as they shared their stories during the interviews.

However, resilience (Christman & McClellan, 2008), coupled with determination helped them deal with these situations and to move forward regardless of the pain the prejudice caused them. These principals knew that, once relationships were built with those who doubted their ability to be competent school leaders, there was a possibility for a change of mind and heart.

Theme: Placement in High Hispanic Schools

When the Latina principals shared about being placed in a school with a high percentage of Hispanic students, it was obvious that they felt uncomfortable talking about the subject. It was imperative that their message was not confused when they attempted to explain their mixed feelings about being placed at a school with high numbers of

Latino students. They were proud to be in a school where the majority of the students viewed them as a role model and a success story. The principals felt that they could relate to the students and parents. They principals did not mind being placed in a school due to the large Hispanic student population.

On the other hand, they shared a concern about being placed in a school where the student population was predominately Hispanic. It was important for them to know and accept, and as important for the school's Hispanic population as well as colleagues and community members, to acknowledge that they were placed at the school first because of their qualifications and not because of the large number of Hispanic students. It greatly concerned the principals that this was even a remote perception of their placement in the educational community.

With this in mind, they expressed the importance of Hispanic principals having the opportunity to be appointed or placed at schools with a low Hispanic student population. Such a placement recognizes and speaks volumes of their leadership capabilities, knowing that they can be exceptional leaders in schools with a low percentage of Hispanic students as well as in schools with a large percentage of Hispanic students.

Connections of Findings to Literature Review

Women as Education Leaders

Women are creating a new force of energy in educational leadership. A growing body of research attests to the outstanding leadership potential of women in administrative positions (Scheckelhoff, 2007). Schools operate in complex and dynamic

environments. To lead successful schools with a population that is more diverse than ever, principals have to address difficult situations when dealing with internal and external pressures (Thurman, 2004; Fry & Gonzales, 2008).

The demand for school leaders in the United States has been growing due to retirement, turnover, a lack of interest, and candidates who are not qualified for the position (Pounder & Crow, 2005). Recent research indicates that the number of women taking leadership positions in elementary schools has risen over the past ten years. However, the fact remains that little consideration is given to women in education to help solve this problem. In spite of the growth of women in elementary schools, there remains an underrepresentation of women in secondary school leadership roles (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006). This is a great opportunity for Hispanic females to peruse school administration as a career.

Latinas: Educational Leaders

Few studies exist on Hispanic female leaders' lived experiences. To better understand women in leadership, we need to focus on the perceptions and experiences of women leaders. By hearing their stories, recommendations, and suggestions we will be kept informed. There is much to learn from women leaders as they reflect on their experiences and offer advice. The opportunities and challenges that they have experienced position them well to "tell the story" to the next generation of women leaders (Grogan 2000). We need to draw from their experience and voice.

The voice of the Hispanic female principals interviewed was consistent with the small number of studies completed on the Hispanic female principals. The literature on

the Hispanic female principal focuses on family support for achieving their educational and career goals (Ortiz, 2000). The findings for this research study also indicated that the family was a great support.

Another study revealed that firm belief in their competence and abilities to improve education is what encouraged them to seek administrative positions (Mendez-Morse, 1999). The findings for this study indicated that Latinas exhibited a strong sense of self-efficacy. They had no doubt in what they could achieve and how far they could succeed in their chosen career. They had strong purpose and they moved forward with their plans and dreams. The limited studies on Hispanic female administrators in the literature does not account for the “token” Hispanic as denoted in this study. In addition, the limited literature does not account for Latina principals’ perceptions or experiences on being placed in a school with a high number Hispanic student population only because of their ethnicity.

Career Paths of the Hispanic Female Principal

The most common career pathway is teacher, assistant principal, elementary principal, secondary principal, central office, and superintendency (Manuel & Slate, 2003). A lack of Hispanic females as teachers contributes to the dilemma of increasing the number of Hispanic female principals. This is evident in the literature as colleges and universities continue to search ways they can increase their pool of Hispanic students.

Another possible contributing factor to the principalship career path of Latinas is the mentorship or role model, or possibly the lack of. This finding connects with a study by Mendez-Morse (2004) who looked at the role of mentoring for Hispanic females as an

important facet of their career. This study concludes that the lack of traditional mentoring did not stop the Latinas from finding a mentor to achieve their goal of becoming an educational leader. In some cases, because of the lack of mentors or role models, the Latinas had to create their own mentor by selecting various qualities or behaviors that they had observed in their dealings with colleagues.

The mentors or role models in this study did not have a traditional mentoring program, but sought their own mentors, usually from principals they observed or worked with as a teacher or assistant principal, or someone that they knew from the district office. These mentors were not Hispanic, nor did they have to be. The principals needed someone that would support them and provide the guidance needed to be a successful school principal.

Implications

This study suggests implications for Hispanic school leaders, district policy makers, Hispanic females who aspire to be a school principal, and to others interested in further study.

- The eight Latina principals interviewed reported no preconceived limitations; however, they expressed concerns about other people's perceptions. It is interesting that a group often perceived by others as a minority and possibly accepting social stigma as lower in ability, did not perceive this lower status in any way. This may be perceived as a fundamental insight and important in viewing Latinas as having perceived that they have entered the American mainstream.

- No clear perceptions of what the job of the principal is like developed. Despite all having gone through professional education through at least a master's degree, and having been exposed to literature dealing with the principalship, it does not appear to have 'taken'. This has considerable implication for the professional education of future principals and the development of professional programs for preparation of principals.
- Not one Latina principal stated that she felt she could not do or was not capable of being a principal. A strong sense of self-efficacy was apparent. This has implications for the development of the self and the self-concept of Latinas in the Hispanic culture, and suggests future studies comparing other minorities' self-development.
- Latina principals were concerned with obstacles "others" placed on them, but did not accept these perceptions in their development of their perception of their personal and professional roles.
- Respondents reported that they utilized components of their Hispanic culture as part of their professional practice in the principalship. This has major implications for preparation programs for principals in that further research should take place to determine the factors leading to this result.
- The term "token" Hispanic appeared to concern respondents. Stereotyping was reported as still a problem for Latina principals. This suggests that because principal preparation programs presently and in the foreseeable future

will deal increasingly with minorities, such professional preparation programs should devote time to the issue of social stigmatizing.

Theoretical Implications

It is hard to imagine a study without a theoretical framework. Merriam (1998) defines a theoretical framework as, “The orientation or stance that you bring to your study. It is the structure, the scaffolding, and the frame of your study” (p. 45). The following theories guided this study.

Role Theory – Role theory was used in this study to help explain the status of Latinas in leadership. This theory provided a basis for examining the principals’ roles and for explaining their behaviors in roles such as the principalship.

The Hispanic principals held different views of what the role of a principal should look like. Their perceptions of the principal’s role rested on their observations and relationships with other principals, especially with principals they worked for before becoming a principal themselves.

During the time working for other principals, they gathered some information related to the role of the principal to formulate their own conclusion of how they were expected to behave when they became a principal.

When reflecting on their role as a principal they did not feel that their position or role was one of power. They were very proud that they had attained a prestigious position within the educational community and within their own culture. They now viewed themselves as a role model encouraging more Hispanic females to step out and to become a leader. However, in spite of the various roles they performed, they considered their role as a principal was to create and provide opportunities for students, staff, and parent to excel in academics, socially and culturally. They saw their role as being protective, caring, warm, and nurturing, yet holding high expectations for students and staff. The principals, even though they have gained status in their leadership positions still view their role as nurturing or a caregiver, roles that are considered much part of a female role (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005). This is their interpretation, their perception of how they are expected to behave or how they perceive what they are supposed to do surrounding their position as a principal (Shapiro, 2000).

Situational Role Theory – This theory examined whether the principal changes to fit a situation, or if necessary, a change in the situation is necessary to correspond with the leader. In other words, different situations demand different kinds of leadership.

Situational role theory may help to understand why the principals perceived that bringing in their culture played a big role when dealing with situations, which involved students, parents, and staff. Changing cultures to meet the needs of students, parents, and staff in challenging situations yielded stronger and more balanced results. Therefore, the principals are convinced that bringing in their culture is different yet led to a more successful school environment.

Role Conflict Theory – Conflicts between the expectations of the role of a leader and the role of a female occur throughout history and continue to exist in most cultures (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005). Acting in ways that challenge traditional roles may lead to conflict or stress for women administrative aspirants (Smulyan, 2000). For example, expected role practices of women within partnering (spouses) and mothering can clash with the demands made on them as an educational administrators (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005).

Although the Hispanic principals shared their accomplishments, conflicts and struggles continue to challenge them when they try to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Stories related about conflict roles portrayed the principal as a wife and principal, mother and principal, or daughter and principal. This seemed to cause great turmoil and a sense of guilt when sharing the sacrifices made to attain their professional goals.

Conflict was also obvious within the context of role expectations from the district superintendent, assistant superintendent and other direct supervisors. As the Hispanic principals moved into leadership positions, they were exposed to the pressures created by multiple role demands and conflicting expectations from district and state personnel. It was important for others to see them as successful in their role, especially if a school was a successful school in terms of state grade.

Self-Efficacy Theory – As the Latina administrators shared their experiences and reflected on their perceptions on self-imposed limitations or obstacles, they acknowledged never having thoughts or behavior that indicated they were not qualified or capable to performing the role of a principal. This assertion led to considering Bandura's

(1994) theory of self-efficacy, which helps to understand how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave to meet the demands of a specific task.

The principals unquestionably knew that they possessed the knowledge, qualifications, the people skills needed to build relationships, and the common sense to lead and influence the lives of students, parents, and staff members. They knew they had the personal capacities and resources to meet the demands of a specific task (Bandura, 1977; McCormick et al., 2002). Personal efficacy influences the goals people choose and their aspirations. This was evident with the Latina administrators interviewed when three of the eight reported holding positions of assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, and area superintendents (Bandura, 1977; McCormick et al., 2002).

Researcher's Reflections

The demand for school leaders has grown in the last few years due to the increasing number of retirements, turnover, and a lack of interested and qualified applicants (Gajda & Militello, 2008). With keen interest, the researcher observed the procedures of the recruitment policies for qualified Hispanic principals in the K-12 setting to meet the challenges of the underrepresentation of Hispanic females (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006). The reason for this personal interest was that the researcher is a former Hispanic principal in her county. In fact, and sadly enough, for 15 years she was the only Hispanic female principal in her district. The researcher was vested in the study since Hispanic principalship is her an area of expertise as a result of her many years as a school administrator. The researcher was also keenly interested in the study's

implications to share recommendations with school districts regarding policies that may assist with reducing the underrepresentation of Hispanic females as school principals.

With this in mind, the researcher entered this study with an open mind.

Controlling personal bias was of great concern, and procedures to prevent bias from infiltrating the study had to be implemented. Probably the most challenging time for the researcher was during the data analyses and interpretation. It was during these moments that the researcher's personal perceptions and experiences as a principal did not influence the data.

To assure that personal bias was not affecting the study, the researcher addressed the following question: How do I control biases? To thwart contaminating influence from the study, the researcher utilized peer reviewers and jury of experts to examine, validate, and provide feedback related to the methods, themes, and findings of the study. Careful attention from the peer reviewers to the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, as well as the way the findings were reported, increased the validity of this study.

The researcher had great interest in the themes that evolved from this study. Based on her personal experience, some themes that emerged did not produce new revelations. For example, Hispanic females need role models and/or mentors, and it is extremely beneficial if this person is Hispanic and a female. This is evident in the researcher's professional life.

Another finding that was not a new discovery was that the administrators experienced prejudices from staff members and parents. The researcher feels that this type of behavior is as unacceptable as it is unavoidable. How a person reacts to any type

of discrimination is what really counts and the researcher was pleased to know that the Latina principals reacted in the same manner that she had during her 15 years as an administrator.

Other findings greatly surprised the researcher. For example, the support family members had for the principals, which also included the husband. Since the literature embodies the Hispanic husband as the “macho” of the family and not very supportive of the wife (female) pursuing an education much less a administrative position in a school, the researcher assumed her husband was unusual, an anomaly because of his sacrificial support to make sure the researcher continues to pursue her goals.

The finding that surprised and affected the researcher more than the other findings was the strong sense of self-efficacy in the Hispanic females interviewed. The Latina principals knew, without any doubt, what they could achieve and accomplish, once given the opportunity. They approached difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. Personally and professionally, the researcher was able to relate to this finding and also to the success stories shared by the Latinas.

These are the stories that need be shared with Latinas aspiring to school administration as a career goal, and who may find themselves struggling in their endeavors.

Limitations of the Study

However, it is important that to acknowledge that limitations exist that need to be recognized.

- The first concern is the geographic location for this study. This study was limited to the central part of Florida, Orlando and Kissimmee. Hillsborough and Lake Counties were invited to participate in the study; however, Hillsborough's invitees declined and Lake County did not have any Latina principals employed.
- Only eight Hispanic women were selected for this study. The eight Latina principals did not represent all ethnic subgroups of the Latino or Hispanic groups.
- The terms Hispanic and Latino were used to represent a wide range of ethnic cultures. Each interviewee used the term interchangeably during interviews and none expressed a preference.
- Only public school principals or former principals holding district positions were selected for this study. Principals from private schools were not selected.
- Since the researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, personal and professional biases could have influenced data gathering and interpretation.
- Since the sample size for this study was small, precautions should be taken not to generalize the findings to a larger population.
- Not all Latinas were principals at the time the interviews took place. Three of the eight principals made career advancements and were in district administrative positions.

Recommendations for Future Research

In concluding this study, it is obvious that it has brought about many other questions that are essential to future studies of the perceptions and meanings that Latina principals attach to their experiences as administrators. This study only scratched the surface of the important insights that can be gained from hearing the stories Latina principals are willing to share.

Future research may deliver more in-depth understanding, provide important insights, and fill the literature gaps on the Latina school principal.

- Future research is necessary on the theory of self-efficacy as it relates to the Latina principals.
- Is “token” Hispanic a current district practice when selecting school principals?
- District policy needs to be reviewed when placing Latinas at a school as a principal to ensure that placement in a school can reflect either high or low numbers of Latino student population.
- Do district policies or practices on mandatory county-wide training include training on cultural diversity?
- Is the term “token” Hispanic a perception only among Latinas or is it also reflected in the thinking of the majority culture?
- Professional preparation programs should devote time to the issue of social stigmatizing.
- How would this study differ if conducted in other locations with high Hispanic populations such as Miami, New York, or Southern California?

- Does the principal's family impose the feeling of "guilt" in relation to being a principal with small children or is it self-imposed, stemming from guilt?
- Why are there not more Latina principals represented in these counties? Is it because teachers do not want to go into school administration, is it because teachers perceive that principals are treated unfairly by staff and parents who might hold prejudice toward them, or is it because the Latinas teachers or assistant principals are not being mentored into the position?
- With the need for more school principals, more research is needed to evaluate what district policies are effective in recruitment and retention of the Latina administrator. This research can lead to the implementation of best practices in the districts' hiring practices and retention programs.
- Underrepresentation of Hispanic principals exists in the counties where this study took place, suggesting that counties should evaluate their personnel policies and practices of promoting minorities.
- Latina principals did not know exactly how many Latina principals were employed in their counties, suggesting that principals organize professional development groups to avoid the obvious isolation that this implies.

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Appendices

Appendix A – IRB Consent

Letter to District Superintendent

July 26, 2005

Dear Superintendent:

I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida and I am requesting consent to interview Latina Principals from your county to the topic of my dissertation, *A Case Study in Public K-12 Education: The Perceptions and Meanings that Latina Principals Attach to Their Experiences as School Administrator*. It is my hope that the findings in this study offer hope and inspiration to aspiring Latina school leaders. Additionally, that possible perception of tacit assumptions and beliefs held by the majority culture as well as by the minority culture, which have kept Latinas from acquiring administrative positions, could surface in the use of the interviews.

The duration of my study will be approximately four (4) months, beginning in August, 2005 and ending in November, 2005. The first part of my study is to conduct a pilot study which allows me to interview one (1) Latina Principal. After my pilot study is completed, I will proceed with the actual study, which allows me to interview eight (8) Latina Principals. All personal and professional information that would identify these principals will be kept confidential. That means that only the principal and I, as the

Appendix A – IRB Consent (continued)

researcher, will view the information. All data will be kept confidential and results will be reported in aggregated terms.

My IRB application is on file at the Institutional Review Board at USF. My faculty advisor is Dr. A. Shapiro at the University of South Florida, Leadership Development, Department of Education. You may contact him at (813) 974-3421 for further information. If you have questions or concerns that you would like to discuss, feel free to contact me at (863) 519-8442.

Your signature below or a response by email will indicate that you are completely aware of my endeavor and, therefore, giving your consent for me to conduct this study.

Sincerely,

Martha Santiago, Director
ESOL Department
Polk County Schools

Superintendent Signature

Appendix B – Letter to ESOL Directors

February 13, 2006

To: Selected ESOL Directors: Dalia, Tomasita, Minnie, and Sandra;

Dear Ladies,

I am a doctoral student at USF. I just completed my proposal defense and have the blessings of my committee to move forward with my study. I need your assistance in referring Latina Principals from your district that I may contact to voluntarily participate in this study.

My study is qualitative. I will interview Latina Principals to The topic of my dissertation is - A Case Study in Public Education: The Perceptions and Meanings that Latina Principals attach to Their Experiences.

It is my hope that the findings in this study offer hope and inspiration to aspiring Latina school leaders. Additionally, that possible perception of tacit assumptions and beliefs held by the majority culture, as well as the minority culture, which have kept Latinas from acquiring administrative positions, could surface through the use of the interviews.

The first part of my study is to conduct a pilot study. The pilot study requires that I interview one Latina Principal. After my pilot study is completed, I will proceed with the actual study, which requires me to interview eight (8) Latina Principals. All personal and

Appendix B – Letter to ESOL Directors (continued)

professional information that would identify these principals will be kept confidential.

That means only the principal and the researcher (me) will view confidential information.

I cannot recruit Latina Principals from my district for this study because we presently do not have any Latina Principals. I was the only principal for 16 years and now that I am in the district office, there are none in our district! With that in mind I need your assistance!

If you would email me names of Latina Principals in your district that I can contact, I would greatly appreciate it. Please include the school name and phone number. I will be certain to contact your Superintendent to make sure I follow appropriate school board policy and protocol.

My IRB application is completed and on file with the Institutional Review Board at USF. My faculty professor is Dr. A. Shapiro at the University of South Florida, Leadership Development, Department of Education. You may contact him at (813) 974-3421 for further information.

If you have questions or concerns that you would like to discuss, feel free to contact me at (863) 519-8442.

I thank you in advance for your assistance, and know that it is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Martha Santiago
Director, ESOL Program
Polk County School Board

Appendix C – Informed Consent

Dear Principal,

The following information is being presented to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in a minimal risk research study. Please read carefully. If you do not understand, please call me at (863)519-8442.

I am a doctoral student at University of South Florida. The title of my dissertation is: A Case Study in Public Education: The Perceptions and Meanings that Latina Principals Attach to their Experience as School Administration. The principal investigator or researcher is Martha Santiago, Director for the ESOL Department in Polk County School District.

My study is a qualitative research study. I will interview eight (8) Latina Principals in K-12 public schools in four (4) Central Florida School Districts. These school districts are: School Board of Orange County, School Board of Osceola County, School Board of Hillsborough County, and School Board of Lake County.

As a Latina Principal in your school district, I invite you to participate in this study. It is my hope that the findings in this study offer hope and inspiration to aspiring Latina leaders. Additionally, that possible perception of tacit assumptions and beliefs held by the

Appendix C – Informed Consent (continued)

majority culture as well as by the minority culture, which have kept Latinas from acquiring administrative positions, could surface in the use of the interviews.

The interview process is intensive and will necessitate time from your already hectic schedule. If you should accept, I will interview you three (3) separate times at a location most convenient to you. The interviews can be schedule two to three weeks apart to accommodate your schedule and also allowing sufficient time for transcribing the interview. The time frame for each interview is approximately for 90 minutes each. I will be responsible for recording and transcribing each interview. The transcribed documents will be emailed to you for your perusal, approval and for the opportunity to make recommendations of any corrections or deletions. You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

By taking part in this research study, you may increase our overall knowledge of how to assist aspiring Latina leaders. This study can also assist you in identifying and communicating serious matters and pertinent topics of concern to the Latina population as well as to the non-Latina population.

There is minimal risk involved in this study. I will work around your schedule to accommodate the interviews. Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of

Appendix C – Informed Consent (continued)

Health and Human Services, and the USF Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project. I will be responsible for transcribing your recorded interviews to maintain confidentiality (this means no one sees the data other than you and me). Your name and any information that would otherwise jeopardize you will be omitted from the transcribed data. All data collected will be stored in a locked organized filing system in my house for three years. After this time, the data will be destroyed by shredding the documents.

The results of this study may be published. However, the data obtained from you will be combined with data from others in the publication. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way.

Your decision to participate in this research study is completely voluntary. You are free to participate in this research study or to withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty if you stop taking part of the study.

If you have any questions about this research, feel free to contact my faculty advisor, Dr. A. Shapiro at the University of South Florida, Leadership Development, Department of Education, (813) 974-3421. If you have questions or concerns that you would like to discuss with me, feel free to contact me at (863) 519-8442.

Appendix C – Informed Consent (continued)

If you have questions about your rights as a person who is taking part in a research study you may contact the Division of Research Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-5638.

By signing this form I agree that:

- I have fully read or have had read and explained to me this informed consent form describing the research project.
- I have had the opportunity to question one of the persons in charge of this research and have received satisfactory answers.
- I understand that I am being asked to participate in research. I understand the risks and benefits, and I freely give my consent to participate in the research project outlined in this form, under the conditions indicated in it.
- I have been given a signed copy of this informed consent form, which is mine to keep.

Signature of Participant

Printed Name of Participant

Date

I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above research study. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the subject signing this consent form understands the nature, demands, risks, and benefits involved in participating in this study.

Appendix D – Interview Questions

Interview One – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions on how they became a principal?

1. Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know.
2. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?
3. What was your motivation in becoming a principal?
4. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?
5. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?
6. Did you have a role model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?
7. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?
8. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?
9. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?
 - a. How about specifically with Latinas?
 - b. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?
10. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal?

Please elaborate.

Appendix D – Interview Questions (continued)

11. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?
 - a. If you were, how do you feel about the placement?
 - b. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?
12. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming principal based upon your ethnicity?
13. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?
 - a. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

Interview Two – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their role as a principal?

1. Share with me as much as you like or can about your role as a principal.
2. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?
3. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?
4. How do you perceive others, and by others I mean the majority culture, view you as a principal?
5. As a Latina principal, do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently than your non-Latina peers?

Appendix D – Interview Questions (continued)

6. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?
7. As a Latina principal, what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices?
8. As a Latina principal, have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

Interview Three – What are the Hispanic females’ perceptions of their career path and how it might differ from that of non-Hispanic females?

1. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.
2. How many Latina principals are in your school district?
3. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?
4. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?
5. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experience, or observe in others as you worked in school principalship?
6. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?
7. Due to your culture and ethnicity, were there any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews

Pilot Study Interview #1 – Mrs. RX

M – This is Martha Santiago – April 2 and I am interviewing Mrs. R for my dissertation on Hispanic/Latinas Principals. So Mrs. R, I am going to ask you a couple of questions.

R – OK

M – feel free to answer them, elaborate as you wish. If you don't understand it we will go back and kind of see if I can reword them. OK?

R – OK

M – What we are going to capture is – What are the Hispanic female perceptions and how they became, how they came to be principal. So my first question to you is, when did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

R – I knew I wanted to become a school principal when I was teaching kindergarten. Uh, that was one of my first jobs. After 7 ½ years of teaching I knew I wanted to do more than that. So, I knew I had to get my leadership degree and I knew that was the route I was going to be taking. Uh, becoming an assistant principal, than principal and being able to head my own school and make a difference in the lives of children and teachers.

M – What was your motivation in becoming a principal? What motivated you to become one?

R – I had a great principal. Uh, I was working at ? Elementary – Louise Brown, she was a great role model and she gave me the leadership opportunities to see if that was

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

something I would want to do. And, also my grandmother. She was an assistant principal in Puerto Rico of different schools – private schools and a military school.

M – Who and what were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?

R – Like I said my grandmother was a big one and the one that was my principal Louise Brown and also I was working also at that time with Tomasita Ortiz and she worked in the county and she encouraged me.

M – How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

R – Well my family was 100 percent supportive. They were there if they needed to watch the kids, or if that, they told me if that is what I wanted to do then that is what I needed to do and they supported me in every way. Like I said I attended classes on Saturday so then you know – taking care of the kids and if I had needed time to write my projects and everything, do my research they would be there for me.

M – Did you have a role model? If so, who and was he or she and was it someone of your ethnicity?

R – Like I said I had Louise Brown and she was not Hispanic and my grandmother Blanca Martinez and she’s Hispanic.

M – As an inspiring principal did you perceive your support system was effective for you?

R – Yes Definitely my mentor and my fellow – my principal – where I was an assistant principal, my principal that I had, she was wonderful she gave me every opportunity. The people at my learning community, my area superintendent, my executive are director –

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

very supportive people. Like I said in the county Tomasita Ortiz very supportive – Javier Melendez who does recruiting from the county very supportive.

M – How long have you been a principal?

R – I have been a principal now a year and two months.

M – What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

R – Everything I thought it would be – Um (laughter) As the principal, you know you are in charge of everything in the sense that whatever goes wrong with it you did it or not, it is your responsibility. And at the end of the day I am the one that has to be accountable for whatever happens in my school whether there was my teacher, my assistant principal, secretary, it doesn't matter because at the end of the day they say what did you do about her or what, you know, if you knew about this what did – it all falls back on you. Test scores, it's data you know it's me – it the name attached to pretty much everything, whether it is good or bad, it it is me and you take care of everything from there is no toilet paper in the bathroom to there is no substitute in this classroom or covering lunchroom duties – you do those when you need to, hum, parent complaints, student issues, teacher problems you deal with everything.

M – So, you are not disappointed?

R – No, no, not disappointed at all. Like I said there is never a dull moment. You come in and there is something waiting for you and you go home and you've left something waiting for you for tomorrow.

M – Were you warned by other people?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – I was warned by Louise Brown. She said, “Do not become a principal unless you want this to consume you – don’t do it!” I didn’t listen! My grandmother said the same thing – I didn’t listen (laughter).

M – You had your right of mind....

R – exactly

M – of what you wanted to do

R – I knew I wanted to be a teacher since I was four, so

M – that’s good!

M – Did you feel that your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community changed when you became a principal?

R – I think it did. I mean you go from being an assistant principal to principal and now you are in charge – you’re it. Everyone looks up to you for any problems, any advice and you are supposed to have the answers to everything. As an assistant principal you could always say, Ah you need to go see the principal for that, Hum, I was very lucky because the school where I was Assistant Principal at my principal went out for eight weeks, over eight weeks, so I was left in charge. They didn’t send anybody else, they just – I was left in charge for those eight weeks, which was a great experience because I had – I had no where else to go. It was me. So that was a great experience and I think that helped me to come prepare for principal. But it does, it does...your status does change when you go to the meetings and with your area, your learning community personnel.

M – How about specifically with the Latinas

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – It does, it changes because they perceive you as someone who has made it that far and that is a great honor. There is not a lot of Latina Principals so you serve as a good role model, too, for all those aspiring assistant principals or even teachers or resource teachers that are wanting to get into the leadership profession – You say, look, Yes you can. You can make it.

M – Do you try to discourage them?

R – I do not, you know what? I don’t. Because I think most of us that get into this, into leadership, we already know what we are getting into. We’ve already gotten a taste, whether it is through a resource position, cause we are CRT or reading coaches, we know, we already know – we are in, you know, in that principal’s leadership team. So we are aware. We know that it’s not going to be a piece of cake. So, I don’t discourage anybody!

M – Did you feel that your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when you were selected as a Principal.

R – I think it was an asset. Are you kidding? Whit our – we have a booming Hispanic population, student population. The fact that I am Hispanic, I’m fully bilingual is an asset. I feel pretty much – name the school – I mean not name the school, but there are a lot more opportunities when you are bilingual and you can represent that population of you school.

M – Do you feel that this is the norm throughout Central Florida?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – I think so – Most definitely, I can’t think of - I don’t know about Seminole county cause I can’t speak for their population but I know Osceola, Orange County and even Lake County. Yeah.

M – Do you believe you were placed in this school in particular because of the high percentage of Latins? And if you were how do you feel about that?

R – Yes! I think – then this where I need to be. I think this is very important that when my parents walk in they feel at home. That the person they need to communicate with, they are having a problem with their child or with the teacher, can speak their language and that makes them feel so much at ease they are not trying to, you know speak in English. They can just speak in their native language and they feel so much more comfortable. Now for the kids, the kids when they hear me speak Spanish they are like – “You speak Spanish?” I am, like, of course I speak Spanish. They are just – they can’t believe it. They are so surprised and proud and they are telling everybody – you know she speaks Spanish. Yep, I do and I am very proud of it.

M – How do you think the other ethnic groups feel about that – about you being a Latina here and you speak Spanish?

R – I think they had to get used to it, especially the white population. But now I don’t see it as a problem. When I did my Assistant Principalship it was at a majority white school. It was 86 percent white, so there is no problem communicating with anybody.

M – Do you feel that Latinas should be placed in a school were the majority of the kids are Hispanic...

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – I think if you are proud of your heritage and you are fully bilingual I think it can help that population and you can serve as a role model for the students and the parents, and like I said, you really make them feel welcome. So I don’t see anything wrong with that.

M – What preconceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

R – I didn’t have any. (Laughter) Just because I am Latina – that did not present a limitation at all – or anything.

M – No limitation on yourself, your family.

R – Nope – Nope

M – You just knew what you wanted and ...

R – Yeah! If you are good at what you do people are going to recognize that and that is what is going to come through.

M – What role do you feel the English language mastery or fluency have in acquiring your position?

R – 100% - I mean you have to be completely fluent and master the English language if you expect to get anywhere in a leadership position cause you have to be able to represent yourself, your school, and your ideas have to be able to come across. You have to be able to write memos, and letters for the school and to the parents and to the staff. You have to be 100% proficient.

M – What about when it comes to an accent – because some people say that because they have an accent...

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – I think unfortunately the perception is that if you have an accent then you are not capable of doing it or, you know, you don’t know the language. And I think that is a limitation because of perception, of people’s perception. I think it would be harder, if the accent was thicker or more pronounced – I think it would be harder.

M – So what would you do if you had someone that would come to you – Latina and wants to be a principal one day – has a heavy accent – What would your recommendations?

R – She needs to practice it. And I know it sounds funny, but songs and just to be – just to take classes. She doesn’t need to get rid of her accent, cause we can’t get rid of our accents, get me nervous enough and my accent is going to come out. And there are certain words where you just know, where you can peek, or yeah, you know, because it just comes out. But you have to be able to lose the accent enough to be able to get accepted. Cause it is hard – it is very hard if you have a thick accent.

M – Did anyone assist you in that area?

R – No.

M – Anything that you want to add? I guess this is the time where, because there will be different interview, so this is a time at the end of the questions where you can go back and reflect on any one of the questions or you may just want to add a little bit...

R – No. I think if you are an aspiring Latina that wants to be a principal and go into leadership you got to set your goals and not – you can’t perceive being Hispanic as a limitation. And, you can’t go with preconceived notions of, Oh I am going to get a job just cause I am a Latina. And, you , just like I said the best representation of yourself is to

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

do a good job, throughout. From the time you are a teacher all the way through, because people, people notice. Even when you are a teacher and then when you start to move up, people will remember that. And I think, make sure you keep your bilingual; I think it helps a lot; it helps a lot with the parents and the students.

M – You can reach more parents.

R – You can reach so many more parents and on the phone when you are calling them – it’s just so much easier. You get so much more information. They feel so comfortable coming to the school where they know there is somebody that can speak the language and can help them. Whether it is a discipline problem or housing problem or just about anything., at least they know there is somebody there and they are not shamed to speak it.

M – Do you feel there is a higher level of respect?

R – I do. I think so because they know that – it’s like you are one of them – that you are not afraid to speak it, you know, you’ll go out there and talk to them in the hallway or outside in the car loop and I’m you know I am no embarrassed. I think it is great and I encourage the children too. I encourage the parents to make sure that their children are bilingual. Cause it can only help, it can only help – I say , look at me – it can only help.

M – OK – So what we dealt with today was the beginning part of the three part interview which is basically dealing with your own perceptions, your family structure, and did that help or hinder it and things like that. Is there anything that you would like me to, would like to see me add to this first part?

R – no, I think the questions were in good order because it led from on thing to another. That was good.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

M – Yes that is important.

R – It flows – it helps.

M – I added a couple of questions which what I am going to do with my other interview is add them all to the questions.

M – OK. I think this will be great for the first interview and what we will do is get together again.

R – OK, yes we have two more – you are on my calendar.

M – Thank you very much.

R – You are welcome – anytime.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Pilot Study Interview #2 – Mrs. RX

M – Good morning again Mrs. R. Today is our second interview. We are going to interview for the Latina principals and I appreciate again your time for taking that time for us. You did receive the transcripts for the first interview. You have indicated that you read them?

R – Yes ma’am

M – And everything is ok?

R – Yes

M – OK. Thank you I appreciate that. And we will do the same thing for this – transcribe them and I will send them back to you.

R – OK

M – So today our first – what we are going to look at – we are going to look at the female’s perceptions of their role as a principal. So before I start doing this, and I neglected really to do this the first time was kind have like I can it an ice breaker but just kind of have you talk and things like that so, but since this is the pilot study this is when you realize the good and the bad that I do. So I would like you to do is just to, just to talk to me as freely as possible your role, everything you can think about as your role as a principal – good, the bad, whatever. Just share with me your role as a principal.

R – As the role of principal, I am a financial chief operator because I am in charge of the budget, so I have to make sure all positions are allocated. If I need to make cuts where I’m going to cut. Money allocated for textbooks – LEP books and ESE materials. Then whatever is left over – and the Title One, I need to make sure I allocated the money

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

where it needs to be going – where it is going to impact the students most. So I have that role of the budget. Then I have the humane development side. Where I am looking at my teachers looking for those potential leaders, teachers that I can trust, that I can give them assignments and things – responsibilities and they will get them accomplished. And they have that desire to maybe go beyond just being a teacher either to move up to CRT or just assistant principal. I also have in the human side that take up most of your day your mediator. When you are having either a problem with a parent and a teacher, or even among the teachers you know a grade level problem. They are not getting along and you have to call everybody in for a meeting with mediations and you have to settle the issue. Your parents are constantly calling you and you have to settle those issues – the safety, or they are not happy with the grade or homework – whatever the issue might be for that day you have to make sure you take care of them. And that pretty much keeps busy. And then you have the kids, they have discipline issues or they just want to come read to you. You have to be available to them. Then you have the county office which is requiring you to do - like right now we are in retention meetings and we have to follow the guidelines for retention in 3rd 4th and 5th. We are waiting FCAT scores for 3rd grade – to see who’s going to be retained, who do we need to meet with and then we will have retention meeting for K-2 so it is very hectic. Then we are also, a test giver. We are also giving DIBELS, and we have the Edgy Soft and the CELLA for the LEP that we have to give. And all these three tests have been given within the next two weeks. So these kids are being tested and tested and tested some more. So right now everyone in K-5 is taking a test at any given time in the next two weeks. And now also waiting we have to

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

unassigned involuntary – unassigned job fair tomorrow afternoon and there is a list of teachers that are continuing contract that lost their positions due to budget and those teachers need to be placed and tomorrow is the fair and by Friday they will be placed whether you want them or not. And that make me very nervous cause I have some of those openings and I already have people in mind. So there is a lot going on.

M – Well they say this is the time to kind of settle down a little bit.

R – This is not – No – to me we don't settle down until June, until all the FCAT scores are out – we have all the personnel has been pretty much placed or you know your vacancies. That is when it starts to settle down there is no settling down. This is it. I have to do the evaluations for all my continuing contracts and they have to be done April 30th and signed and delivered. So no, there is no down time. 5th grade celebrations. No No

M – It is amazing how the role of the principal has changed throughout the years.

Because what you are going right now was not the norm back then. It was much more of a settling down, so it is interesting. I am going to go through the questions like the last time and if you feel at the end of it that there is not a flow, you know, you let me know which ones need to be changed or things like that and that would be great.

Ok we are going to look at the Hispanic female perception of their role as a principal.

What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina Principal?

R – I think the fact I am able to communicate with my parents and my community. It is a great feeling when you are able to have a meeting and talk to them in Spanish and give them new information in Spanish. It makes them feel so welcomed at your school. They feel like they have someone they can relate to just because of the language. I think that is

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

such a wonderful feeling to give those parents and those students who also look at you as a role model, cause they can’t believe that you speak Spanish. You know, I just think that a lot of time they want us to learn English, English and not you know so much emphasis on Spanish so when they see someone else, you know in my world speaking Spanish – it’s you speak Spanish and you don’t mind? Of course I don’t mind. I think that is most gratifying.

M – Do you perceive these were self – imposed obstacles and if so would you explain?

R – I did not see, I did not encounter any obstacles to this part of my career. Earlier on while I was in college just starting out in education, I was in my senior internship. I had my supervisor from the college I attended and the teacher – the one who was supervising me they did not pass me because they thought that my English was not good enough and that I need to go back to Valencia to take English speaking course. And this was my senior year of college. I was ready to graduate. That was all I needed. That was it. I was ready. There was nothing wrong with my teaching except that they felt I had too thick of an accent. Of course, I had been here since I was ten. I did not have an accent. And they did not, they would not me and I had to redo the whole thing over. It cost me another half a year.

M – Did that – do you feel that that was how you would I say, something negatively impacted you?

R – At that time yes it did. My self – esteem was shot. I was ready to graduate with my friends from high school. We were all in the same class. We were ready to go and get

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

jobs. And then you had to tell your friends, no you are not – they are not going to pass me because my accent is too thick.

M – and you were here since you were 10 years old.

R – I was here since I was 10 and that was when I was 21. There was no accent (laughter).

M – Do you feel that there were any obstacles placed by anybody else in your field, not self imposed, but by anyone in your career path?

R – No.

M – OK. How do you perceive others, and by others I mean those in the majority culture, how do you perceive others view you as a principal, and you may give personal experiences or feedback or anything like that you would...

R – I think a lot of other administrators perceive that I got this job just because I was Hispanic. That – those were the comments. Oh you know you got that school because you’re Hispanic because you know 70% Hispanic and that’s the reason why I got this job, not because I was qualified just because I was Hispanic. So the perception that I may not be able to get a different kind of school may not be – where Hispanics are not the majority. Well no, cause I had to go to a school where the majority is Hispanic and that is the only reason – that’s the only reason why I got this job – the Hispanic.

M – and how did you react to that?

R – I said you know what that would be wonderful then cause I can relate to the community and I can speak to them in their own language. What a difference that is

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

going to make in those people's lives. I will take it – that's a compliment. That just means that I can relate to them.

M – They probably didn't expect that answer, did they?

R – No, no you know it it's not going to faze me. I got my job and I know I am doing a good job (laughter)

M – that is true! Any other experiences or anything else that you perceived form the majority culture?

R – No, nothing has ever happened. I am very happy to be here. I can actually relate to the parents.

M – As a Latina Principal have you perceived you've dealt with situations differently then your non-Latina peers? If so, explain.

R – I think being a Latina Principal I understand the culture where it is good or bad. Kind of like, well Hispanics are always late. Unfortunately, yeah they come late to school then they bring their kids late. Like I tell them there is no point in yelling at them or sending them a letter. I say we have to change the culture of the school and you have to – it's and education, you have to say these are the expectations – your son has to be on time to school because they are missing learning and it is very important that you write notes about how they are going to get home or the changes. I understand, you know, the vecina is going to pick him up, but if she is not on the list, then you have to write that down because there are procedures and I think that's very much our culture. You know if I can't go pick you up the vecina – la puerde – yeah ok now she is going to come pick you up, don't worry. And, we don't worry who is on the list and who is not. It is just not

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

important. So I think I understand that and I understand where they are coming from. And it's not that they don't care and it is not that they don't have the time because that is the perception all the time – Well they are just lazy. They just don't want to get their kids there on time. Why can't they just write a note – what' so – it doesn't take that long...that is not the point. The point is that they don't understand the importance of that and that is why we are here to teach them not scold them. There's a difference approach we have to take to this whole thing. I say the way you are doing it – you don't do that because then you are becoming their enemy. They are saying, look they are looking down at us. You are not respecting them so you have to be sure to say – I understand that is fine when you are on vacation or anything else, but this is for the safety of your child and the well – being of your child. So I think I have a different approach on how to approach the problem or little things that come up. And I still – you have to treat them with respect and give them – they know what they are doing. This is not because they don't care or they don't think it is important.

M – Do you have non-Latina principals call you or confer with you about situations that you have helped them with?

R – No, not yet. I think I am too new at this and other principals that are much more experienced than I do and I am not and they will not be calling me just yet.

M – They will – trust me they will! Do you feel you have had any additional pressure to improve your performance as a Latina Principal? Do you feel that once you came on board, because you were a Latina principal there was certain pressures?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – I think the only pressure was to reach out to the Hispanic community. To make them feel like this is their school – to make them feel welcome and make them feel comfortable with coming in and know that they can talk to me. That I am just somebody that they have to make an appointment with and I am pretty available to them. I think that has been really important and the pressure, not so much pressure but the NEWM – Mi Vision contacts me a lot cause now they know I speak Spanish. So they can contact me, like on Good Friday, she was looking for a principal who spoke Spanish to ask about the number of students absent and all that and the difference between Thursday and Friday so they come over here they know that I am pretty accessible. And then it is nice because on Monday all the kids and the parents say we saw you on TV and I forget that they watch Mi Vision at 6:00.

M – (laughter) It’s very popular station

R – Yeah I found out.

M – Well you said in our last interview that you did eight weeks in a school that was not did not have large Hispanic population.

R – Well I did two and a half years as an assistant principal in a school 86% white and 10% Hispanic and my principal had to leave and I took over the school for 8 weeks and you know it wasn’t a problem at all. Those parents they loved me there and we had a great relationship and it didn’t matter that I was Hispanic. It didn’t matter from the beginning. So I think that goes to show that if you do a good job.

M – Well think the key that you just said is relationship and you’ve mentioned that before.

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R – Yes and we just talked about that at a training last Thursday and Friday and it kept coming up that the most important for all principals, for the majority of us there, was building relationships, whether you are building relationships with your staff, with your students, or with your community. If you don’t have that relationship you will never, you won’t have the buy in and won’t get the school to function as it should, as one community...you have to have those relationships.

M – Cause people can perceive if you are genuine or not.

R – Exactly. People – that’s just like kids can tell, they can tell right away if somebody genuinely cares about them and so can the parents. You know, we can’t fool them. We cannot fool them with a fake smile and the perfect answer cause you will not always be able to do that as parents and teachers, they know. They know when you are truly there for them and with them through whatever it takes.

M – So with this question about dealing with things differently, I think it was when you talked about the parents just being here and knowing the culture, the Hispanic culture and things like that, Do you feel that even if you are Latina and you work in a school with a high populations and Latinos students that you still can’t relate to parents because, how would I put it, you don’t relate to the culture, you don’t want to relate to the culture – I am not saying you, I am saying this in general.

R – I think that some people have a hard time with the relationship piece, because they don’t want to put themselves out there. And it is very hard. You try, you know you walk that line of keeping in your professional persona and giving all the right answers and making sure you stay within that principal character and I don’t know maybe this is

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

because I am Latina, but I am, we are all about relationships and we build those from the time we are tiny, you know you have your aunts, and the ones that are not your aunts that you call your aunts and your cousins and like I said your neighbors and it is all about relationships you know since you were little that is all you ever seen. Always together as a family and as a group. I think for me it comes very easily, because that is how I am and that just – and every body can see that. I am not going to give you one answer here and another answer here, because this is who I am. So take it or leave it that is just me.

M – I agree with you, we are just so used to having – like everyone is our family. You are a friend for one time and then you become family.

R – That is what I tell the staff – look like it or not we are family. We are here, you know 7 or 8 hours a day and we see each other every day - 5 times a week – just like family. You may not like your aunt and so and so much but we still kiss and hug when she comes in and you still have to put up with her cause in the end we are family. That is something you got to remember that...got to remember that.

M – What kind of experiences as a Latina principal have you perceived were based upon prejudices? And it could be with parents, it could be with other staff members, it could be in the community but any experiences that you have...

R – I have been very fortunate I haven’t had any with either parents, community members, partners in Ed, businesses we have worked with or other staff. I just haven’t. I am just luck that way – or with the district.

M – Do you feel the one at the college was based on prejudice or...

R – that is the only time that I can go back – that was it for whatever reason.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

M – Like you I’ve never experienced anything...

R – Other people have commented that they have, but I have been very fortunate and never.

M – Do you think the comment that you go this position because of the high Hispanic population was that...

R – I don’t think it was meant as a prejudice, I just think it meant I represented the culture. It is just like you have African American principals and they are mainly placed at schools that have a high African American population and I think that has helped the relationships with that community.

M – And that was one of our questions the last time we met. Do you see that to be a problem that you are Latina and you are placed in a school with a high Hispanic population...do you see that to be a problem? Or a step towards a prejudice type of placement?

R – no I don’t think they are pigeon holing me or anything like that. No I just think they are finally seeing that that community needs to see their culture represented in the school. We can’t have a school where there is not one Hispanic in the front office or anywhere they walk in and then say I don’t understand why the parents don’t want to come in – I don’t understand why we are not getting the by-in. Well they don’t see themselves represent anywhere. So I think they are finally realizing that we need to do that. That we need to get more qualified Hispanic people to be in leadership.

M – Do you find it equally as important to put Hispanic/Latinas in schools that don’t have high Hispanic population?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

R – Yes, it is equally as important so that they see that we don't only work out in the schools with the high Hispanic population. We can work out anywhere. A good leader is a good leader no matter where you put them. It could be in an elementary school or a high school – a good leader is a good leader. It is the same bases you just have to change who you are dealing with.

M – I agree with that very much. Ok and the last question is, have you experienced any hindrances as a principal within your Latina culture?

R – You know, I think sometimes the Latinas are more – they are harder on you – because it is almost like we are divided. There's the Latinas that don't want to speak Spanish, they don't want to relate to the culture. They will say that all the Spanish shouldn't be late. That is not part of the culture. No, they just need to be taught. And here I am I'm Latina and I speak Spanish not ashamed of it so I go the opposite. I say no I'm Latina, I'm not ashamed, I speak Spanish to my parents, I speak Spanish during the meetings, I don't have a problem with that. So I think there is that difference – this is almost like tow camps and I am just not ashamed of who I am.

M – and I think that was what I was referring to when I asked you the question earlier about or I made the statement that you can have a Latina principal at the school that doesn't necessarily mean...

R – Correct that the culture is going to change or anything is going to be different.

M – Or they can relate to the parents...

R – Exactly or they can relate. They sometimes don't want to relate. They try to distant themselves and like I say I don't have a problem. I mean we are who we are. We come in

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

all walks of like and you don’t look down on people just because what they are coming to you with. That is what makes us so rich, why our culture is so rich, just like any culture and I just don’t have a problem. I think it comes from my upbringing.

M – So they can be harder on you. So can you explain that a little bit as far as how that has affected you or how that has...

R – That has not affected me at all. I just think they do things there was and I will do things my way. We will see which one works out the best.

M – Have they been negative toward you?

R – No they have not been negative. I just remember specifically I made the comment about the parents being late, and how that is part of our culture and one principal go very offended and said I’m Latina I’m never late and it is not part of our culture and that is just an excuse. It is not an excuse I think that is the reality that we are dealing with. We can approach it the way you can educate them and help them see the importance of it, or you can approach it your way and send letters and scold them and make nasty phone calls and you let me know how that works out and then we can talk, because there’s you know, I think it is a culture thing it’s not just because we are lazy. No you are right when we’re generalizing it is just general statements – it’s a culture thing. Of course not everyone is like that. If you are in a school and you are having a huge problem with that and they are all Hispanics then it is a culture thing. I mean you are always going to be late because I think that comes from here. When I go to Puerto Rico I have a hard time because everything is running way behind and I’m ready. I say, but that’s the reality we have to deal with so lets just start from that point and go from there.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

M – I like the point that you make when we generalize we put everyone in the same boat, but not everybody really is a victim because there are a lot of Latinas that don’t follow those rules.

R – No and it depends if you have been raised here have you been here long enough you may not fall in that category. But if you have been here only a year or two or less then you still following what you did wherever you came from.

M – And some people will never change and we have to be...

R – And we have to be realistic.

M – And you know when we look at the non-Hispanic culture you have a lot of people that have the same problems.

R – that have the same problems. If you talk to other schools – I’ve spoken to another school where the majority is white they had to put out a clock in the care rider circle and turn it around after it was time with the sad face to let them know they were late. Well obviously they were having a problem too. We all have problems we have to tackle. Sometimes they are all the same all across it doesn’t matter. Like I say where I was AP they were late too and they were mostly white. Different reasons same outcomes.

M – To wrap it up and since we are talking about roles of a principal I would like you to share with me your highlights your best experiences.

R – Since I’ve been here – a little bit over a year, we got the Toyota Literacy grant, which is a national grant – I feel very fortunate. We wrote that in conjunction with – elementary and – elementary and we got it and that is a great achievement cause when I got here last semester we needed more parent involvement. The parents were asking for more adult

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

ESOL classes and this is geared to that. I must say that my area superintendent, she was so supportive. She provided us with a portable so they have their own portable where the parents can come in have their adult jobs, that’s been really great. And to get that recognition for getting that help for the parents and the kids – so that has been really good. Also we have partnered with Compaq. When I worked downtown I worked on the same floor with Compaq when I got to the school I said we can definitely use your partnership. We have reading buddies that come to our centers and recognize our honor roll students so that has been wonderful and also a gift from music we have strings here. This is the first year we have strings for third grade so all third graders take violin. They are going to have a concert coming up in May. So that has been really great – the things that you can do for the kids. And now through a gift for teaching and a gift for music we are going to give away 35 bikes to 4th grade students. So we are keeping track of their homework, we are keeping track of points and in May they will come and do the safety lessons, they’re going to fit them for helmets and everything else and 35 kids will get bikes. And I think that through reaching out to your partners in Ed and trying to give it all back to the community so that they see that we are here to stay and we are here to help you.

M – And as a Latina principal what has been in your role one of the most negative or I hate the word negative – unpleasant?

R – You know what? I haven’t had anything so unpleasant – there are all things we deal with everyday. You know that parent that is just not happy or that basically has been it, the parents. Even the teachers have been great. I think when you are a person that likes to

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

build relationships you are always here and put yourself out there I think that makes it a lot easier. So I really can’t tell you that I have had unpleasant situations.

M – You are really a builder of relationships. I can tell from our two interviews that we have had and I think that is a big key. Even though you are the new kid on the block like you said there are more experienced ones, there is a lot to learn from what you re saying.

R – I think it is ...you got to have these relationships because even though I have been here a year, I am already getting calls from teachers at other schools saying, I heard how great it is to work at your school I want to come and work over here and to me that is the greatest compliment and these are good teachers, so when I hear that good teachers are saying I heard how from teachers at your school how great it is here, if you have an opening I would love to come over there – to me that is the best. When people want to come and work here and we are doing it all for the kids, then it is wonderful. That is what it is all about. If I have a great team of teachers and I can tell we are all here for the kids, then the parents know that the community knows that – we are all on boards.

M – And that is the recognition that you need.

R – I don’t need to be on TV – when I get those emails saying I heard from so and so in your school how great it is to work there and I would love to work for you that is all I need. Ok, I had a great day today. No matter what else happens.

M – It does not surprise me. In fact, I always say that it does not matter the person you are – you can be Latina, African American, Asian, whatever and people know when you are fair and square and you do a good job, they want to work for you.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R – And that is why I say it doesn’t matter who you are – a good leader is a good leader no matter what – across the board.

M – We have come to the end of the interview.

R – It comes so quick. It was wonderful.

M – And then when you get those transcripts they like...

R – I was shocked. We didn’t talk that long...

M – And they were at 12 font... Tell me about the order of the questions were they good.

R – They were great. They flowed. Very nice. They just lead to each other.

M – Is there anything else you see that I need to work on or improve...

R – I like the way you clarified that other question about the Latina principals and the one you said that maybe there was another – that clarification helped.

M – Ok – One of the things that as I went through the first interview I listened I sound so Ummmm and this is so new to me also so I don’t know how much to deviate from the questions that I have and after my readings I found – it’s just a conversation.

R – And that’s what it seems – we are just having a conversation. It flows very well.

M – So, any recommendations for me to do later on?

R – No it sounded really great.

M – I am going to do the same thing. I am going to transcribe them.

R – And email them to me.

M – And email them to you. Take a look at them and then we have one more interview and then after that we just kind of look at the whole picture – think about it if you see.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Pilot Study Interview #3 – Mrs. RX

M. Good morning Mrs. RX.

R. Good morning.

M. thank you for allowing me to come to your school today, especially on a daylike this

R. No problem.

M. Did you receive the transcribe for the last interview and are they ok with you.

R. Yes they are fine.

M . Today is going to be a shorter interview and we are going to start to deal with how Hispanic female career paths and how are they different from non Hispanics paths. So most of my questions are going to deal with career paths for Hispanics.

M. to start off would you share with me some of your experiences and or your beliefs on choosing school administration or school principals as a career path for Hispanics females.

R. my reason for choosing to be a principal or administrator was that I wanted to be able to help those parent s and students (the Latinos) parents and students. I think our population is growing and we are underrepresented when it comes to administration and the people who are going to be able to help us and understand how to reach us and how to make us succeed. A lot of times there’s the belief that you are Hispanic, that you just came, that you are not going to achieve the same. The students we continually to do that, we just ask them, we water down the curriculum, not so! Those students can achieve the same and we need to get them all the same opportunities that everyone else has. And the parents also. We just can say they don’t want to get involved or they can’t speak the

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

language, so we don’t have to inform them now. Those kids, you know those are our future and that is my main reason for getting into administration where I can make the difference and that I can in a community.

M. How many Latina principals do you have in your district? More or less. Just give me a reference.

R. Around six to eight.

M. And do you find that to be a low number compare to the non-Hispanic administrators.

R. Oh yes that is a low number.

M. Do you find that the county is working at that

R. the county is working very hard. We just have to get more Latina teachers to go into administration into that path.

M. and what do you see the county is doing?

R. the County has a leadership program where the principal selects two people on their staff that they think will be good at leadership and they have a tier program that they will go through that will prepare them to be assistant principals and it gets them in that mind set if they want to go into administration and they can go back and get their masters if they haven’t done so yet.

M. you mentioned in your past interviews your concern about having or looking for Latina teachers that are or you think would be great in administration. Could you elaborate on that?

R. I think they don’t want that challenge. It’s a lot. They see the work that you do and the hours you put in and that it is not just about the students, which would be great if it

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

were just about the students, then you have the parents and then you have the learning community people that are putting pressure on you and with FCAT scores, whether we like it or not or whether we believe we should be measured or not, that is how we are judged and when the scores come out – it comes out. And when they see, all the things that play, the budget and everything, and a lot of times they are just happy teaching. I find that it is a lot easier when they are younger. When they come out of college and they have been teaching 1,2 or 3 years I can talk to them and they are more willing to go into administration, but the teachers who have already been teaching 10 years or so, they are happy teaching. They may want to go into leadership position as curriculum resource teachers , compliance, but they don’t want to go all the way to administration.

M. Do you feel from your perceptions and experience that this will always be a struggle for Latina women in administration?

R. Yes, I think it will always be a struggle. We need to get more of the teachers coming out of college to get into that mindset. Start grooming them to be our future leaders. From the beginning, give them the 3 years of teaching and then start putting in that little seed – you would be great at this, let see how you take responsibility, team leaders and you just move them up.

M. Is there any kind of effort from the County to have a group of Latina principals to motivate them?

R. No

M. Has any of the Hispanic principal taken the endeavor or talked about that?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R. no, but it is something to think about. It is only what the county is doing for everyone. No specific Latina group. I will be working on that!

M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if you did would you describe.

R. No. The principal that I had work with for 2 1/2 years when I was assistant principal she wasn't Latina, but when I worked with Tomasita Ortiz in the county she was my mentor. I worked with her for 3 years and just her drive and her passion for our students, for Latino students, that they make sure they get a good education and that they get the same rights and the same services that all the students are , and for our parents, that they get the same rights and that they are informed and that they are getting everything just like everyone else. She is so passionate and she not only leave that at the county level but she also takes it to the state level and if she has to she will take it to the National level. And she is remarkable and to see her drive and passion for so many years, and she is such a smart women that is wonderful. Her organizational skills her people skills are just amazing to see her at work and I had the privilege of 3 years.

M. did she mentor you to enter administration?

R. Yes, she did. When I started working for her, probably a couple of months later I started working on my masters, and I got my masters while I was working for her.

M. if you had not met Mrs. Ortiz or not worked for her would you have considered going into administration?

R. I might have considered it , but I don't know if I would have been pushed into it or encouraged into it as much as she encouraged me and she kept after me until I did. She

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

has always been so supportive even to do this day she comes out to my school and we stay in touch.

M. do you feel that with the mentorship that this is something lacking in the county and maybe that is why some Latinas don’t go into administration.

R. I was just thinking about that. That is definitely lacking in this county. They are suppose to provide us with a mentor, even as beginning principals, and I have to say that the person I was provide with was not even in the county, can’t remember the name of the program, but it is a statewide program, she has never been a principal of a school, she has always been a college professor or a college administrator. She had no idea of the budget she had no idea of FCAT scores or anything like that there was no point in me talking to her. I talked to my other fellow principals in the same spot that I am, but it would be wonderful to have someone here, in the county that understands what we are going through has gone through it that we can talk to. It could be a very lonely position.

M. Since you haven’t had a mentor, do you think that is something you would like to see done or be a part of, mentoring Latinas?

R. Yes, I think that would be wonderful, because I don’t know if we give them a chance to come out shadow me for a day and to really get into the business of a principal –this is what it’s like to be in a school. I think it would be wonderful. It would either turn them to it or not – but I think it is needed.

M. What stereotypes about your culture have you believed experienced or served that have either helped or hinder you from getting to your position.

R. I haven’t had any stereotypes that had influenced in me not getting my position at all.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

M. Do you believe other Latinas may believe that certain stereotypes play a role?

R. I think they do. For example – speaking Spanish. Some of them don't want to speak Spanish not even to the parents. They see that as a negative. I see that as an asset that I can communicate in the language that my parents can understand. For whatever reason some Latinas think, no I have to speak English and not speak Spanish and I don't understand that. And that is one I have seen.

M. Another one that is very prevalent and probably in other Hispanic cultures is the one that the female doesn't advance, doesn't go to school, the one that does is the male. I am wondering if that is a stereotype is a hindrance to Latina women going forward. But in this case maybe not.

R. I don't see it as a hindrance. It has changed so much and we have so many household that whether they want to or not both parents have to work or you have more single mothers.

M. How do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal?

R. I think by starting a mentoring program and a cohort group here of Latina principals and expanding it through FABES and through all the surrounding counties.

M. Well as you stated earlier that you had no one except for Tomasita and if you did not work for Tomasita you probably would never had anyone. And you mentioned earlier that you always look at your staff to see teacher who have those leadership strengths,

R. Definitely, because I have to develop people that is what I am here for to look for those teachers who have those skills – the people skills the organizational skills and those are the ones you work with.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

M. and you want to assist the county to since it has the need to for more Hispanic teacher.

And you made it and you want other s to make it!

M. Are there any obstacles you perceive to be different from non-Hispanic woman because of the culture and diversity?

R. no I don't see any obstacles. It's an even playing field. It the same. We all have the same problems. When I talk to other principals that are not Latinas – it's the same issues that they are facing. Parents are parents, the issues are the same. You're late everybody is late in all the school.

M. Is there anything in these questions I need to change or work on?

R. great questions.

M. I think I need to work on the question about stereotypes. Make it a little clearer.

R. Yes that would be very helpful. Maybe some type of leading in information

M. Thank you for your time and I will transcribe and send it to you for approval.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. RVX

M. Good morning Mrs. RVX and we are going to interview you for my dissertation and feel free to share whatever is in your heart to share. First I am going to start out with...

1) M. Would you share with me your life story anything you want to share with me about your life story?

R. I was born in NYC. I am what you call a NY Rican, so I was born in NY but my parents are from PR, so of course my first language was Spanish at home. My mother didn't know English and it gives me goose bumps as I think about it, is that she learned English with us. So she taught us at home. She went ahead and bought us the phonic books to make sure she did the phonic with us. She went ahead and bought little records and a record player so that we could listen to fairy tales. So my mother did all of that at home. Got us squared away at school. I went to parochial school in NYC. I went to college in NY my freshmen and junior years. I graduated as a junior out of High School went to Hunter College. I was going to major in psychology, that was my first major, however while I was there I realized that teaching was something I wanted to do. I used to work – my mother eventually went to work at a day care center – so I would work there and volunteer, and during the summers I would help tutor and after school, so from there I thought I might as well get a teaching degree I am doing it anyway. So my parents moved to PR when I was in college. During my sophomore year I went to PR. My parents were going to sale their house. They didn't get to sell it so I went to PR and my sister got stuck for a year. Eventually we went back to NY in my third year so I went to Inter America University in Fort Buchanan in Puerto Rico which was on the base so I

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

had classes in English which helped me because I was, by then I always studied in English. Went back to NY and then by my senior year my parents moved back to PR. By then I knew people in PR inter America, in between both universities. I finished with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and secondary education. Well in my education degree I decided that I wanted special education too, so I took special education courses. I did work in Fort Buchanan consolidated school system. I did my internship there then I worked with the program assistance, then I became one of their permanent substitutes. Before I did that I worked with Aladra intermediate school in Santurce as a title one teacher. Before that I also did work as a title one English teacher at the Balbosa in Puerto de Tierra. I had seniors and I was still in college while I was during that. So I went back and forth. So eventually after working in the public school system and not making enough money, I decided to become the permanent sub at Buchanan and there you had to have a teaching degree, even to become a sub. So there were three or four of us as permanent subs so worked between the whole three schools. Eventually one teacher was out sick so I did special Ed reading for three months. So, I did that and eventually I got married and my husband was transferred to Texas. So I spent 18 years in Texas. So I did a lot of my career life in Texas. In Fort Hood, independent school district I worked. When I first got there it was hard to get a teaching job I got there and they told me, Oh you need to become a bilingual teacher. But here I had a degree. I had been teaching English. I had a psychology and education so it was hard to get in their system, so I went to work for Central Texas College. In Central Texas College I taught developmental reading, writing, ESOL and I taught DESEPS to soldiers –basic skills in reading writing

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

and math and English. I did that and eventually I met another Latina who was already in the system and she told me let me show you how you can get in. So she opened the door and told me look, you just go and see so and so tell them you have this. She told me that and I went and got a job. That I was for two years and couldn't get into the system and so I finally got into the system and I was hired as an ESOL teacher and I taught ESOL middle school for a few years back then it was self contained 6th, 7th and 8th taught all Math, science, reading, English, except music and PE. Eventually – In Texas all you can do was to just go to school there was nothing to do were I was at- so I went and got my masters in special education at the university of Austin of Texas. I would drive to Austin over an hour and a half to go to school. So I got my special ed then I realized I really wanted to do ED Leadership, too, so I went back and got another masters at the state university and that was two hours away...everything was far from where I was at. But I got a lot of experience. I got a lot of education there, but when I got into the district eventually I was able to go through and I met some good people. My first Assistant principal became later on the executive secondary director of the district, so when there was a opening there and I applied, at first I didn't get in because it was for curriculum. When she had a position and I applied I got it so I became the bilingual ESOL consultant for the district, back then we were consultants, so I dealt with the ESOL, bilingual, curriculum organizing everything. So I spent from 1994 to 97 in that position. The district restructured, they changed our titles and became instructional specialists. I was first a district instructional specialist, but when they restructured we were sent to different schools to work. So I went to a school and I sent up a bilingual Korean program

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

and a bilingual German program. So I went to the Korean program not the Spanish, but the Korean. I was there less than three years. The thing was that I kept applying to become an assistant principal, I couldn't get in, I couldn't get in. They said, You will eventually would eventually get it. Eventually was that I was in an area where it was called the good ole boy system. So if you where from there or you were a retired colonel you got it, but if you were Hispana, it was kind of hard to get it. it was a few and it was me and just a few Hispanas in the whole district. I would have people who maybe had not finished their master's get into one of those positions and here I had two masters and I couldn't get in. So it took a while to get in to that. Eventually I got tired. I told my husband, we come to Florida twice a year, and I said you know what I am tired of this. Here I have two degrees I want to become a principal I want to become and administrator and nothing. So several years down the light, JM here from the district with F. from the multilingual department here were recruiting in San Antonio so I went with a friend and we were in NAVE and my friend was applying to come to Orlando and I just went with her and I said you know I wouldn't mind finding information about administrative positions and J told me well it is kind of different – in Florida you have to go into the pool the whole thing we do here in this county. So, OK I left it alone. I went back to my district and I didn't feel I was being appreciated. So I told my husband you know I am tired of this do you mind if I apply? Because at the same time I was apply for the department of defense to go back to PR to work in Fort Buchanan and he said sure...he was just humoring me. I called JM and he said you know we need people like you in Florida. He said just take any job and you will see that within a year you will move up.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

And that is what I did. I took a teaching job teaching Varying Exceptionalities bilingual special ed. I got the job over the phone with a principal right next door, right next to this school. And he hired me. I didn’t realize I was a commodity for him – that I had special education, that I had bilingual and that I was willing to take a school that I didn’t know where it was at. So he gave me the job over the phone and within a month I was already over here. Came and did fingerprinting, bought a house and we have been here ever since. We have been seven years here. When I first got here I took the bilingual special education job because I had met people in the district already I was kind of recruited already – you know you should try for one of the compliance – the ESOL, so I went and the following year got a job as the ESOL Compliant – whatever the title was, we changed it with the central learning community. I was there for a year because they knew I wanted to be an assistant principal I was able to apply. I went to several interviews I didn’t get in, but eventually I got a High school so I was there for two years as an assistant principal over the ESOL over the special Ed department over reading and language arts at the 9th grade center. From there once the schools restructured and there was some movement, I was able to go to U. High School which is on the other side of town but it was totally different from the school I was at. I went from a D/F school to a B school. The population at University was mainly Hispanics and whites, where at the other schools was majority black and some Hispanics. So it was a totally different experience. Eventually there was an opening at the district for multilingual director everybody knew that that was my background. I was able to apply and I was multilingual director for curriculum with T for a year. Then this opportunity came to my door in January. And I wasn’t even thinking – I

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

did want to become principal- but I was waiting because I was doing my doctorate – I said ok eventually. I said when I grow up I would become a principal. Well eventually I had to grow up real quick because this opportunity came and I applied and I got it. This school the principal was going to open a new school. However it was the same school we were at we were a swing school so my school was under renovations/ construction. I went over there the end of January to July almost August to this building – so I am here.

2) M. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

R. Long time ago when I was in Texas when I did my Ed Leadership I wanted to be the principal, because I was doing...we had 900 something students we had an assistant principal we had a principal and when they were gone, I was it. They would say, ok M. you are it. So they would leave and I would take the leadership of the school. So I knew back then I wanted to be a principal.

3) M. What was your motivational in becoming a principal?

R. I think I had Ed Leadership in my blood. It was ok I can do this and people can do that. I love coordinating things, and I guess I like that – to be in charge, but I also like to work with a team. So I wanted to be in a school where I could help, for example this community is a Hispanic community, it is a title one campus, not too far from where I live. I wanted to work with people of my background. This is a bilingual center and it also has special education, bilingual special education. I wanted to come and work in an area like this so when the opportunity came around I took it.

4) M. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R. My mom and dad that are in PR, but my husband had been very supportive. He’s the one that sheltered me when I went to school. Doing two master and two children and him being in the military wasn’t that easy, plus teaching, but has always been there to help me. So if I needed to study he would do stuff with the kids and matter of fact, if I had to have something typed out or proof read he would help me do that. He was my backbone and still is my backbone. He is here volunteering right now. But even with my doctoral program he’s the one that says no you got to go and do it. Because sometimes I say this is hard, I am principal, I am doing my doctorate and opening a new school, it is kind of hard, but he says no you can do it. And I know I can do it, but sometimes you get kind of tired, it’s like I can’t do all of this, but you go home and you do.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

R. My mom, my mom was wonderful. My mom eventually became an educational technician and she works at Fort Buchanan. She is still working with 4 and 5 years old. So, she didn’t finish her Bachelors degree, but went and got an associate, got her GED, learned English, went to school, she’s done her CDA. So she has been working on the base for the last 30 years. So she’s been like a teacher. She became the teacher I also followed. She was very supportive and she still is.

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

R. I do and she wasn’t of my ethnicity. When I was in Texas M B she was the, the lady who was my assistant principal at first and she was wonderful. She was so supportive of the Bilingual program, of the ESOL program. She was just a great person and she was my

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

role model. She was real focus and we would do things this way, but she was very compassionate. She was Slovakian, her family was from Slovakia. So she understood – her mom didn’t know English came to America, so she was from an immigrant family. So she was the one who helped me a lot.

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system was effective for you?

R. Here in Florida, Yes. In Texas I didn’t see that. It depends in Texas is a different world, especially where I was at. But here I have had help. It’s been kind of hard for people when they come here to learn the system especially in Orange county you have to know how to go to the PMP program, getting into the pool. That thing I had to learn, but I had other people to help me, I had other principals, other administrators. My area superintendent right now was my boss several years ago when I was in the learning committee, and she helped me. And she is the one who helped me get my foot in the door and she is currently my new boss. And also my secondary director who is Hispana, she is Cubana, and she was pushing me to do this to, she was well, you need to do this, we are in the same doctoral program you need to become a principal now. So that’s another push there.

8) M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

R. I think the same perception I have now except I know it’s more work. I guess because I have been in leadership for several years and I been at high schools, I’ve been at elementary schools and middle schools, I guess the High School one, was a lot that I learned from it, I worked with other principals and I got to see the different styles, and

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

you go well I do this like this one did or I'll do things, or I won't do it like this but then when you come here you go okay this is a different monster because now that's one of the things you say okay now I have to grow up, I'm the one in charge. I have to make sure that the facilities are right, that the teachers are right, that the FCAT, that the kids, that the parents, so it's a lot of responsibilities, so that was the only thing, you know, all of that but I had good role models. I think this has been real interesting the whole move to this building the whole facility, because now I know what it entails. And I can tell the men out there that the gate does not close, you need to go fix it, So I go tell them. They go the opposite, or oh here she comes, because I'll go argue with them and say you know you haven't fixed this, you know my kids need air conditioning my teachers are sweating the bathrooms are stopped up and you did construction here so they don't want to see me.

9) M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

R. I don't think my perception changed, maybe of other people, maybe for example, the parents -I have a very good community here and they work hard and they ask things of me and I try to help my community, for example in our SAC I have a lot of my PLC parents and when they came to SACs around a months ago they voice their concerns, for example they want English classes at night, they wanted a parent coordinator, they didn't say a parent coordinator, they wanted someone to help to train them, so I listened to them and I hired people, for example, my coordinator here. I am going to do things with them, I think they perceive me a little like she's the principal, and I still see myself as myself. I'm a hands on person, like I'll walk this building if I have to clean up something I clean

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

it, if I have to go do the breakfast, I do the breakfast, One of my teachers the other day said you know, he told me and my assistant principal, you know I am looking at you and I really admire you, you all are getting to everything, you are running for buses, and you are doing this to both of us, so I guess they perceive it maybe a little bit that were the principals, sometimes I just feel I’m a person.

M. How about specifically with Latinas

R. I don’t think so because I guess were networks here in Orlando, we all know each other, so we’re a tight knit family, so I know I can pick up the phone and call one of my comrades and say I need help with this or I’ll call the district my multilingual department you know, Hey Tomasita I need help or I’ll call Francis and I’ll call the girl and say I need help and we help each other out, I know there’s not a lot of Latinas out there, but were growing and what we need to do is build leadership within our own Latinas, for example Mary here, my coordinator, she starts to do her at leadership she wanted to go into counseling I said what do you want to go into counseling, you’re a leader , go into leadership, you have to push each other, they like - but I don’t know if I can do this - you can do it . I have other girls that I know, teachers that worked with me in the community that go into leadership because you have those leadership skills. So, I think because we network we’re doing pretty good I think we need more out there because something is you go to a school and sometimes it funny cause you’ll say - they’re not going to put two Latinas together to run a school - but they’ll have two whites. Two Anglos doing the school so okay why can’t I have two hispanas here, but we don’t and I know what it is

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

because you have to have your balance just what I do with my faculty I have a balance of my faculty. Pero, we need more.

M. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?

R. I don't, no I look at them as a person, I don't look at them as a Latina, cause if a person is not really ready for that then you say you know this may be better for you, not because your Latina, because they can be Anglo, they could be black, you have to know if the leadership skills are there, okay and some people are not cut out for it, you know, the same way they could be blond, they could be white, they could be black, you just have to see, the style, but I do encourage my Latina friends, that I know can do it. I push them, that have the leadership capabilities.

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

R. It was a limitation, it was a limitation, it wasn't an asset. It was a big limitation. Now if I lived in a place like San Antonio Texas where the Hispanic population was different, but where I was at no. They really didn't care, you had would we would call a token Hispanic, maybe. For example, I had applied for a curricular position at one point and I knew I was qualified for that and I did not get it. A friend of mine who was black got it and what she told me was - she said, well when I go into a building or walk into an office they know I'm a minority. You walk in you could still go for white. So it took a while so you know and other people that I worked with you know that was the perception. It was like no, no, you'll get it eventually. Why should I have to wait it? If I have what I can do I will do it. Although, I've learned a lot throughout the years, you have to be careful; you

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

have to be politically correct. At first when I became my consultant at my district I was all gung ho, you know you’re going to save the world, you just have to know how to save the world in a politically correct way. And sometimes you can’t say things you really want to say, you just have to know how to say it. In Florida, here in Orlando, in Orlando I have been fortunate. At first I went to several interviews for assistant principal, I didn’t get them and it wasn’t because I think that I was Hispanic, that wasn’t the problem because another Hispanic got it. But they really didn’t know me and till I got around and I had people help me - you need to have people help you and it doesn’t matter if people help me or not if they are Hispanic some have been Anglos. But my Hispanic colleagues, but people have helped me too.

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos? If you were, how do you feel about the placement?

R. I think this community where I am at several people interview. I think what they looked at was they needed somebody that could work with the population. Yes it is Hispanic, but it was I think because of my bilingual background as knowing how to you do bilingual and special education that we have here and that I know the community. So I think that helped. I don’t think I was picked because I was Hispanic because the one before me was not. She was Anglo. So, but I think the people who selected me and my area superintendent know me and trusted me and she knew that I could do it, she would say you know you can do this that’s why I can do this, she had faith in me and that’s why.

M. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

R. There are some ethnic groups I think don't really care for me to be here. And I don't know if it is because I am a Latina but it could be, I'm not sure.

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

R. That I had about myself, I didn't have any limitations. According to me I was, okay. It was their problem. Because I have always been assertive and I was a go getter and I could do this you know, so I never doubted myself on doing things, other people might have, but I didn't. But you have to know yourself and what you can do.

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?

R. You have to be articulate and you have to know the English language because a lot of people hear people with accents, and they may say she doesn't know English. And it is important okay. When I was in Texas, which is so funny, I moved to Texas, and it was in the middle of nowhere, I go and apply to work at Central Texas College, and when I get my application the girl learns that my degree was from Inter American University of Puerto Rico, well, she didn't know that I was born and raised in New York City, she didn't know that my first language, we had Spanish when I was little, but I grew up in an English environment, and she sees and I talk to her in English and she goes - where did you learn to speak in English so well? I told her Brooklyn, New York. Because it was just the perception you see Puerto Rico on a transcript and I didn't talk to her and - this was like the secretary of that little office -she was wondering, how did I learn to speak English? They knew or think that if someone came from Puerto Rico or from Hispanic

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

think that they would not know how to speak English or at least without an accent. So, what I told her, the accent that she was hearing was a New York accent, it was a Brooklyn accent, and that was what she was hearing, she was from the south. So you know, English, you need to have English mastered and I know a lot of people who have degrees, a lot of females that I’ve met here who don’t know English and it’s not that they don’t know the stuff but you can’t come into an interview a lot of Hispanics don’t know how to interview, I notice that when I interview people right now. And they need the mastery of the English language. Just to compete with everybody else. Cause you are competing.

M. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

A. I didn’t have that one; mine was a New York accent so.

M. Anything you would like to add.

R. No.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. RVX

1) M. Share with me as much as you can about your role as a principal

R. Right now, my role right really should be of an instructional leader however taking over a new campus it has not only been instructional leader- it’s been getting people together, hiring, getting new folks to work together as a team, I have a lot to new teachers with no experience so it is getting them the help they needed and also building a new leadership team. Also opening a new school, a renovated campus. I have people here who were here before this school, now there other are other ones and they this is the old school and it is no. It is a renovated campus with new faculty and with new students, because we have rezoned so we have students from different schools. So right now I have been doing a lot of facilities, construction work, but my main focus is to get this campus together to meet the needs of our students. We are a bilingual center school also a special Ed bilingual school so we have a lot of needs, so my role right now is a lot of different ones...Not only as a leader, but also maintaining a safe and orderly environment for my students and my teachers, and also meeting new parents and the goals of all of our new students.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?

R. I just had an IEP meeting with a parent and the mother was Hispanic and she wanted the meeting in English though, but at the end she told me that I was the first “directora” that had given faith in an IEP meeting. Also working with, because this is mostly Hispanic population, my parents, my community my parents really enjoy and like that they do have an Hispanic administrator that they can come talk to in Spanish if they need

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

to and voice their concern. My teacher too, I think they feel really relax that they have a Hispanic administrator...sometimes I think they are too relax – they want to talk Spanish all the time, which I think it is great but we need to maintain our English and protocol with other faculty and the kids. But I think they all like the idea of having a Hispanic in place.

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?

R. Self Imposed? I think I imposed maybe sometimes saying, I am not ready for this, I have other things to take care of, I haven't grown up...it is not grow up, it's that once you become a principal it like you are in charge of everything. It's like, it is not only the teachers, it's not only the school, it is also the accountability of making the grade, making sure the budget is in order. So those things give you a little bit of fear and say that I really didn't want to do that but I am and I am doing OK with it.

4) M. How do you perceive other and by other I mean the majority culture, view you as a principals?

R. others, for examples administrators or...

M. Administrators, parents, majority culture anybody that you come...how do you perceive that they view you as a principal?

R. It depends who you talk to. I think a lot of them realize that I am here to help them. That I am knowledgeable. Of course, you have some of those people who prefer not to, and I hate to say this, have a Hispanic principal. So they may have there biases. Other people know that I am here, that I do have the experiences and I do have the education

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

and I am learning and I am trying to do as much as I can for them so I guess they will see as time goes on that I am capable of running the school.

5) M. As a Latina principal do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, personnel) differently than your non-Latina peers?

R. I deal with things as myself, so I am not sure how other people are dealing with things. I know I look at the needs of the parents and the students and the teachers, and I don't go asking other principals, "well what did you do with this person." We all have different personalities. I am more I think of a people person so I think that is part of it too. And also culture comes into play sometimes because you are more sensitive to a Hispanic parent that you know doesn't understand the language. I guess I am more sensitive to that and I try to explain and help them, not only to my Hispanic counterparts but I also have a lot of Haitian Creole parents here, so in order to meet their needs, I hired a Haitian Creole person. A gentleman who has an educational background too and law background to work with them. So I want my parents to know that I am here to help them.

6) M. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

R. Of course, of course. This was an A rated school for two years and my predecessors were not Hispanic. They...at one point the one that was here before me, there was a certain grade, there was a male, then we had another female and they were Anglo, and they may say we got the grade because they did it so I have to prove it – no we have to get the grade, but my population has changed so there is an added stress intention – I have to maintain this grade with our students although we are a bilingual campus and I

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

am getting children from other schools so there is stress intention there...but I will make the grade.

7) M. As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on Prejudices.

R. Before I move here from Texas, it was a different culture/population. Really it was a good ole boy town. Mostly males who got into the leadership role and then Anglo female and I was like at that bottom of the totem pole. I experienced that. I had two masters degrees one in Ed leadership and one in special Ed and people who did not even finish their masters got into a leadership role. And I was told at one point don't worry your time will come, you'll get one eventually. So I have experienced that and here too I have experienced some of that from some of the staff who don't think a Hispanic can do it. So I experienced it here too.

8) M. As a Latina principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

R. No. I think all my Hispanic counterparts have been really supportive. I have for example people at the district who have said hey you can do this keep on going.

When I moved from my last job to this one the director I worked for sent me some flowers and she said I have a legacy that you left behind. So that give me goose bumps just to think that, so I gotten pushed by a lot of people. My boss was the first one that told me, she is an area superintendent, no, you have to go, you have to progress, you need to go ahead and do this to go on. Other people that I have worked with have said the same thing. So I have gotten a push from everybody. End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. RVX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

R. I think it’s one that a lot of people think that they can’t go into, or say oh no that’s not me, for example I was one, for a long time I did not want to become a principal when I was in Texas, but since I did not get into it I let it go, I said I don’t need to be a principal to a point, cause I has leadership and that’s how I became a director for multi lingual, Well it’s still a leadership role, where I got to do a lot of impact with children, but when this opportunity came up, but I said I could do this, and a lot of people think that they can’t do this, right now I have two ladies on my staff that are doing their leadership, and one of them wants to be a counselor, I said why do you want to be a counselor, you have it in you to be a leader, you are a leader, but some people don’t think like that. But we just have to push each other.

2) M. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

In my district you can count them, we are a very big district, but as principals I would say maybe fewer than 20. But I would have to go through all the schools and see these are the Hispanic. I know quite a few but I don’t know more than 20.

3) M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

I had two. I have for example my secretary of director, she’s cabana, and she’s my mentor, and she is the one that pushed me to do this. Also my superintendent also. So she pushed me to do this. But mostly Maria has been my mentor this whole time. She works with me right now.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

4) M. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

R. Yeah there were because for example I would say oh I have not grown up, no I’m not ready for this, no it is too much responsibility, no I have to make sure the kids are fine, the teachers are fine and the finances are fine, so that was myself imposed. But I finally got over that one.

5) M. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

R. I don’t know I guess I did not see it as a stereotype, yes in the whole school system; it was really a male dominated, not more Hispania, and it was dominated by men. Back then it was like the good football coaches were the ones that became principal not Hispanic females. But the more we are going and the more we are becoming a diverse populations; you have a lot of Latinas in it. So it’s like move over we are here now.

6) M. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

R. I think a lot of it cultural because we and I want to say Corazon we have a heart in it, and we understand our culture and if you are a Hispanic principal you can’t forget that either, for example the population I am working with right now are Hispanic they are of maybe less fortunate, but I make sure that I bring back what I have with the parents I work with, with the teachers I work with, even the students. For example I have a little boy that is special ed and bilingual and is living with grandma and as a lot of trouble, but here I brought back some of my experiences from New York, and he lived in New York,

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

and I was telling him the other day, you I seen and you have suffered, I know where you have been and what you have seen but you can't let that take me down either. And you have to progress. So I think I bring a lot of that. Like I told him the other day, Yo se que tu tienes un buen Corazon, I know he does, however he has had some poor choices and done some bad things and down the path of no destruction, but you have to bring that out. So I think as a Latina we bring a lot of that too. I don't see that with other folks. I don't, but you know we are more family oriented, I don't know that's the way I see it.

7) M. Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

R. Yeah there was, before I got here I wasn't in a southern state, and that southern state and there wasn't a lot of Hispanic women, but the male got into the roles but females didn't especial Hispanic females, so that took me forever for me to get into the system where I was at. They let me get into a bilingual position, because I was Hispanic and had the background, but to go on they didn't. When I got here I did not see that in Florida, I guess Orlando areas were more diverse and there is a need for it.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. OX

M. Hello and thank you for letting me come and interview you even though you had a rough dismissal

O. One of a kind

M. I want you to know it was great sitting out there and just watching everything . I know how it feels like, been there done that.

O. I say we ended Friday with a bang.

M . I say you did.

M. This is our first interview. And it is on the Hispanic female perceptions and experiences as principals. I have a total of 13 questions, so feel free to elaborate or add whatever you want.

1) M. Would you please share with me your life story. Anything about your life, how you got started, where you were born. Anything you want to share with me just to get to know you better.

O. I was born and raised in NY and since you are doing your study on Hispanic principals, I was born to Hispanic parents. Both of my parents were born in Puerto Rico. My father grand mother came to NY with one of her son who at that time was in WWII and little by little the family came over from PR and my mother and dad met in NY, fell in love and married, the children were born there. I moved to florida in 1982, I did go to Fordham university in NY I should say) 1982 came to orlando and I have been here since. I have entered into the educational field in 1988 and have worked in different areas in the field of education. I have been a teacher of course, and a bilingual teacher, and esol

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

teacher, I have taught adults in adult schools, I have been a dean, have been a parent resource teacher and CRST. So I have done a few things within the field of education that have progressively lead to administration and I have been in administration since 1998 where I am presently at the time. So that is basically a synopsis of how I came from NY to Florida and where I am at now.

2) M. Share with me when did you first know you wanted to be a principal?

O. I think I would have to trace it back a couple of years after I left the classroom and I was a resource teacher and at that point in time I know I wanted to aspire to a position of leadership. And so it took a couple of years to get acclimated to it to the resource position, and once I got acclimated to it then I know that I wanted to pursue something that would make an impact, make a difference would impact children.

4) M. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal.

O. I think the influences, there are so many influences and to say that it is one particular person or I can't say that it is one particular person or one particular...that I have influenced by one particular event. I think it really stems from the experiences as a Hispanic that you encounter and go through that really lead you towards the direction that you know that you will make a difference. So it's all the experiences in life that I have had, with other people within the education system. I think one of the biggest influence is knowing the children and the challenges the children go through within the education system and the fact that so many of them are not on grade level are not the A students and those are the students I always wanted to reach. And seeing that and experience that as a teacher and seeing within the community how much of the needs there is. I think that is

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

one of the greatest influence you can have –that part in your life knowing that there is a need and that some how you can change that and make a difference.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

O . Very supportive. I don’t think I would have reached the level of administration without their support. Particularly in the sense that my parents do take care of my children and that is a very big help. In the Spanish culture that is very prevalent that your parents support you somehow, some way and so they have always been a part of my life and my children’s life. But without a doubt I would not be here if I didn’t have their support because this field takes lot of time away from your life. Many, many long hours in the job, you don’t leave until late in the evening and so you really need some support. And not only support in the line of taking care of your children, but you need emotional support as well –because it is a lonely job and you need lots of support like I said of your own family for your needs but also the emotional support.

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

O. I had, I think there have been lots of role models. Some in the education field and some – I really have to think long and hard because there have been so many role models in the education field and some that are not in the educational field that you know that have been instrumental in paving the way, not only me, but for other Hispanics along the way that have influence me in how they think and how they impact us. I think it is a combination within education and outside of education, not solely education. It could be

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

a political figure, it could be an artist, it could be people in the labor industry that really make a difference in the life of people.

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system was effective for you?

O. I perceived that it was effective. I believe I was able to follow the guidelines and the necessary planes that need to be taken. There is a part, and I truly feel that there is a part in following the plane and implementing, you know the implementation of when you start out as an assistant principal or principal. I think the networking is a total different arena. I think the people that develop the plan and guide you – the whole preparing principal process; I think that was a good experience for me. I think I did feel the support in following that plan. I think the arena of networking and developing relationships with other administrators that’s the hard part. It was so much, yes I had a great experience with preparing me for principal program and as far as the people that were leading it and any time I had a question I could call that office and they would guide me in the right direction and tell me what I had had to prepare ahead of time, so forth, so that goes well, but along the way when you are at that job site you do need networking and you haven’t really built enough relationships to really have that in place.

8) M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

O. A lot of my perceptions were on the ball. I think the work that I really truly didn’t feel is the loneliness – the loneliness of the job, because at the end of the evening when you are in the office and it is 8:30 or 9:00 and you are all by yourself and it is all about you being there all by yourself doing the job and you are not surrounded by people and you

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

are isolated from your family, isolated from your colleagues, and your social life is lost to a certain degree. Your social life sort of becomes nonexistent. The was the one thing that I really didn't feel as much as when I was an AP. Because when I was an AP I had the principal that I could cling on to and that we could connect and go out and at the end of the day I go on my merry way. As a principal that is it! You are there until late at night and you are the only one and that was the only thing I didn't feel. The second thing I didn't feel, and it has to be with feelings – you know your perceptions you can perceive it but sometimes you don't feel it. The other thing I didn't feel truly was the pressure with FCAT. I didn't feel the pressure of the FCAT. As an assistant principal I was always the cheerleader – oh one grade dropped I was the cheerleader for the principal. So I never felt that pressure because even if we dropped I was no let's go let's go we can do it. As a principal, I always feel that pressure, I always feel that stress, I always feel that need, to make those gains and sometimes those feelings are very over whelming. The perceive this to be a lot of what it is, but I didn't realize was what I would be feeling.

9) M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

O. No actually I haven't felt any of that.

M. How about specifically with Latinas

O. Maybe because I don't see it within myself. I am here to make a difference and to truly try to – I truly feel that I owe it to myself to make a difference and it's a part of a contribution that I need to make –myself. But how I view myself and I do view myself as having that role, which is trying to make a change – trying to change one life at a time.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Do I see myself – I don't think anyone sees me any differently than – I don't view myself differently. Now do other people view me any differently? I haven't really noticed.

M. Do you think Latinas view you differently? Maybe because of the role or status of the position

O. No I don't really feel that. I really don't. Besides the fact that there really aren't that many Latinas to view me differently, No I think I have been treated the same – before I was an administrator and now I don't think that has changed for most Latinas I have known meaning the people I have known that are Latinas who are genuine and the ones who are not genuine has not changed.

M. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas.

O. No I never try to discourage anyone from achieving their full potential and that is for them to decide. I do want everyone, people that work with me to realize their dreams if their dream is administration then I think they should go for it. I think there is room for everyone there is always room for everyone. So I don't try to stop anyone from going into it but I do at the time paint a realistic picture. This is what you are going to get into. Which is you might have an office with a computer and a phone, might feel good some days, but attached to that you lose a lot. You lose part of your life, personal freedom, your life, your time with family and so I do want them to realistically know what they are getting into. And I think we need wonderful people to become administrators and that is why I encourage them if that is what they want to do but at the same token it is a hard job and they need to know that they need to come prepare for because it make look different from the outside than when you are in the inside.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

O. Actually for this school it was an asset because this was a bilingual center and they needed a Spanish speaking principal and they needed someone who knew the community and would be able to hopefully connect with the community. So it was an asset for me to be chosen as a principal for this school. Really it became an asset being a Hispanic at that particular point.

M. And this has been the first school for you.

O. Correct!

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?

O. Yes I think I was selected precisely for that reason.

M. If you were, how do you feel about the placement?

O. Very comfortable. Truly I do feel comfortable. I feel comfortable when I drive into the community, when I get into my car, when I – I just feel like I am a connection and an extension of this community.

M. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

O. I think within the school I think everyone is fine with that because there are so many Hispanics and they do need Hispanic representation. So within the school because of the high number of Hispanics they feel connected with me. The non latinos within the school-some of them fully accepted me and the ones that didn't accept me left. Meaning transferred to different schools. Yes I think that there were people that had a difficulty

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

time with the realization that a Hispanic was going to be there supervisor, although they may not have verbally communicated it I sensed it. So I think they left and transferred to other schools the ones that accepted stayed on board. And as far as the district, I hope that the district does ok with it - you know you don't get out to the district. You spend most of your time at your school, in your office, I really don't even get an opportunity to sense how anybody from other areas perceive you. And truly we are so isolated from each other. We are in different learning communities, we are split into the north Southeast, southwest, central and so forth as we really don't get to see one another to begin with that often. And as far as the district, I never go to the district except once in a blue moon. Most of the time is spent at the school, so I am not particularly sure what the perception is about me because I always do my job and trying to do the best I can and I am not really focusing on the district – we don't have the opportunity to engage with other people so much.

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

O. I think that preconceived limitations for probably knowing – probably the experiences I've had in the past at time with other ethnic groups and how there is resistance towards acceptance. So there was preconceived limitations there because of those experiences, because you know that that has been a really true picture for you – different instances in your life that there has been resistance towards acceptance and it does become a preconceived notion when I take over that schools I know that there will be preconceived limitations. The preconceived limitations that I would hear that you would get to be a

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

principal because you are Hispanic and that they need Hispanic. Things of that nature.

And so of course you are thinking in that area.

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?

O. Great role. I think everyone every person to be equipped to be able to deliver and communicate effectively and that it’s a great role in– not that it shows in this interview this questions really make you think – but overall it does you really do need to be prepared to master the language and deliver messages and communicate effectively so that the information is disseminated the right way.

M. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

O. The accent always comes up. Every single kind of – will always come up with the curiosity among people sometimes its from non-Latinos that are very curious where you are from where your accent is from and within your Latino community they are still curious about you and why you speak a certain way. So, the question of where are you from always comes up. Where are you from –where were you born always comes up especially when the saying is said...oh you are a Hispanic where are you from where are your parents from. Usually when they ask you where you were born well I say I was born in NY the question that follows it is where were your parents born, because I know I hear the accent. Well my parents are from PR, but if they really simultaneous question, where are you from? where were you born? where are your parents from? So I am used to it cause I always heard that, always and I do have an accent so I am very, very

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

comfortable with people asking me that – At this point of my life I am used to it. I have always heard that. Like I said from all groups they have always asked me that.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. OX

1) M. Share with me as much as you like can about your role as a principal

O. My role as a principal is a 24/7 job - A wealth of multitasking and wearing many different hats throughout the day. Not only do I do the job throughout the day, but I carry it with me and take it home. It is never ending and so it is a job that has lots of responsibility that are required and it truthfully never ending. Very fulfilling, very rewarding, not financially, we are talking about intrinsically, it really satisfying and rewarding emotionally, spiritually, but definitely, definitely it is very much one that there is no down time and there's no time to relax, there is no time to truly stop and smell the roses.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?

O. It's gratifying that I feel that I am contributing one way or another to the community that I am able to assist them in some way or another with their children, with their family and I feel that I am empowering them to become informed about their children's education. I am teaching them, sometimes in very subtle ways, sometimes in other ways other than subtle, but we try to all the time teach our parents, our Latino parents how they can become a part of this educational system. Many of them don't know how, many of the rely on the educational process to make a decision for them. So I hope that in some way or other not only am I contributing but that I am empowering them to make decisions that will help their children, their families be more successful. I am hoping that I am a good role model, that I am a positive role model that through my acts and through my words that I can help them learn, learn, it is all about learning.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?

O. Self imposed? No I don't think there were any self imposed obstacles. Not that I would I myself...that I would have self imposed? No. That there were any, there might have had to do with the time constraints, if at that, but I don't think there were any on my part.

4) M. How do you perceive other and by other I mean the majority culture, view you as a principals?

O. I am not sure, because I am not sure because I am so self absorbed in my own little world in my own little corner, that necessarily you don't really see how others perceive you. If I come in at 7:00 and I leave at 8 or 9 at night, I am in my own little world and so I am very isolated from other administrators/principals. When we do see each other it is once in a while and we come together to discuss educational issues, we come together to discuss training and staff development and all that learning process that we come together for, so I am not sure how anyone perceives me. I can sometimes maybe guess, but I am not really sure. That's a very very...our district has sort of clumped different areas so if I am in the southeast or southwest I necessarily don't see people from the north or principals from the west or principals from the Central I don't ever see any of those. Once a year we come together and we come together for our leadership retreat and then we see everyone and at that point we are so focused on something else, on another direction that well there is no time for me to know how others perceive me.

50 M. As a Latina principal do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently that your non-Latina peers?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

O. I think I do, I think I do a lot more different. I think my culture makes me more passionate than let say someone that is non-Hispanic. I am very passionate about this community, I am passionate about the children, I am passionate about helping them to help themselves. And so, there is a big difference right there. As a Hispanic female a Latina principal I am very warm and caring and fuzzy towards toward children. I do feel that they need a pat on the back, I do feel that they need hugs, I do feel that when we are together in a meeting, in a parent meeting that we help the parents. We have a different culture...more of a connection and emotional bond, and a physical bond. It is not formal and it is not cold and we can acquaint ourselves better and really be at the same level because we have something that is emotional and we are passionate than other principals. I think non-Hispanics principals tend to be more formal, they shake hands and they maybe a physical distance that they keep or maybe it is the mannerism that are more formal. We are more informal in our meetings and we like said, we hug and you don't necessarily have to be someone that I've known for a long time, it is a parent that we made a connection, we met a child, so our total disposition is really different from a non-Hispanic stand point.

6) M. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

O. Absolutely, I do have additional pressures. Some of them are, a lot of those pressures are built in, a lot of those pressures because I want to, because I want to make a difference, because I want to be a role model, because I want to impact the Hispanic community and when you have schools that are lower socio economic, that are

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

academically struggling to meet that grade to make those gains the pressure is increased. And so, I do feel that I myself have the pressure. And yes, I do have the pressure from the district. Not necessarily so much Hispanic verses non-Hispanics but that we all the pressures to make the gains, but when it comes to the school, I feel that I have, not only the pressure, but I feel that I have a moral obligation to make the gains and that’s what I think makes it hard, that’s the difference. It is not about me about having to do it, it is that I feel that I have the obligation and responsibility that I have self-imposed on myself to make a difference in, in the Hispanics, in our children, in the way we are perceived, in the way that – in just everything. It is more about me and my moral obligations and moral responsibility towards others.

7) M. As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on Prejudices.

O. Lots of experiences. Many of those experiences you can relate to with your parents and the way they come across and treat you. Sometimes you have parents that see the last name and treat you and see the last name and the they know that it is a Hispanic surname and they don’t feel that you may be qualified to do the job. But sometimes it can be from a staff member who may have doubts that you are equipped to do the job and, I think sometimes it impacts the way people treat you and view you. And others, like I said others, even among the district people you are hired because they needed other another Hispanic administrator, but not because they needed another administrator, but because they needed another Hispanic administrator...oh you got chosen because they needed someone Hispanic, rather you got chosen because you were qualified – there is a big

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

difference and so, I think that those are experiences that we have throughout the year with parents that may feel that you may not be as prepared, as prepared as a non-hispanic administrator, or they might feel that you don’t have the necessary skills, or sometime from a staff members that have never had that opportunity and they may feel a little bit shocked to have to deal with someone that is not what they are used to dealing with. I think the “race” card is used a lot, many times and in many ways, by parents by staff members unfortunately. That is a sign of the time chose by many people deciding not, they don’t look further beyond of what the measurement of what success should be is not defined by your last name or the color of your skin, it is defined by the kind of person you are and the job you do.

8) M. As a Latina principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

O. No, I have not. I have to say that the ones that I know personally have been an inspiration to me and they have been a- just a good inspiration and an example, that’s the word I was trying to think, they have been a example to me of what a good principal is about. So that I have to say that I know personally, and they are some, it’s not a great deal, but I know a few personally, I think they have done a good job in the way that they run a school and treat people and in general they have not been a hindrance but truly a light in my path. I am happy to say that!

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. OX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

O. It started a while back, and it was a series of steps that leads you to where you are at. I don't think I started out as a teacher saying I want to be a principal. I started out as a teacher loving what I did, which was teaching and having a passion for it. Mine came out, my career path, really took a shift in direction, not because I chose to leave the classroom, but I had one of my principals ask me to pilot a program when I was a classroom teacher, and it was co teaching/ inclusion for LEP students, and she really wanted me to pilot this program and that meant I would have to leave the class room, and up to that point, it wasn't that I was pursuing a principalship up to that point, I really loved what I did which was being a classroom teacher. But being mindful and respectful of my supervisors and believing in them I decided to take on that new endeavor. And I became then not a classroom teacher but I became sort of a resource teacher. And I was working with a LEP children I was co-teaching and doing inclusion, it was a wonderful experience, I enjoyed it tremendously. I was working with lots of teachers and going in there and co teaching and doing a lot of inclusionary experiences. Great experiences. It was a wonderful experience for me. Learned a lot, it was at that point I decided that I needed to border my horizon and pursue a leadership field. And I did that, started on my Masters and then I knew that it was truly a way of touching more than your little classroom. And your world of 20 children became much more expensive it wasn't just a little classroom but here you had the opportunity of reaching so many more children. And

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

so at that point so then like I said I started taking my Masters in educational leadership, broaden my horizons, became a dean of students, and it was baby steps, it was baby steps that brought me here. But I don't think when I initially entered education that was in the back of my mind, I truly loved what I did like I said. Teaching my second graders was my passion. And when I left the classroom I cried. And in fact, this a true story, the principal at that time, that offered me that job, I met with her not that long ago, and she said do you remember that day, and I said yes I do I cried. Because I was crying because I was leaving a world that I loved. And when you become a resource teacher it really is totally a different experience, you don't have a team anymore, you don't have a class of your own, you don't have students that are really 24/7. It really is a different world. And she said to me do you remember back then, I do I remember I was crying. And she said yes, and she said, well do you remember what you told me? No I don't remember what you told me? She said – I remember some of it, but I told her I am taking this job - it went something like this, I am taking this job because it is important to you and if it is important to you it must mean something. And that who always sort of you I am. I really trusted my leaders and I feel that when you have that deep trust with people over you that it will be for a good reason. Yeah, I see that you said that to me, but remember you telling me crying if I don't like it can you sign telling me that you would put me in the classroom? That's the funny thing, cause I asked her to write it out that if I don't like it that she would put me back into the classroom. I never did go back to her and say that but in essence what I did go - I liked it so much that I decided to pursue another challenge and that was the challenge of a way to really make a difference and a change in the lives

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

of children and particularly in the life of many Latin children. So that is the way it happened it wasn't really a clear cut thing where I said ok I am a teacher and I am going to really now go into – No, I really wanted to, at that point when I started teaching I loved it and it was a passion and a joy and a feeling of satisfaction that I just remembered crying, crying because I did not want to leave, but I also remember I had this faithful, I had my loyalty to my administrator and there is something faithful about someone who is your supervisor that you respect and believe in and trust.

M. It is really neat that you could actually talk to her again and reminisce about that, because she got the ball rolling without realizing.

O. That is right, and I would think that maybe she did realize it at that time, but I didn't realize it at that point but it is what both me to administration.

2) M. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

O. Considering how many schools we have I would have to say a minority and I would have to be way under ten percent. I don't have an idea, but it would have to be way under 10 percent and we have so many schools and when you look at the principals there is only, not that many of us, just a few of us and I think we know each other by name so it's not much.

3) M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

O. Yes I do think I had Latina mentors. I don't think they have explicitly thought they were mentors. I think that they have helped me along the way in my career in different ways, whether it is questions that I have had about the role of the leader, especially when I started in different situations, because there is really no formal training, nor do you

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

shadow a principal for six months or a year. You do shadow your principal when you are an AP, but you are usually doing discipline and you have your own little, you have facilities to take care of, discipline to take care of, that is really a big, that is your area of concentration, but it's not like you shadow them 24/7 on other things but I think I have had other friends of mine that have become mentors along the way that are Hispanic that have encourage me and given me the vote of confidence that we sometimes need along the way. So yes I have had, not a lot, not a great deal, but I can say have had three or four, about three that have really as friends mentored me along the way and helped me to see different things, to undertake different things that I have that this job requires and like I said there is no formal training you are in the job and you are supposed to know all the answer and sometimes you don't. and I think that your mentors come in, mine being not formal mentors but more people in the fields that are friends that even in the most difficult of situations that you may have in the schools that they can support you emotionally and help you to look at a brighter day, because we have sometimes difficult challenges that come our way- and you- and it really sometimes affects your spirit and your heart and something that you know that should be done, and just different situations that you say but I know I am right why is it that.....there are moments that we know somebody that we can pick up the phone and say oh you know what? Guess what?... this challenging parent, this challenging teacher and it always good to have someone to listen, that can listen to you and provide the emotional support and give you some clear judgment, cause sometimes when you are in situations you need someone from the outside perspective to shed some clarity to situations that you are in. So I have about 4)

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

M. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

O. I don't think I have ever self imposed anything on my part. I think the obstacles have always been placed by others. I think when you have the will and the passion and the know how, the general know how, that it is not self imposed. I think the barriers, and the challenges and the hurdles usually come from other sources and so I never had anything self-imposed. I always felt that I was ready. I was ready for a challenge and I was ready to take something new, and I was ready to become a leader in some form or fashion.

5) M. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

O. Well there are lots of stereotypes, and I have to think about the question, because others can mean, parents, teachers, students. Well I have to think about this one, cause I am thinking about different stereotypes and some stereotypes as I am working in the schools sometimes with parents and the culture, when we have meetings if I don't have the meetings organized the way it should be organized the way they should be organized, this is what happens, if I have just one group of Spanish speakers and English speakers together, then there is a lot of frustration. Now we do have the units, the translation units, but still I encountered a lot of frustration among the parents. Usually there is a lot of talking, there is no focus, there is a lot of engaging in conversation. And Latinos are known for talking and sometimes talking throughout meetings. I don't know if that is a stereotype or not, but it is something that I noticed here anyway. So, we have had to like our science night and FCAT night, we had two separate sessions going on simultaneous

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

so that we can conduct one session in Spanish and one session in English –everybody is focus, no one is talking and parents are really listening. I don’t know if this is a stereotype of the Hispanic in general –but that’s one the talking in meetings. Now I’m just going to focus on parents –the other stereotypes sometimes has to do with the children during events and function where there is no direction for their children. The children are running around all over the cafeteria and you ask them to sit down and the parents don’t see it and chooses not to deal with it because they are tired and put a full day of work and now they just want to relax and hear the presentation, but they can’t hear because there are so many children talking and running. So I have gone about by having child care all the time. Children are now engaged with other children and a classroom teacher to take care of the children, and parents are now focused. But if I don’t have child care I sometimes see that there is no control of their children. And it is funny sometimes, back to the talking, the communication cause we are very emotional, talkative, I think very engaging. Where the “American” culture is very, very formal. Very quietly go to the meetings. They would be listening and there is a different. So those are the stereotypes I see with parents. The stereotype – LEP students being below grade level, that is something that I see as well, cause we have lot and lots of students below grade level. And the home school connection not being there, that is a stereotype trying to draw our parents in and trying to encourage them to be a part of the educational process and not all of them, but stereotypically you would find the Hispanic mother watching soap operas in the afternoon or early evening and that is very much of the culture and trying to establish that home school connection, which is so important to us, I

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

sometimes view the parents unengaged, not because they don't want to. I think they do have a heart and do want their children to do well in school, but I also think that other aspects in life that are important to them and the is pretty much a stereotypic thing that you would see that you would see the Hispanic mom at home watching soap operas, but what are their children doing. So that those are stereotypes that come to mind with the parents and the children, and like I said it is not all parents and all children, but our mission is to educated, so that is what we are trying to do, to educated to change that mentality so there can be that home school connection and children can be engaged at home during those hours working with the parents rather than the TV turned on. That's what comes to mind when we talk about stereotypes.

6) M. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

O. For me, and I can only speak for me, I am hoping I can contribute a strong presence of a female, Hispanic principal and to be a role model to all children but especially to young girls that it is possible to be a professional. To have all those qualities that are important to make contributions not only to our own ethnic group, but to this world. That we are here to truly change lives and touch hearts and make our students productive citizens, because that's what it really boils down to, making productive citizen. Years after we are around that all these students that are growing up together can live in a peaceful world. What I am hoping that we can contribute, I am hoping that I can contribute that role model of a female, a Hispanic female that we have a heart, that we are passionate, that we love people that we are committed and I want all my students to know that they can strive

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

to be what they want to be and not limit them to service industry, not limit them to menial jobs, not limit them to the expectation that society has placed on minorities for so many years, but to allow them to understand that there is a world out there for each and every one of them, but it is up to them to work hard, because it is all about working hard, you have to work hard, but I hope that there would be that spirit of, the spirit of working hard, the spirit of having a good heart, the spirit of giving, the spirit of contentment, all those qualities and integrity. I don't think we have ever been given, I don't think we have ever been personified as a people of integrity and yet we are. That is what is important to me, that out there that people can see us as having all those wonderful qualities that incorporates what integrity is all about. That we are working, trustworthy, hard working, we are reliable we have all of these good qualities and that we can inspire so many to be what we are. So there are so many things that I would want our children to learn from. I believe we have so much to offer and I think that if we can have our children learn that there is a world of opportunities out there and we can role model that I think we will have a better world.

7) M. Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

O. I think the obstacles of how people view you because of your surname or because for the fact that you speak another language perhaps the feeling that you are not as competent that you are not as equal as an administrator because you are Hispanic. I remember when I was appointed AP, that was a long time ago we were at a meeting, someone said to me, Oh yes you were appointed assistant principal because we are short and we need Hispanic

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

principal and that was why you were chosen. I said to the young lady, well I think we had to pass the same exams, we all have to go and get our Ed leadership certification and we all have to pass the Fili and I said you too can become an assistant principal, because she had been in the pool, you too can be selected if you follow process if you truly want to be a leader. I had to take the same test as everybody else, and I had to have a passing score as everybody else. And it was funny, because she was, well you know, you were selected because you were Hispanic. And I think it those perceptions because, not viewing it as you are qualified for the job but you are selected because there is like a quota system and they have to fill the quota system up. I have always thought about that as people viewing us and those obstacles of how they view us. I think they place more of ...it's almost seems that we have to prove ourselves, twice as hard as someone else. And so that always seems like a challenge to me, because I feel like I always had to prove myself a little bit harder than the person next door. And the person next door, well the person next knew Joe Smith who helped her get her job, but I didn't know anyone, I took the test and I worked hard on it and I got in by my own merits and so it has always been an obstacle to me in the sense that you almost have to work twice as hard to prove that you are worthy of your job.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. FX

1) M. Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know about your life story.

F. My life story. What do I want you to know? You know, it’s probably a typical story.

Nothing very exciting I don’t think. Do you want like my schooling or –I think I always

wanted to be a teacher, I think that has always been embedded in my mind and my

internship, my internship was at the High School level so I spent, I say now half of my

career at the high school. And as I taught high school I was in Osceola County. My

principal V. said, “You know you really have a lot of talent. I would like to see you really

do some different things” so I help with – my masters degree we put in place the PRIDE

program – personal responsibility in daily effort and that was just a program to motivate

teachers help, to help moral, work with the children, they got certificates, it was really

awesome and from there I got pregnant with twins, and Daniel and Joshua, my boys are

13 now and in that process of going to school I met Dr. T who was a UCF professor, and

she said, I got a great opening for you if you would come and interview and that is how I

came to Orange county and I took the assistant principal position of the HS who’s now,

AD - gosh she is on the cabinet, right, she’s awesome, anyway I replaced her and then

from their I was at CCHS for about 4 or 5 years and then I became principal of D. I

believe in 98. Did my dissertation which was at the ASA magnet school because we

were under populated and I needed to find ways to get more children to come to my

school. The school was only known as a center school. And from there I opened this

school in 2004 and I have been here ever since. Did I answer your question – Ok-Ok –

Ok

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

2) M. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

F. That is a great question. I wish I could give a definitive answer. It’s not like I went into it looking to be a principal - it kind of happened. When I was over at CCHS I was involved in the OCASA board and I worked with J.C. who later became my boss. I worked with Dr.B. I helped as API – assistant principal in charge of instruction. I worked with the principal very closely, establishing the master schedule and we did the 4X4 plan, back then and that was very complicated. And all of that, I guess all of that highlighted the fact that I had some talent there - from other people, because really I had my children, I wasn’t really looking to be a principal at that time and I was happy doing what I was doing and I really loved the HS. And then one day we had graduation, I was working the stage with Dr. B, he was the area superintendent at that time. And he looked at me and said, “You know leadership transcends” and I said, Yes sir, and he said I think you would be great as an elementary principal. I said Dr. B I’ve never spent a day in elementary – I have spent my whole life in the HS, teaching, dean, assistant principal – he said No, good leadership transcends. Well remembered that. I did enjoy, at CC the little bear preschool, my children were in that program too – very young and I do really like younger children, but never have worked with them. And then really my team, my mentors really kind of pushed me, you know what I mean, and then an opening became available, and I interviewed for the position and got the position at D, which is a ESE center school. And it just kind of happened. I don’t know that one day I woke up and said I want to be a principal. I think God just opened doors for me. I think people saw in me things that I maybe didn’t even see in myself, I have to be sincere about that. I wanted to get into

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

leadership I sought out the assistant principal position. I really wanted that. But I don't know I can say I sought out the principalship in far as saying ok I am going to do this, this and this. It just kind of happened. I don't even know that I was even ready when it happened. It just one of those things that I don't think you ever ready to do, so.

3) M. What was your motivational in becoming a principal?

F. I think you know I enjoy working with people. I love working with children. I like making the difference in the lives of other people. Again, I do think it is a spiritual calling. I think God wanted me in this position or I would not be here, I would not be successful. I think that would be the best way to answer. And I enjoy, you know, making the difference.

4) M. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?

F. I would have to say probably my immediate supervisors, my teachers, JC, who is just a phenomenal leader, Dr. D, who took most of the time and he moved and she became the boss, my principal, Dr. O and at the end all of those people really mentored me throughout the process and mentor me you know honing my skills and seeing where I would best fit.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

F. Absolutely, absolutely. My mother lives with me which I think it is part of the Spanish culture. I think some people think that is crazy but I couldn't be where I am if she didn't, and my husband – very much supports everything I have done. I couldn't have done it without their help, and my children too. They have to support me I was their principal for half of their life so yes!

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

F. You know I have had a lot of role models, some have been of my ethnicity and some have not. I think back there was a lady by the name of Dr. R. She was my teacher back in college who – she would come with her little briefcase and I would say I want to be just like her. And from there I would have to say, J C. definitely mentored me and I have a lot of respect for her. I would say my current boss Dr. R I have a great deal of respect for her she has mentored me and stretched me in ways that I didn’t really know I can do. And, A has taken that role too and she is Hispanic. So I really didn’t look at it in that way, in general, people would come like in the past where I’ve had some great leaders help me and influence me from all...

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?

F. Yes, Yes, I think it definitely was. I think when I got the position at CC, like I said I was replacing A. D. I know that she was a Hispanic person – they really needed a Hispanic because the school the population the children needed to see themselves. And so I think that probably opened the door in that situation, being bilingual was helpful for the principal that was there and for the school climate, so that kind of worked out, but I think the school district does try to place people of all works all background so that the children see themselves, you know I think we are very diverse from what I seen and even in O county when I was in O county they were pretty diverse too.

8) M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

F. Very different. My perceptions – I think I really came close to what they really are. I know that I would be working with children – I do love working with children. I will never forget what my boss said. – you know, your biggest problems will not come from children and their families but from your own people. That is the part that stands out. That is the most difficult part of being a principal, I think. It's not the family, not the parents, but it's your own teachers that you are working with and there is a problem there – that to me is the most difficult and I don't know that I thought about that 10 years ago when I became a principal. I must say that is the most difficult piece, but I think it is a wonderful opportunity to really help children to be successful, you know, move the community forward, you know with learning and achievement. I don't know if I answered that question, but that is what came to my mind.

M. That's a good one because sometimes we just don't see everything so different until we get into it.

F. And they can't teach you all aspects of it. You know you really don't learn for example about the budget until you are doing it and I can understand why you wouldn't. It's like teaching – if Johnny does this what are you going to do what is going to happen... but there are differences.

M – Personally, I have always say that working with the staff is probably the most, not hard, but challenging.

F. Challenging. It is the most challenging. Sometimes you are only as good as your last decision. And they don't always see the whole picture and you can't really share that with them. So that is the piece that is most difficult for me.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

9) M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

F. I don't think so. I think people respect the position of principal. Period. I think it is the position of high respect. So in that aspect I think – but really as an assistant principal I felt respected, as a teacher I felt respected. I think everyone in education should be, ought to be, and need to be respected because we are working with the minds of children every day. I don't think it has really changed. I don't know if I have even thought through that piece, because everybody in this building from the cafeteria to the custodians we all need to be respected in all that we do. I don't know that I feel different

M. How about specifically with Latinas?

F. Hum – I would answer it the same way, I haven't thought about it specifically either. You know, I have friends for all different backgrounds and I don't think so. I have lots of principals friends from all different backgrounds – not really. I think it is a respectful position – period you know what I mean, regardless, and I think there are certain things that we need to do to maintain in this job to keep it that way. I think that there are _ I am like in the middle, because there are a lot of brand new principals that came in and there's a lot that are going to retire in the new few years. So I am kind of in that spot that is needed. You know because I am not new and I am not getting ready to retire and I think that with that maybe there are some different trends – I am just in that climate, because I always felt that I can be everything I always wanted to be I always felt it from my parents. That's what I tell my children – there is nothing stopping me if this is where I want to go. I have felt that from the district as well - lots of people want me ...even now I

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

am doing Ventures training Ventures for excellence – there only 8 or 9. How about that we are just training and that is going to be the pool process. People that come into the Pool have to go through that interview questioning and it is very open very, you know based on past behavior and based on who you really are as a person. What do they say, you hire people base on what they know and you fire them because of who they are? It’s based on who they are which I think it is a wonderful thing for the district in hiring people.

M. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?

F. Absolutely not. I encourage everyone here. One of the things that say about me is that I promote from within. Mrs. C was my, I hired her when we opened as my reading coach, PRT and she is not AP at _____. That is with everyone. My other assistant principal, acting principal at_____ she will be a principal soon. My new assistant...I am much into promoting. I have an African American PRT right now who is outstanding, but I really don’t think along those lines. I mean, I hire the best people for the job and I promote everybody. Cause I always say you don’t get by your interview, you get your next job by what you do every single day, you know for the children, for the school, for education. And so I want to say I encourage, strongly encourage to be anything you want to be.

M. Do you always look at that there is diversity because in diversity there is strength?

F. Absolutely, Absolutely. I think it is important that the children see who they are in us and there has to be a nice international flow because I think that brings not only diversity, but just a different perspective to the learning environment. I think you are absolutely right! Yeah, absolutely right? I got two – I got five interns right now from all over the

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

world and they are doing beautiful and I would hire anyone of them at this point, you know as positions became available.

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

F. I think definitely an asset. I think it is another tool that I have to be able to reach a different group of people, and additional group that maybe other could not. I think it is definitely an asset. I think, it has helped that schools that I worked and the district to be able to help them and reach out. You know, because just speaking in the language people come and they are upset and speaking Spanish for a few moments, right away they’re not so hostile – she understands me... right away. I think people feel comfortable.

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?

F. I don’t. We don’t have a high percentage here at _____ we have an average percentage. When I went to _____ it was really known for an exceptional Ed school. What a huge task that was for a first principalship. I didn’t really see the types of disabilities that were actually out there because I, just unbelievable. I think I had that ESE background. I do think that at the back of any leader’s mind you want to get the best person for the job and I think being bilingual was a wonderful asset. So, I can answer, I don’t know if that played... I am sure it played some, because I think it is a positive. But this school is not a high, it is pretty average. It is not like a bilingual center or but like everywhere in Florida you have a lot of Hispanic people in our communities. I don’t know if that is a leading – they have whole committee of people, they look at the profile,

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

what they want in a principal, the experiences they wanted, eventually they will want one of those attributes.

M. If you were, how do you feel about the placement? How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

F. Good question, I don’t know! I think it is wonderful. I don’t know, I have a good relationship with my teachers and staff. I have a good relationship with the community so I would think positive...of course that is my perception.

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

F. I don’t think I have any. You know I think that attitude is 90% of everything. I think I always go in and if this something that I think I want to do and I can do and God takes me here and opens that door I am going to be successful. So I never really think about that. And I always tell my children that. Today they have trail for Basketball and I think it is related in that. You know what they are small for 8th grade – I said you go in there and give it 100%. You are a good ball handler you are not the tallest, but the coach will see that you have good ball handling skills you can move about because you are small. So I always try to find the lemonade in the lemon, because we are all have talents we have to figure out what they are and manage our weaknesses and move forward on our strengths. So I don’t ever say...

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had In acquiring your position?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

F. Critical, I think you can't be a principal without being able to read, write and speak in an educated fashion, professionally. I probably get 97 emails a day...different reports at are due every week, every month. I mean it is critical you have to be able to have commend of the language – that is a high

M. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

F. You know I don't think I have much of an accent because I came from _____ when I was 7 and move to _____ and when I moved to Florida I was 10 and have been here ever since.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. FX

1) M. Share with me as much as you would like anything about your role as a principal?

Just talk to me about your role as a principal.

F. We can probably talk for days on this one, but my role as a principal is one that I get to make a difference in the lives of children, in the lives of parents, in the lives of teachers, in the life of the community, which is that we are in. It is one that, this is my 10th year and there is never a dull moment and never a dull day. So it's – you know I take my job very seriously from the moment that we hire somebody to – you know every facet of what I do – but it is all about the kids learning, the kids achieving, the kids growing – that is our goal. So we want to have some achievement and we want to have strong collaborating teams that work really hard. Remember we opened the school with where everyone came from different places so we worked really hard at building that sense of collaboration among the teams. So we want to be efficient as a team as well, we want to be professional to all of our stakeholders, everybody who comes. Those are our main goals that I am trying to accomplish.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina Principal?

F. I guess I would say working with the children. Right now we have a big project with future problem solvers and it is a group of children that are special kids and every year I give them a real problem a real problem that they have to solve. And the one I gave them I'm having trouble solving it, which is paving the whole back of the school so I can get the buses to come in the back, because we have only one way in the school. So they have to contact the city commissioners, they have to contact the school board, you know,

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

doing all the stuff that I have to do, they are going through that, so that ‘s sticks out in my mind that that is something that we are currently working on and my student government is helping as well. That sticks out as something that’s really gratifying, cause we will meet that goal and they will be a big part of that. I don’t know if I am answering your question, but I am coming blank with this question. I mean I am very – I look at the fact that we opened an A school and we maintained an A school for three years, this is our fourth year. You know I got a lot of the same people that I hired 10 years ago when I was at D. these are the things that make me happy, that we got a strong team. I don’t know if I am answering your question but this is what is coming to my mind. We dedicated this school to the children and I think that’s making a lot of progress. We are doing lots of outreach. Right now we are working on Christmas gifts for all the children all over the world, where they put everything in a box, and it’s going to Nicaragua, it’s going wherever the pastor says it is going, I don’t even know, but it’s going to touch children. We are working with the Relay for Life Saturday we have one of our student that has leukemia. We are working on a Math-a-thon that’s going to benefit special needs children. We just gave \$300 to the rescue mission that they collected by wearing a hat. We are constantly trying to engage in the community and doing what’s right. Because many of our children are very blessed here, they need to be exposed to those experiences where people aren’t. I think that is part of our responsibility to teach them.

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal?

F. No, like I said to you in the first interview, like I tell my children that to me there is no self imposed obstacle, or anybody else, if you want something you have to go for it and

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

have a good attitude. Attitude is 90% of everything – what is it, 10% is how you handle it. No.

4) M. How do you perceive others (the majority culture) view you as a principal?

F. I think I have strong collaboration with other principals. I think they would view me as professional, as a team member. As someone that contributes in the meeting and our goals that would Mr. B would have for us. I don’t know that it stands out that I am a Latina or not, I don’t know that that enters into the picture from my perspective, from what I see. This is the second school that I am a principal at and I feel that I work really well with Mr. B leadership team. So I would say that I would be perceived as professional, a team player. I don’t know if the other enters in.

5) M. As a Latina Principal do you perceive you deal situations (academic, district endeavors, personnel, etc) differently than your non-Latina principals?

F. That is a great question- hard to answer because I don’t know how they would deal necessarily, but I think that being bilingual is a wonderful attribute, because sometimes for example, parents come in and they are upset, just because I can speak their language right away, they thought Oh I can trust her they calm down, or maybe somebody else that doesn’t have that attribute couldn’t do that. I think things in that nature is positive, I think it’s wonderful. Sometimes with children – I think kids need to see their role models in the schools and in places that it doesn’t matter where you are from you can do anything you want to be. So I think in that aspect it is positive. I know that I have been asked to serve on certain committees probably because of my background in order to assist and I think it is a positive and I think, of course, having a different culture and coming from a different

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

place I have to bring a different flavor to what I am working with, but I think it is a positive, I think it is a win for the district and the school.

6) M. Do you feel that you have additional pressures to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

F. No, I mean not anymore than anybody else, I think our big, big pressure is probably the grade of the school and how much pressure the community looks on it and how much pressure Mr. B, has with the media and everything with that letter. I think that is the biggest pressure. If we can keep that in check and, and say ok we are here for the children to learn. No I don't think so, not because of being Latina.

7) M. As a Latina principal, what kinds of experiences do you perceive are based on prejudices?

F. I would have to say, none. I would have to say I can't think of anything of people. If so I haven't noticed it. I just think my answer would be no, because really, I don't know, I am a young principal, too, you know what I am saying, so maybe we have come a long way. I don't know the answer exactly, but for me I would have to say no, no.

8) M. As a Latina Principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina Colleagues?

F. No, absolutely not. They were actually very encouraging. I remember when I was assistant principal talking to A. D. who is now on the cabinet level and she always encouraged me and always talked about the fact that I was bilingual as an attribute something positive that I could...always, always encouraged me. So I think on the contrary, nothing as encouraging when you see others like yourself. But again, we are

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

decentralized so we are in our areas - I only get to meet with the principals in my area once a month. We don't get out as much as we used to, but, did I answer your question?

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. FX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

F. I think it is a beautiful career path for Latinas. I think it is a beautiful career path, period. I think you need to start by teaching because you need to understand the craft and I believe the way that Orange County has it set up you have to teach at least three to four full years. And for my career path, do you want to know mine in general? I went from teaching for a couple of years and then I became a dean over in Osceola County and did some things of academics and award ceremonies, but was mostly discipline. And that works you into an assistant principal/ principal position. But I think, I think it is a wonderful opportunity and I think there is more than you can give to a school.

2) M. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

F. Great question! I think in... in the entire Orange County or my area? That’s my old area, that’s two.. four...gosh, I think maybe ten. I am just think that in my area there are four, I am speaking of areas – we are big know we are SE and SW...I would say about ten of us.

3) M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

F. I have not had a Latina mentor – I could say A. D. has been my mentor, in the sense that she wasn’t assigned to me or I assigned to her, but she has mentored me since I took the position she vacated when she became principal, so I know she is there for me and she has encouraged me to continue up the ladder when I became assistant principal –she

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

encouraged me to become a principal. She has been wonderful. I guess if there are ten across the district there is not that many of us to mentor, you know.

4) M. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

F. No, No.

5) M. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

F. I think the only one that we tease about is being late. You know, I think everyone teases about that, you know, standard time or Spanish time, like me by CCT, Ok she is coming, you know...who’s our teacher of the year who’s beautiful name – I can’t say any, that stands out. But we joke around, you know. I don’t know if I answered that well but that is the only thing that comes to my mind, because as I’ve said throughout the interviews I don’t feel any of that stands out with me, personally.

6) M. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

F. Maybe perhaps I can contribute the fact that never let anything get in the way, would show that perseverance if you got a goal you can make that goal. And I have always said that attitude is 90% and the other 10% is how you handle it. I think other people seeing us, I think it’s healthy for young girls to see that they can be anything they want to be, I think girls are taught that more now than when we were younger. I have said throughout that children need to see themselves in all of us. That it is something that they can achieve, something that’s a positive.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

7) M. Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

F. I don't think so. What stands out for me, I don't know if it fits in here or may fit in general when you are looking at this, because I know that my mother lives with me.

When I look at my career path I wouldn't be where I am if she didn't help me, because I told you I have two children. I think sometimes, I don't know if I want to say that it is looked down upon, but it is definitely something in our culture much more accepted. We believe that extended family is a very healthy, positive and sometimes I get comments, You got to be kidding, How do you do that. And so, in that aspect I am where I am because of that support. I think it fits here. It has allowed me to be who I am and to do the job that I do today, because it is a huge one so how do you not support...I think it kind of fits here and I think it is a cultural because I don't see it as much in other cultures. But we don't see a big deal in that at all, I mean, you know.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. DX

1) M. What are Hispanic females' perceptions on how they came to be principals?

Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know.

D. I came to Orange County about 20 years ago. I started out as a teacher for the mentally handicapped and substitute teacher and then I became a teacher for the specific learning disabled and that was at the elementary level. I worked with a wonderful female principal. Her name is, J. B. who is currently a principal with Orange County public schools. J. encouraged me to go back to school and pursue my Ed Leadership. It was her support that basically got me through the program. So I became what is known as the Dan Ford Scholar, in other words I didn't have to pay for my schooling, it was paid through this program. After I left the classroom, I became a curriculum resource teacher at an elementary school, and again J helped me get that position. Shortly after that I had the opportunity to do my internship – when you do your educational leadership – at a high school, at a local high school and...cause I always wanted to get to the high school, to the secondary level...so there I had an opportunity during my internship to be observed by a director, her name is C. W. Again C and at that time R. T. took me under their wings and as soon as there was a position for a dean's position, they encouraged me to apply. So I would say there were powerful women that helped me get to a least the dean's position where I began basically my administrative career at CCHS. I was the only dean of students - 1500 kids. I had no experience with discipline. I probably was the shortest person on the campus and still Dr. W – he gave me the opportunity and it was basically – and I would say without people giving you the opportunity you don't have the chance to

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

show what you have. Dr. W took me under his tutelage. Shortly I finished my Educational leadership and I became an assistant principal at the high school. I think it was for 9 months and after that I was called to be the principal at JMS, but again if it wasn't for Dr. W picking up the phone saying to the superintendent that I was ready, I wouldn't have been given the opportunity. What is remarkable, is that CW who had initially had seen me during my internship became my boss when I was a principal at the middle school. So with C help, I survived the first year of the principalship. For Hispanic females, the only one at the time at the secondary level, was basically a do or die, because I had to prove that I could do it better than others, and I was given one of the most difficult, because back then JMS was known for gangs and I had to go in and change that perception. But again, with Clara, who happens to be African American, she understood the challenges that I would have as a Hispanic female. From there I think I was at J. four almost five years, and then I was called to be the principal at UHS. You would have thought that what I did at J would have changed the perception of what it is to be a Hispanic principal – but then again that is not true. It seems when you are a minority you constantly have to prove yourself at every level at every job. When I became the principal at UHS, I just went on vacation for a week. I didn't realize there were community members that were calling the school board that they didn't want me as the principal. In fact, they showed up at the school board meeting to speak against my appointment. I think very few people have experienced that. But thank goodness my new boss then, R. H. who had come in from Texas and superintendent DM who had come in from California, they basically said no, she's the principal at UHS and I became the

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

principal there under what I would say, difficult situation. But I would say within or I would say a year, I won them over. I would say I loved my principalship at U...I was there for 5 years. We were able to establish two magnet programs, an international baccalaureate program, which some people thought that kids from that area would not flourish under that program, but they are wrong. Today it is a vibrant program and also we were able to bring a math and science magnet. So from there I left and became the director in one of the areas, and today I am associated superintendent. - Almost four years since I have become an associate. I would say that the best job in the world in the principalship and anyone who has the drive and the perseverance and believes that they can do it...it’s the best job. So that has been my short travel in 20 years.

2) M. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

D. I was not even in education per say-I would think it was 22 years ago. I was at the beach in Clearwater and I passed the high school and I said, “Wow that would be cool to be a HS principal” So it was probably 22 years ago.

3) M. What was your motivational in becoming a principal?

D. I guess what motivated me is that I always have an opinion and it is always been I mean that is who I am, so I felt I can only influence those in my classroom. Then as a resource teacher I can help influence a small population in a school, but there is nothing like the influence and the authority that a principal has over a school and a community. So that is what motivated me.

4) M. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

D. I had great role models. I had some great role models and the support of my family. So I had principals, district personnel and even teachers would encourage me to pursue the principalship.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

D. My family has always been...my dad, my mom, my then husband, and my children – extremely supportive. I would say the principalship comes at a sacrifice and the sacrifice is experienced mostly by the family.

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

D. It would be hard to chose only one role model, so I had various, like I said...it would be J B., C. W., Dr. W., R. T., J.R.. None of my ethnicity, because there were none at that time...I was the only HS principal – I have been the only HS principal – Hispanic that Orange County has had, which is unfortunate, but it is what it is.

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district and was effective for you?

D. Yes, absolutely! I would say OCPC has been a family to me for the last 20 years.

8) M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

D. Political. I remember telling Dr. W, I could never do your job because you have to be too political and you can't be blunt like I am. It's funny years later I became principal. So that was the perception I had. I also never really, really acquired the poker face that some principals have, because I am a person that you can tell what I am thinking based on my expression. They are a lot of more tempered, I think with time and experience. But that

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

was always very difficult for me to grasp - in how can a person not show their reaction through facial expressions. To me that was a perception that was very difficult to grasp because I was looking on the outside of the principalship.

9) M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

D. Yes, I would say that the Hispanic community celebrated with me that I was one of the very few principals at that point. It was exciting. But it was also exciting to see I would say the change in perception that the majority or the main stream population had of what it was to have a Hispanic principal. Yeah...it changed I have to say at least in East Orange County.

M. How about specifically with Latinas? Do you ever try to discourage Latinas

D. No. I don't discourage them, but I am very frank with them. I explain to them that they will always have to work harder than their colleague who is a non-Hispanic; they would have to constantly have to prove themselves in though they may be the very best at what they do. That is not going to change while we are still the minority that's the way it is and if they can accept that and not try to fight it, they will survive it. But if you think that people have to accept you because you think that you know, based on your merits, that's that true, that's a false, false, that is false. In the real world you will always be seen as a Latina/Hispanic principal. Not as a principal it's that Hispanic principal at that school. And anyone tells you differently that I see you just as a principal...that is just politically incorrect, because it is not true – not true. That is what I tell people and if you live with that – fine, if you struggle with it you are just wasting your time.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

D. I think it was an asset, but it is also a limitation. The asset? Because they needed me. But could I have been a principal at a majority all white school? Today I would say no, because they would tell you, as a system, over the system, they would like to match you to schools. But it funny that you have whites matched to predominately Hispanic schools, but do we have Hispanics over predominately over white schools. So that is the limitation, in that system says, we are treated equal, but in reality it is not. If you were to look at – if I truly am equal to a white principal that I should be able to go to a white school – Not the same. But then you get the response that we need you where the majority is Hispanics. So that is limit where you yourself can’t dictate where you go. And I am not sure that the whites can, but number show that they go to Hispanic school but it is not the other way around. So it contradicts itself.

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?

D. Let me tell you of my first placement. I had no idea where the school was. When the superintendent called me in and said you will be the principal of Jackson, I said, Oh I’ve heard of Jackson, they have a lot of Hispanic kids. I came from a brand new High School. When I pulled up to Jackson, I had tears in my eyes because the school, the front of the school was filled with mold, green mold. And I thought oh my goodness where have they sent me. Someone who had no experience other than being an assistant principal for nine months to maybe a year of dean experience, which under normal

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

circumstances that is setting someone up for failure, OK. I was sent there because of the majority of Hispanics and because the Hispanic community had been saying why don't we have a Hispanic principal in the district. When I went to U. they had I would say a high Hispanic population, but not as high as probably the C. HS. So I would say that there it was because I had a superintendent and an area superintendent that thought, well she can handle that the majority are not Hispanics. So that was a wonderful opportunity cause I proved there that the Hispanic can do where the majority is not, but today - today probably the school is 40 percent Hispanic. But the first one it was just because I was Hispanic and the majority was Hispanics.

M. If you were, how do you feel about the placement?

D. Well at that point, it didn't matter because I wanted to be principal. It about killed me, because it was very, it was say, I would not give had given that assignment to someone that was not an experienced principal, because you are asking too much of anyone person to get rid of gangs, clean up the campus that was falling apart, bring the community together, keep the kids safe. All of that, plus learning the budget...there were even curtains on the stage where the kids would perform, the school had rats – that's a lot to ask of a new person. It wasn't fair to the school. It wasn't fair to the school. They deserved someone with experience to go in there and just being...without killing themselves, because I caught pneumonia that first year, because I would work seven days a week, 10-hour days, 12-hour days just to stay on top of it. So it wasn't right, right to put an inexperience person just because you needed a Hispanic.

M. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

D. I never saw myself that I need to be principal because I am a Hispanic so I didn't think in those terms of ethnicity nothing preconceived. I would say that I was naïve. I was naïve to think that a community would accept me because I would give them the very best I knew and I was being coached to give them the very best. I will give you an example or several, I was in the first year of principalship in J. and I received anonymous letters at home accusing me of several things and that I needed to leave or something would happen to me. I would get phone calls at the school, anonymous phone calls that would use in appropriate terms towards me. In fact we had a group of parents come up here stating that they witness me flying the PR flag on the campus and having students pledge to it. When I was approached by the Deputy back then and the superintendent, he said Anna these things are happening. I said I can't believe it, I can't believe this would happen. He said, what do you think is going to happen...you are Hispanic. What did you think the community was going to do? Frankly, I didn't think that hate was so vivid in East Orange County. So my perception was very different for the reality that the community wasn't ready for a Hispanic principal, but I have to say that the school system supported me and they told the parents that's ridiculous. And that say rumor followed me at U. And when I answered the phone, I said, are you sure this is not 4 years ago, because I was accused of doing that at J? If I, if they witnessed me of burning the flag. I had no idea that people would be that cruel, but they are, still today I am sure they are.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?

D. I think it had a lot to do with getting the principalship because I have no research to support what I am going to say, but this my opinion. I still believe that people that have an accent and, at least in the school system, are not valued for what they know. They are judged by how they sound. So someone who articulates well in English and uses proper grammar will probably, and has no accent, get a principal’s job a lot quicker than someone equally qualified but has an accent. So I think it does have a lot to do with it.

M. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

D. It’s funny – here it is –oh you have an accent and I say, Yeah form Brooklyn, and that’s shuts them down, because what they were trying to say is that I don’t have a Spanish accent. And I sometimes respond, so what part of the south are you from because I detect an accent too. Yeah that shuts them down.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. DX

1) M. Share with me as much as you like can about your role as a principal

D. The role of the principal I would say is one of autonomy and you have to be very careful that make sure that we keep everyone informed above you and give information out to those that are below you. It is a variety of things. The principalship can be a very lonely position where you are made to make decisions all by yourself and you live with those decisions. It is a constant flow on any given day on decision making. I remember my day would start, people would be waiting for me in the parking lot and I would warn them that I hadn't had my coffee yet. But from the moment I went from the parking lot to my office maybe five people had approached me all of them needing a decision. The role of the principalship I would say is one that I would say you have to have open communication with your staff, your parents and even students. Your door needs to remain open and when it is open you have to understand that anything can come through it. So it is one of time management. One that requires balance – balance with your professional and your personal life and it can take a toll on your personal life. The principal has to be an instructional leader - that is not only looking at the district to provide best practice but it is someone that is constantly looking for what is the best practices for their students, because it just depends on the school that you are leading. Based on that you tailor what research you can find out there that meets the needs of your students. Another role of the principal you are, I say, a mentor to those new teachers and coach to those who have been in the profession for a long time and then often time the person that has to be the one to tell someone who has been a teacher for many years, but

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

has not taken it upon themselves to stay up with the latest research and that maybe it is time to leave the profession because it is not benefiting students and those are the tough decision. So the role of the principal I would say is a lot more than what people think it is, but it is probably the best job, I know it is the best job I have ever had.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?

D. I guess I never really saw myself as a Latina principal, just as a principal who happened to be Latina, so the quantifying was just having a great time with my students, seeing the success of my teachers, working with parents who had to make difficult decisions that they had to make with their students. It was – I enjoyed the principalship thoroughly so I would say, just seeing some of the initiatives come to fruition were gratifying moments for me in the principalship.

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?

D. No, I would say that my time of being a principal was early on in my profession so given the opportunity I would constantly learn whatever was around me in order to prepare for the principalship. So, for self-imposed I would say no. I can’t think of anything that I imposed on myself. But then again, that is the way I see life I am not sure if other people would say the same thing.

4) M. How do you perceive other and by other I mean the majority culture, view you as a principals?

D. Well I have a standing joke around here that on any given day the superintendent wants to send me back to be a principal I would say absolutely. I think others would see me as a forceful leader. Someone who has a relationship with their staff - Someone who

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

is looking for what is best for students. To me my leadership style – was money was not an obstacle it was my responsibility as a leader to be resourceful and find resources. I would think that other would find that my leadership style is based on relationships. I would not tolerate anyone getting in the way of what is best for kids. So, that’s what I think people would say about me.

5) M. As a Latina principal do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently than your non-Latina peers?

D. I would say that –I am trying to think in terms of what initiatives –it just depends on what initiatives we are working on. We have a superintendent who believes in diversity and he wants to make sure that all children are achieving – around the table people want to know how are the Hispanic students, how are the black students doing, how are the disabled student doing, so I would say when we are at the table we are all looking at all students, so I don’t think how I would react is any different than the whole teams.

6) M. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

D. Yes, absolutely, absolutely! Yes I would say because of being a principal – now there are a lot more Latinos principals than when I was a principal – but, absolutely, because I have to make sure that when people think of Anna Diaz when they think of her role as a Latina, that she is one the best principals because that would help other principals or other aspiring administrators become principals. And be supportive of those that put them in leadership.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

7) M. As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices.

D. Well I would think that at the beginning of my principalships, both schools they were difficult because there being a few staff members or people in the community that were prejudice against any minority. So I would say that those experiences that would live with me – some were disrespectful, but they were just as disrespectful to me as they were to any minority, so you learned to work through that. As far as the school system I have to say that when I needed the support, I was supported by the school system and they knew the difficulty that I would be having. I got a lot of support from my administrators, a lot of support from the majority of the teachers and the majority of the community, but the experiences were there and I think anyone who is different will experience difficulty in a mainstream situation.

8) M. As a Latina principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

D. No, absolutely not! Support - Incredible support from my colleagues, my peers. I had celebrations more than anything. I would say the support from teachers, parents; everyone supported my endeavors in my principalship - and still today as associated administrator.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. DX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

D. I think it is something it just really depends on how you see your role as an educator in today’s world. I mean if you want great impact beyond the classroom, then the principalship would be an area that a Latina should go into, especially if she wants to be a role model for other women and other students that are Latinas. It really depends, some people are just comfortable in the classroom others want to expand and have a greater impact than those 30-150 kids that they have in a year the principalship would allow you that opportunity.

2) M. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

D. I would have to pull those numbers- I had them the other day. I would – I would rather tell you numbers – I’d say 30 – could be a lot more, but I would have to verify and get you those numbers.

3) M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

D. No. No Latina mentors - laughter

4) M. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

D. Self-imposed obstacles? Yes, I think the self imposed obstacle is sometimes I can be very abrupt in the – I think that if I would have know before stepping into a situation that I would – that abruptness sometimes is not appreciated by the mainstream so you have to tempered it a bit. If I would have known that probably it would have saved me some

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

headaches, because the culture in mainstream is a lot more subdued a lot less abrupt and I think that it is culture – it's culture. So knowing the culture - than being a women, because if I were a men it would not be seen as aggression – but there are not too many men in these principalship that are Hispanic so I can't really gauge but I can comments that I have heard. Latinas or Latinos need to be able to show restraint if you are pursuing the principalship because that's for today for the year 2008 can get in our way or give others an excuse for not to give us the opportunity.

5) M. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

D. I believe that stereotypical of the- let's say- family is important to us and it is true. We have a lot of emotions and that can be seen either positive or negative and I think that is true too especially those of us that are from Hispaniola. I am not sure if the Spaniard are as expressive as we are – repeat the question – I do experience that sometimes they say that if you are Hispanic you are lazy that's from a particular culture. Like I said the emotion – the passion – let's call it passion. I am a passionate woman in everything I do. So maybe I did live up to the stereotype of being Hispanic and being passionate, but frankly I don't give a damn, so. That is who I am and if people don't like it then that is there problem. I have learned that too. People don't like who I am who you are then they have a problem, you don't.

6) M. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

D. I believe that –do everything you can to overcome the obstacles that are put in your place because when you get to the position of power then you will be able to make change. You will always need people so don't isolate yourself from others that are not from your culture, because you need that collaboration, because our kids exist in the world that is filled with a lot of other people. I believe that you have to be true to yourself. It is difficult if you are trying to get to the top not to lose yourself because you're trying to be to other people what they want you to be because you know if you don't some of that they won't give you the stamp of approval. I think as of a Latina you have to come to the point with, someone who becomes a principal, you have to then come to the point – ok I got here now what am I going to do for our students – What am I going to do for education. There will be time that you will do things that are not – what I would say good PR, but sometimes it's not about having the good PR but it is about making the right decision for the kids and for the people you serve and you won't always be popular. The principalship is lonely position. I would say stay healthy, work out, eat well, take your supplement and there will be days that you will have to make sure you cherish that fun moment because the next morning or the next day won't be as good. And those are just things I learned from the principalship. And one thing I learned from my superintendent is, "you're never as bad as they say you are and you are not really as good as they say you are, either, so it keeps me humble."

7) M. Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

D. Oh heck yeah, absolutely- it is interesting that you say you speak in the past as if I don't have them now. When you are a minority – when you are a Latina – I think we are accepted in that we because we're mom, we're sisters, we're granddaughters I think we are accepted as a leader. Ok obstacles I think would be any women, a Latina or not, especially if you are in a High School, can she, can she lead these big young men. That's just something that you just have to overcome and yes, yes you can. Again there will always be the obstacle of are you knowledgeable or not. You're Hispanic; in this country it is still not seen speaking two languages an asset. The majority thinks it's like a liability or like a second class citizenship if you speak two languages but those are obstacles we have to face. Again, to me just like I said prior that is there problem and if they are ignorant – they are also ignorant in thinking that having two languages is a liability but those are things that you have to face – those are challenges it is your reaction to. Obstacles can be being put over a school that the majority of the school is Hispanics just because you are Latina. I love to see the days that Latinos are put over schools that the majority of the students are not Hispanics because their leadership is as good anywhere they are put – in other words, I still think we are in the mentality of if you are Hispanic, if you are Latina, then you become ESOL director or you become Bilingual, but it is almost like, I can't do anything else? So, those are obstacles that still are out there

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. CX

1) M. Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know.

C. I was born in Puerto Rico, but my formal instruction happened in New York city, because my parents left Puerto Rico and took me to NYC and I went to grammar school and middle school which was called junior High school back then, so many years ago. Then my parents decided to return to the Island so 1975 they returned to Puerto Rico. I was bilingual I did speak Spanish but I was not biliterate. So going to the 9th grade was a culture shock. But I was fortunate enough to go to a bilingual school and I delve into both languages and was able to get pretty decent grades. Went to High School and did all my high years in Puerto Rico. My former university years I did in Puerto Rico and my grad work I did it in NYU. They had a program in Puerto Rico where the professors would go on Saturdays. And I got to go to New York and do some studies there. So, in 1990 I decided to come back to the mainland to Florida after being divorced I needed a job and I thought I could reach my goals here instead of Puerto Rico because of the financial situation that I was living in, being divorced, being an ESE teacher and the pay was not... You know I couldn't afford a home, I could not afford the things I needed and being a single parent then, so I came to Florida in 1990 and I have been here for 17 years. I started as an ESE teacher, became a staffing coordinator, CCT, an AP and now principal. So in a nutshell that is a little bit of my life story.

2) M. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

C – I started studying Education Administration in 1986 or 87, and I never wanted to become a principal I just wanted to have the background knowledge. Now when I got

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

here in 1990, you know you learn from your examples and not examples, I started to notice a couple of things about the leader that I was under and I said you know I think I can do that job, but I would do it differently. And, I was there 6 years and I said you know what I really think I have a shot at this. So I went through all the hurdles you have to go through and when I received an AP I was ecstatic. I said I think I can do this- my dream is to give children an opportunity, opportunities that I was granted – I want to give it to other children and the only way that I can ensure that is if I am a principal.

3) M. What was your motivational in becoming a principal?

C – I think that was it. It was just making sure that children receive what they really need. I didn't come from a wealthy background but what think my mother told me was that education is the key. So I felt that if I was there to help children get to that key, because unfortunate I was not seeing that for all children, I was seeing more gatekeepers, I was seeing people that would say, yeah that child can reach that gold, no this one is not going to make it, so I thought I can set high expectations for all the children and the only way I could do that is being in that position. If I was only in the classroom I would be limited. As a principal I had the entire school.

4) M. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?

C – Like I said the things I saw in the system that I didn't like motivated me but the person, if I would have to say a person I think it would have to be coming from my area would have to my mother. She had gone to the university or anything but she is a very wise person and she says that in order to make changes you have to work with the system and she was there when I would complain, ah this happened, and she would say well you

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

can do it. Why don't you do it? How would you do things differently? And she was the one that kept me for years, because I am telling you it took me 4-5 years to say, you know what I am going to go for it. So she was really the person.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

C. You know at that time I can really say my mother and my brother, because my Dad he's just a person that goes with the flow so he doesn't make any waves. I had gotten divorced. My husband at that time was not supportive at all. He thought that going into administration was crazy because there was no money behind it. And my goal was not the money, you know, I had other goals. So my mother was really the person who empowered me – you can do it so go for it. It was no other person. I come from a small family, my mother, my brother and my father.

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

C. You know, I didn't. I think because I was in the classroom I wasn't exposed to a lot of district personnel or anything like that, so I just went on the dream that I had and I really did not have a role model. I did see people that I said, oh you know I think he or she does a great job at what they are doing, but it wasn't a person that I went to and I spoke to. No I really didn't have like the inside scoop.

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?

C. Yes, absolutely. Actually, then there when I became a AP, the district would place you and I found it ludicrous that they were placing me – I was living in the East and they

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

placed me all the way in the North. My commute was almost an hour and a half every day, but once I got to that school it was like a match made in heaven. There I can say that B. G. the principal she was fantastic. And she was the person who actually helped me to pursue my degree and when I did get discouraged she was there to say, wait a minute, wait a minute and reality checks. I did have a fantastic support system there.

8) M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

C. You always see at times the picture, you are so naïve, and you see the ideal. I saw the job as just an instruction leader and, you can say, and it's not an unfortunate that the principalship involves so many other things. It really does. It's not only being the instructional leader. There's so many other things. You are really a manager too, and other things, of resources, of money and I think that was a really awakening to know that no, no, no, you don't only have to deal with curriculum and setting goals, you also have to this and this and this. So I had a very small perception of what the role was. And what I did was look at the good role models and that is what I have to do-that is what I have to do. And when I saw someone that wasn't doing job correctly, ok I have to avoid this person's role. So that's I what I did.

9) M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

C. My perception? This is really weird. I have never seen the leader as something – it is prestige – but in my terms and in my eyes it has always been a servant. Really, so I never, it's been hard for me sometimes when I tell a person I need to speak to you I always have to remind myself, oh wait a minute I am the principal and they are probably perceiving

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

that as well – you know they're in trouble – because my perception is I am a servant. I am here to serve and see what I can do for you. So I don't see it as something wow – you know I am the principal – no – actually I see and have all the work I have to do.

M. How about specifically with Latinas?

C. I do think that that has changed a little. Sometimes I think that people have perceptions of what a people should look like, be like and that is fine you do have a general framework of what they should and shouldn't, but it's like, a lot of people just, she's totally, she's totally change now she's this way and this is her way of thinking and she'll be very rigid when it comes to – and no, I think I still process that being able to listen to people see what they are telling me I am more of a problem solver. I kept those traits but I think initially people thought just because I have the title -Opps -that means that you don't touch her. That is what and it took a little bit of time to build that trust.

M. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?

C. No, absolutely not. And it is sad because I don't see as many pursuing – I know it is difficulty that is what I tell them – but when I talk to my Latina friends that want to, which is not many, I tell them, but we are a support system. I am here to support you. Let's go – if I did it you can do it. And I try not to if they are just starting not to tell them the negatives. You know you tell them about the perks all those success stories to encourage them. I had a friend who left, she was in the assistant principalship and she never even told me and that hurt me because I said if you would have – I don't know if I could have changed her mind, but I wish I would have been given the opportunity because we are so few and far between.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

C. I think it was an asset – I really do. I think at the time I do – I don’t think I am a token Hispanic, I mean some people have said that – I think that the district at the time was looking for people who were Hispanics and my background, coming from ESE or my experiences – it was an asset. I really do think it was an asset.

M – the term token Hispanic has come up a couple of times

C. Yes it has come up a couple of times and in the beginning it hurt me but after I can show what I know they kind of... and people always have perceptions and think what they want to think. As long as I believe that I am doing what is right for children and I am doing what is correct – politically correct – you really can’t go wrong no matter what people say.

M. Who uses the term token Hispanic the most? Is it the Anglo or ...

C . in this case it is the Anglos.

M. do you see it because you took a position that they...

C. that what it is Yes that’s what it is

M. a position that they should have had

C. Yes, that they should have had

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?

C. Not in this school because in this school we are a minority, but yes I was actually not my first assignment. There I was really placed solely on my experience with exceptional

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

ed and I was actually the only Hispanic there. But my other experiences I have been in 2 - 3 other schools – yes it has been based on that. And I know after that once they seen the quality of my work – they oh ok, but yes it’s been because...

M. So how do you feel about that?

C. I understand that it is good because there are Hispanics there and they need people who are bilingual and can understand and sensitive to the culture, but I also think that my scope needs to be broadened. I don’t – I want to be given the same opportunities as everyone else and that is the only thing that would be lacking. I don’t know – you know how they say racial profile –sometimes I really feel that they just – this the profile – you’ll never go anywhere else because – I think I broke that barrier when I came to this school and it was because like I said you know how I interviewed, my experiences, they have seen my work and I was able to say hey I can perform at any school regardless

M. of the background of the kids and their culture

C. absolutely – absolutely.

M. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

C. You know, I was a little scared in the beginning because of an experience I had in my past school that unfortunately, being a Latina I was under the scope by Latinas, which I could never understand. That to me was mind-boggling, so coming here with that experience, with that baggage, honestly because it was – oh my gosh how are they going to perceive me and I can tell you that this is really a “melting pot” and it is, you know, I am a human being that’s the way it is I mean, it’s not that you are Hispanic I am a human being and what can she do for our school. That is really the way it is.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

M. explain a little by what you meant by the baggage

C. like I said, my philosophy has always been do what is right for the children – all the children. I am the principal of Hispanics of African Americans, of all children and when I make a decision it is based on their well being. Sometimes people have this skewed vision of –if she is Hispanic she will only do for Hispanic interest and I had to set the record straight – no for all our children. If this is good for these children it is good for those children so let’s get everyone and when I didn’t do everything that this big group of parents demanded they saw me as an outsider –why wasn’t I in for their best interest. And they were just thinks that were not permissible with the school system and I couldn’t do it and I – the more I explained the more they felt well now it’s just that you are not so Latina. You know and that hurts you because you would think they would understand, Because it is not an easy road.

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

C. You know I thought it was much harder because, I thought it was probably difficult because I was Hispanic and being in Florida and being in the south, but that was just a notion – I think the hurdles that I have encountered –everyone has encountered. And yes, there will always be those who have their little problems, but if you focus on your vision and your goals, because honestly, I was, I took my test to become an AP in April In May I was interviewed and in June or July I already had – and some people asked me how long I was in the pool – because they have a pool and you are supposed to sit there – and I said, well what do you mean, and I would tell them I took the test in April- they go, well

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

how did that happened? So, you know when they looked your scores and they look at your interviews and your qualifications, they just - this is a candidate that meets our needs so let’s ask them.

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had in acquiring your position?

C. Oh – it plays a huge part. Being a Latina and being bilingual, biliterate bicultural is an asset – I mean, we have to really know that when they are looking at candidates, they really want the best candidates and you need to know the language, you need to be a role-model for students. And that is what they are going to look at. They are going to look at a candidate and say - ok – does she meet all the qualifications or does he. I think language plays a big role. And if you are bilingual you have that extra. And if you are trilingual it’s even better. So it plays a huge part.

M. so you have had no experience with a language accent?

C. absolutely not and I do have a very New York accent that is obvious like people would say and I ask how do they know? My husband says, oh please. No I haven’t. Actually I’ve taken – sometimes I do take it a little – oh and you speak English and you don’t have an accent. Because really accent don’t have anything to do with how intelligent you are so but it does play a role, because as educators they look at that and they want to see if you are pronouncing correctly and you can be understood. Absolutely.

M. Well this concludes our first interview. I told you once we get started it goes fast.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. CX

1) M. Share with me as much as you would like anything about your role as a principal?

Just talk to me about your role as a principal.

C. As a principal I wear many hats. One of them, and I think it is my favorite, is an instructional leader, which I mentor, coach, and guide teachers. Another is a leader to students. I try to model what I expect of them in every instance. If it is reading I like for them to see me with a book in hand and reading. If it is behavior, when I talk to them I treat them with respect even if they are out of control and I model that behavior. To the community and the parent, I am a person that will listen to them and take their concerns at heart and their complaints and make this a better place for them and their children. So I think says what I envision as a principal and the many hats I wear. I mean, I couldn't express all the different hats, I mean there are sometimes when I am a nurse, a physiologist, a mommy, a daddy, you are many things to many people.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina Principal?

C. Having that connection with the Hispanic community. I have seen it a lot on their faces and sigh of relief when I see a parent come in to our school and they are Hispanic and I say I am the principal – you just see it on their faces. I've had parents tell me I am so proud that you are here and that you are the leader of this school. So, It has been a very gratifying experience, just that they know that there is someone that cares and that can probably relate to some of their experiences.

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to becoming a principal?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

C. Self imposed – I think that the good word. There is obstacles to everything and to being a principal because of the nature of the job. That it is so dynamic and although it is defined there is so many things within the scope I would say many people see it as something to difficult that they won’t embark on it. So ,Yes I would say self-imposed. Cause once you are doing the work you find it manageable. Is it hard? It is hard but it is manageable.

4) M. How do you perceive others (the majority culture) view you as a principal?

C. I think there are diverse opinions. I am a very positive person so I think they see me as a colleague that might be a little bit different from them culturally because of my experience, but when it comes to knowledge I have noticed that they hold me in high respect. I have had calls from principals...seasoned principals that have called me to ask for an opinion or how I would do something differently. So I think I broke a lot of boundaries. I think those that did see me like an outsider, just totally different, are now about to relate to me.

5) M. As a Latina Principal do you perceive you deal situations (academic, district endeavors, personnel, etc) differently than your non-Latina principals?

C. That is hard to say, I will just tell you what my perception – I feel that I do because of the cultural differences. I am a part of what my culture – what is embedded in me and I do think that I bring them to the job. I mean, I give people the benefit of the doubt. I like to listen to people. And they might be wrong and I might feel they are wrong but I give them that benefit - let me listen to them because some of the things they might be saying are valid. I truly believe in the “Aye Bendito” Puerto Riquens we do give people the

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

benefit of the doubt. We say, OK let’s see what they are trying to convey. So yes my culture and being a Latina brings a lot to that.

6) M. Do you feel that you have additional pressures to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

C. Absolutely. Absolutely. And If it is not, it would be also something that I would probably say it is self-imposed. Every day I want to prove myself. I want to show that they made a right decision in placing me here. And I feel that some it is because we do have the pressure of other people looking at us and comparing us to maybe other minority groups. And then it comes from within also. Once again I want to prove myself because of the Nay-Sayers – people who just say, well she is a “token Hispanic” she is just there to satisfy a quota. I want to prove that I am here because I have legitimate reasons to be here.

7) M. As a Latina principal, what kinds of experiences do you perceive are based on prejudices?

C. I’ve had experience and it has come more so from parents where they have totally shut down with me because I am Hispanic, they don’t want to open up to me. They think I won’t understand, or because they just don’t like the way I look or the way I talk. It is unfortunate. I always try to win people over and what I say about hearing them, I say look speak to me maybe we could come to terms. But I would say that is a reality. When a person comes to school and see a minority, a Latina, and many time if it is a women also there is still that vice, although there are so many principals that are women it still like oh, she’s a women and now she is Latina too so she doesn’t understand where I am

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

coming from. I deal with it and I have dealt with it a lot. Really honestly I can truly say I don't see that much in this school because I have referred to this school as a melting pot, but the school that I came from which was a big school. A very high Hispanic school but there was a very clear division between the Anglo population and the Hispanic. I was seen as you know she is one of them.

8) M. As a Latina Principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina Colleagues?

C. I think it was more so my expectations – they were very high when I assumed the role as principal. I thought that now as a principal –because as an AP saw sort of a division between the Hispanic principals and the Hispanic assistant principals and I thought it was based on ranks- I wasn't there yet so they don't see me, but once I became a principal I thought we would be more unified and you can just pick up a phone and call and there would be more of that understanding, and it is not that way. It is kind of distance. I think it is something that is cultural- probably there is a perception out there that if we unify a little bit more it will be sort of for political reasons and just people would feel uncomfortable and we don't want to make they feel uncomfortable...but I don't adhere to that and I wish we were more unified. I feel that is an area we are lacking a little. Such a big district I can really tell you that I only have one person that I can really relate to in all terms because she is Hispanic also, because the others I have tried to approach, say no I am not interested so I just back off. I don't want to impose on anyone.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. CX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

C. First and foremost I am an educator. Teaching is the craft that I chose or we can say it chose me. I was put into situations where I taught and then people acknowledged that I had a gift. At least that was what I was told. And I came to accept that path. I’ve noticed that it was similar with other people who were administrators as we shared experiences, most of us where educators, we where passionate about it. But then you get to a point in your career, at least for me it happened, that I wanted to make major changes and the only way I could impact other lives beside that little world in my classroom was moving on to something else, I chose to move on to – I was in exceptional Ed so the next step for me was leaving the classroom and I found my niche as a staffing coordinator. There I was able to work with a group of teachers and kind of direct them. And also, delve into the administrator part and the paperwork. Get to share ideas with my principal and get to see the interworking of what an administrator did. So it came very natural, you know, the staffing coordinator and then once again, someone after just being one year as a staffing coordinator, I had my educational background in administration, but I would always say I would never do it, and a very wise person said, “you know you have a knack for this and you work well with people, have you thought of going into administration?” And, then I decided you know what I am going to give it a try and if I am accepted I will remain and if not, it will just be another experience, a learning experience. I noticed from my colleagues, those that I am close to that are Latinas, it’s been the same thing, they have

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

someone that has acknowledged, you know, that they have, what would I say, positive traits that would bring something to the educational field. And yes they have mentioned, because the person who took me by the hand, in a way, said I was good for this was an Anglo, and did mention to me that as a Latina the door would open for you. I don't – her perception, I think her perception was that I was going to make it fast and that really didn't happen that way but being a Latina did play into it. So that is the way my path went.

2) M. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

C. In my district? Principals? I say there are about 8 or 9 women. Then males, there's a couple more. Yeah I am thinking there are 8 or 9.

M. Do you see that as a growing trend in that area? Will it expand?

C. I think for a couple of years we kind of – that number has not grown. What has happened, it's kind of remained the same because once there are 8 or 9 of us; one will move away or will step in to another position. And it may be a higher position which is wonderful but that number kind of remains a constant. So do I see it growing? I really wish it would and I am really made it now a conscious effort to see the gift that other people are having – knowledge- especially Latina – to say, you know, have you considered? Because that is all it takes sometimes –sometimes people don't have that idea until someone puts the seed. So this has really opened my eyes too.

M. Do you see that the Latina principals are uniting towards this effort or is it an isolated effort?

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

C. I think most of us really are like islands out there so to say that I know of other Latinas that are working on this – no I can't really say.

3) M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

C. You know, I didn't have a mentor per say. When I became a principal though, my area assistant superintendent was Latina so I can say that she gave me very good guidance and she did supervise me, she was my supervisor, but to have that mentoring, no, I wish I would have had that.

M. Did you have it before becoming a principal to guide you into the career of principalship?

C. No, not Latina.

4) M. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

C. I think there are real obstacles out there but I think were self imposed. Sometimes our past experiences make excuse for us. You know you will say well maybe this is happening to us because I am Latina. And when you sit down and talk to a lot of people – you know it happens to a lot of people it is not just because you are Latina. That we do face, because we are human beings we do encounter some people that have biases, but I would say that there are more like open slates, that just really want to look at your performance and you are a human being and what do you bring to this profession. I encountered more that gave me the opportunity than those who kind of shied away from me because I was a Latina.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

5) M. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

C. I would say the experience I had in my previous school some people did have stereotypical things they thought about me and were not able to give me the opportunity. They just saw me and they saw my physical traits – and they assumed I guess she is like this. One of the things is she is not bright. I think that was one, because most of them aren't bright, they depend on the government so to see me oh she's here – well she's the token Hispanic maybe that is why. Once they gave me a chance and we were able to speak and me do what I do, they were able to see, oh she is not what I thought. So yes, you encounter that and you encounter those that you can change their minds by your actions and there are those you can't it's just that they have a preference to believe that. Because when you look at races there are some things that we do have commonality that we tend to group and say oh yeah most of them because they are really cultural things. I think when I lived in PR as a teenager, when I went back from NY I noticed there were things that I grew up with that I didn't understand – they were cultural – and it took me going back there and say oh that's why I do this. But there are people that the negative things they chose to believe them whether you have that trait or not it just that they want to group you –no, that is what I believe in and that's it and stick to it.

M. How about stereotypes that you believed or experience as you worked the principalship?

C. That's a hard one because I think that although I try to say, Oh I don't believe in stereotypes, I really think the human part of me there are some that I do believe in and I

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

just try to work with them. One thing that was funny and that I always fought against and they say, well you are Hispanic so you always come in late...and I hate that! Because I am usually the type that if I can't get there on time I get there early. That is my philosophy. So that was something I always had in front of me and tried to tell people - no, I am not that way and I really did show them that I wasn't that way – But I am sure I do that with other people.

6) M. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

C. Oh my contribution! I know that one of the things that I bring – I wasn't a rich child, I say I was the product of my mother's fierce preaching and tell me that education made a different- When people see me, I can say that to them, you know I can say you know what education is the key. Why? this is my story. A typical girl from the projects with an alcoholic father who did not really – could not relate to what I was doing in school. A mother who could not speak the language and yet I was able to excel at school. To understand at an early age that education is important and I have a goal. I might not understand why I am doing this now, but with the goal in mind if I do this and I stick to this path you know I will have all these opportunities and I'll get to where I want to be and I think that is what I agreed to. The relevancy why education is so important...it is important for Latinos, it is important for African Americans, but when we look at the statistics of Latinos – of the dropout rate I can show them look you can make a difference, but you have to make focus. The same impact the same effort you have for other things you need to bring it to education. I am not a flawless individual, I have

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

defects I have, but I can say I am a success story and the only way I was able to accomplish this was through education and having at least one person that supports you, because I think that is something we have to do for each other. I have students here who have no support here. I am their support system. I talk to them in the morning...did you do your homework? – did you eat breakfast this morning? Did you have a nice...did you sleep well? They are my kids! Here I am lucky that I have 288 and it is easier to monitor, but when I was at my other school with 800, the teachers can tell you I knew kids by their names, I knew who their cousins were. I knew when the parent was ill in the hospital. I made it a point because someone has to care about you and I think that's what I bring. They know that they are my kids and they are protected and safe. Is that because I am Latina? I really think it has a lot to do with it. It has to do a lot with my culture – and how we say that we keep all our little chicks around us. I really think it is a cultural thing people some people say wow but you are so, yes they are your kids but you have to maintain that distance. Yes there is a time when I have to be firm and say, no, these are the boundaries and you will not cross them, but then there are other times when you have to act you know the little physiologists, the nurse, the mommy for a second and I am ready to step in.

7) M. Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

C. The obstacle that I perceive to be different is I really and this is a belief and I might be totally wrong but it is my perception because of my experience. When people just look at me because I am not the main stream, not the blonde with the blue eyes, sometimes I am

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

not given the opportunity that I should be given. I see that many times we are limited to you fit in this community because you are a Latina and you understand and that is fantastic, but I should be afforded the same opportunity – let’s say I didn’t want to work in a Hispanic community which is not the case, but let’s say I decided you know what I don’t want to work in a Hispanic community I want to be given the same opportunity as others and I think honestly I know for a fact that I sent my resume for vacancies for schools that I was very qualify for because of my ESE background and I was never even called for an interview. So, I do think that plays a part – given the opportunity to at least be interviewed- they may not have chosen me, but I was given the opportunity to express myself and they would have been, I think their choices would have be a little bit harder to make. But I really do – that is my perception.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. LX

1) M. Please share with me your life story?

L. I come from New York. My parents were born and raised in Puerto Rico. My first language was Spanish. I lived in New York for 30 years then moved to Florida. While I was in New York I taught for five years in the South Bronx and got burned out, came to Florida, spent two years working for Sea World and did tours and I was assistant manager to the places of learning and then realized that I needed to be back with the children. So I came to the district in 1986, I was an assistant, a substitute, became a teacher, a curriculum resource specialist, assistant principal, principal and then now assistant superintendent for curriculum instruction.

2) M. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

L. I was the curriculum Resource specialist at a school and I had a male principal and because I was doing curriculum I was out in the school a lot in the classrooms, out in the back, etc., and I started noticing things and I went to the principal and I would say to him, you know I think you need to go out during recess time and see what I going on, there are too many kids and I am afraid there is enough supervision. Someone did something great, how about a little note or something like that. Because I was a quasi administration, but still a teacher position people would talk with me and I realized there was frustration and there were just things that needed to be done. And one day, this sounds terrible, but one day I said to myself, gosh, if he could do this, then I could do this and probably do it better and I know that that was the turning point for me. So I think it seems, was being

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

with many, many administrators especially male administrators and realizing that there were things I wanted to see done that no one else doing.

3) M. What was your motivational in becoming a principal?

L. As a teacher I felt that I had my 30 kids and I did a great job with them. As a curriculum resource specialist I had the opportunity of working with teachers of students and I had my hands on that. But as a teacher you don’t have the opportunity to say this needs to be done, and I expect that to be done. So was understanding for myself that I would have more impact with an entire school of students and teacher and I felt that I could be good with those kids and those teachers.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

L. My husband and two kids, this was “91.” My kids were younger, oh my gosh, we would go to the library together, my husband would take the kids somewhere so that I could write a paper. So, that part of the family, the immediate family was very, very supportive, my husband was very, very supportive. And so was my family because in my mother’s side and my dad’s side I am the first one to go to college and that was very critical especially for my dad. And now to be moving up to that next level they were definitely there to encourage me and to say that you can do this and they were proud of me.

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

L. My, and I don’t know if it was a role model because I can’t tell you of one principal that I felt that I said, Wow I’ve learned a lot from that person. Many of them I would say

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

that's a fairly good principal or in some cases I would say gosh from what that principal has done, I would never do that. So it is kind of learning the things not to do. However that the person who directed me, no, the person that would never even know that he impacted me was my college professor and it was a course, my very first course, Introduction to Education. He's name is Dr. J, a black gentleman, with high expectation. Gave a syllables that was outrages and by the time we came back to the next class half of the kids were gone. So I realized quickly that that is how you can determine who is serious and who isn't. So in a sense those strategies that he used were then strategies I used later on as an administrator - by setting high expectations and telling people this is what it is, you make the choice if you want to be here or not, and most of them leave.

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system was effective for you?

L. I am the type of person to ask a lot of questions. So as a brand new principal I was on the phone and what I learned is that all that you have to do is ask. If you ask people do not assume that you are ill equipped, you are not knowledgeable, on the contrary. Most people say, hey I am glad you called cause this is, why invent the wheel or why go through all of this trouble. Let me tell you how to do this best. So what I found was that whenever I called there were people there to support me. Because people are so busy, especially at district level or other principal you don't get them to call you. But, when I became principal at the first school, my assistant principal that had been there walked into my office and said to me this looks like a funeral home. And I said, Oh I My Gosh, what do you mean? And he said because of all the flowers that are in here. So people

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

were very supportive of me becoming a principal, because I still have cards that I can go back to read OK this is what I am still doing, all right this good this is encouraging, but in that manner they let me know that they were happy to see me become a principal.

Different at the school, of course, because at this particular school, the teachers had already come to the Board to get rid of their past principal, so I was walking into a volatile situation, with a very strong union...but we walked through it.

8) M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

L. I think that most people have the same perception which is – I can do that, you know, is it such a big deal? But it is! It is quite different being an assistant principal than being a principal, so my perceptions were that, yeah it would be difficult, but it will be a big deal. But I learned quickly that you have to make a lot of decisions that may not be popular, you have to stick by it. That in reality you have to keep one focus and one focus only and that is kids if not people really could detour you.

9) M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

L. It was amazing because I became the first Hispanic principal in our district. I tell you...and it was very, very interesting, but an article came out in the newspaper about me and the Hispanic population was very, very proud and just went on and carried on, whereas the Anglos were very offended about the article. And when I asked, you know I was just kind of curious, oh what is it that bothers you about the article? And they said why did they have to indicate that you are Hispanic the bottom line is that you are competent and qualify for this job so I don't understand. So I would have to help them to see that

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

being the first Hispanic was a big deal. So that was hard. That was difficult because you had everybody being happy, however some people were happy and they didn't feel they need to say you are Hispanic, but the Hispanics were happy and they wanted to make sure they said that you were Hispanic. So you were caught between a rock and a hard place and I kept always going back to hey I am an Hispanic woman who is petite and I know what I am doing.

M. How about specifically with Latinas?

L. Latinas viewed me as a role model, as a role model. I had several teachers who would come and say...And I would tell you not just Latinas, you had white females, black females, just females saying you are a role model. My God, you made it so if you can do this, then I can do this as well. I went to— I was on a panel for a college course where they were taking their graduate studies and there were a lot of people from this district and most of them were women and that is exactly what they said - was, M. you were at the same school with me as a teacher and you are now you are a principal so I know this can be done. So it was not only for...it was for our gender and it was for our ethnicity, our nationality to move up and say this can be done. So I was looked at as a role-model.

M. This is not part of my question, but I think it is appropriate because you said that there is only one more principal. Is there a reason that you don't see more Hispanic principals especially with the exposure that you have in the Hispanic population.

L. I cannot tell you. I honestly do not know why. We have a couple now of assistant principals that hopefully would be able to prove themselves as competent and qualified individuals to become principals.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

M. So you see the career ladder taking place?

L. Yeah I think so. I think were we had some problems initially was the fact that some people believed that because they are a minority that they deserved to be promoted. So let’s say that I have been an assistant principal for several years, so since I have been assistant principal so I should move up to a principal. But it should be that way. I believe that it should be because you have the qualifications, you have the passion, and you have the vision to be that kind of a leader.

M. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?

L. I don’t think I have ever discouraged another Hispanic woman to go into such a field. I have discouraged people in general, yeah, sure. They are just not - to become a principal you have to have thick skin, you have to be dedicated to what you are doing, all those, the passion, the vision, you know all those things I have mentioned before and you can tell when people don’t really have that. Some people just want the money, but they don’t realize that the money is nothing compared to the headache you get as the principal. That is when I discourage other people.

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

L. I don’t know. I will share with you that it was probably two or three weeks after school started and I had certain union members that were teachers at the school visit me and share with me what they thought should be done and that happened three consecutive times in a row and the third time around I finally put the cards on the table and I told them, “listen I believe I was hired for this job because I am qualify and confident, not

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

because I am a Hispanic female. And once you can get over that and understand that I am confident and qualify we will be in business, we will do just fine. So I found that sometimes your teachers, and sometimes there are other individuals who made you feel that you were the token Hispanic, but I really didn’t give a flip. It didn’t matter to me because I knew it wasn’t true. I know that was why I had been hired.

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos? . If you were, how do you feel about the placement?

L. No, actually the school I was placed at, I guess for the Central Florida, or actually central Kissimmee area an average of Hispanic students and blacks. It wasn’t more so Hispanics than anything else. I would say a thirds Hispanic, Blacks and white. The school was going through a lot of turmoil before I arrived there. And what they told me was that they thought I can go there and make change without making everyone angry. So I believe that is why I was placed in that place. Even though a couple of months later I really worried if I could do that job.

M. How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

L. I haven’t found anyone to be discouraging. On the contrary, I think most of them feel, especially at this point where as I tell my life in Osceola county, my professional life, that most people see it as something very positive. I think most people see it as something for me to share and say M. you got here so how do I go about it. Sometimes it’s what the politics are about. What is going on that I need to be aware of.

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

L. The preconceived notion that people would perceive me as a token Hispanic, although in my heart I knew why I had been hired, you knew that other people were thinking differently. You just can't focus on that, you just can't. People, if they are not going to complain because you are Hispanic then they are going to complain that you are too old, you're too young, you're too short, you're too tall, you're too heavy, or too thin, there is always something. So you really have to be sure of yourself to say whatever they say they say, I still know what I am doing.

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had In acquiring your position?

L. Oh that defiantly, you have to be able to be bilingual, bi-literate, it is a wonderful thing to be both because when you are in a school for instance, the doors open up to you, when you are able to speak to your parents in Spanish, when you are able to speak to the children in Spanish, there is just a different way of communicating, of saying things so that all makes a difference. But I don't think I answered the question. You have to able to communicate very well in the English language and be able to articulate your thoughts really well. You know that's great because I don't have a problem with that, by the same token you have to be able to also go back to your Spanish and be articulate. And be able to speak to individuals and small groups.

M. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

L. No, the only accent people come up with is, you are from New York, aren't you? It's not you are from Puerto Rico, are you from this country, or that country, it's just you are from New York. End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. LX

1) M. Share with me as much as you like can about your role as a principal.

L. I guess it has to do with how diverse the job is. As a principal you are not just leading teachers and professional supportive staff and students, but you also have so many other roles. And when I say that I mean that you become a mentor, a nurse, a counselor, a surrogate mother, I mean all these things that you have to do that sometimes have nothing to do with the actual educational leadership role, but that are critical for running a school. So when you look at a principalship – at least when I look at a principalship I don't see it as just nuts and bolts – there are just all those peripheral things that also affect you as a principal.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?

L. I think there were a couple of things and one of them was all the Hispanic, especial Hispanic females saying, oh my, oh this is great' you made it, you did that, that good, that's good for me because I know that I can do that. Also what was rewarding to see young girls who not only can see themselves now as teachers but would say, maybe I can be a principal one day. So it was great to be able to hear that from kids.

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?

L. Self imposed obstacles? No. No I don't think so. I mean you always think about is the family going to be supportive are they going to accept me at the county office, are the teachers going to feel but I think those things are in the back of the mind nothing that I felt was in the forefront. No.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

4) M. How do you perceive other and by other I mean the majority culture, view you as a principals?

L. Respected. I always felt that people especially other administrators respected what I had to say. We listened, we collaborated. I think the word would be respected. I felt good that I was respected by others.

5) M. As a Latina principal do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently that your non-Latina peers?

L. I’ll answer what I think it is and then you can tell me if it is not. I think sometimes it is different, and I’ll give you an example. When I look out to a classroom or school I see them as children that can learn, no matter what, and that the expectation is high. I think that sometimes that those who were not Hispanics see a bunch of Hispanic kids and sometimes perceive them not as bright or... there is just this whole perception. I see this, I see this now, still, that when I look around, I’ll say, Hey these kids are capable of anything, of any expectations and yet other will say, oh they can’t do that or they are not capable, or are we setting the expectations to high for them. So I think that sometimes yes, there is a distinct difference. Did I answer your question?

6) M. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

L. I will say that any female, first of all, has to prove herself above man, then you put on top of that Hispanic, so there is additional pressure. Then you put yourself as being petite. So a petite, Hispanic, woman, yes, feels pressure!

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

7) M. As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on prejudices?

L. Not as a principal. I don't think that I ever felt, no I don't think I ever felt from anyone while I was a principal that made me feel that because I was a Latina principal...that I was inferior...no, no.

8) M. As a Latina principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

L. The only thing I have found is the competitive, I think sometimes. That you would find people from your own culture, other Latina women, who want to move up and use their culture to try to move up. Let me see if I can explain that better. I have encountered women who are Latin women who want to move up the ranks, and hey, would do whatever is necessary to get there and so when you try to get there the way everyone else gets there, that bothers you. Because then I have felt you are giving us a bad name when you are trying to do those things where as in reality you should do it, whatever the criteria is, that's what you do just like everybody else. So when get to that point no one can point a finger and say you got there because you did this, which is something out of the ordinary. So that is the only time I have found other Latin women who would try to accelerate in some fashion and basically "cut me off the knees" if they need to.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. LX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

L. I think it is something that we should encourage. With the population that we have, especially in the Central Florida area with the number of Hispanic, I believe that- it’s just a great profession and there are so many teachers –female teachers, period, alright.

Especially in elementary and when we look across the board there are probably more female teachers than anyone else. And then as you move up in ranks, assistant principal, then something happens, but not enough, I don’t think enough woman go, especially Hispanics, go into that career, you know of becoming an AP and a principal. So I think we should really be encouraging that. How? I am not sure, but I think there needs to be a system for encouraging minorities to go into administration. They would be a good role-model for our kids

2.) How many Latina principals are in your school district?

L. One and we have, including charter schools, 50 schools.

3) Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

L. No. No, I have never had a Hispanic woman, no, no.

4) Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

L. I think you asked this question before. No, self-imposed obstacles? No. I think that sometimes there are other people who have said things, but for myself?- I just saw myself moving. Whether I – like I said, women, Hispanic, petite, you just...no, I just said, Oh

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

that is something that I think I want to do, I think I would be good at it and I am just going to do it. And, hoped and prayed that someone would hire me, of course.

5) What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

L. I can only remember one incident and it was – in our district you had to prepare a document and submit it to the district office and they review it and then determine if you can make it into the assistant principal’s pool, and it is quite extensive. There was a gentleman who was a PE teacher, Anglo, who submitted at the same time that I did. He didn’t make it and I did and what ran around the campus, because I was at his school, was that he was saying that, well they just wanted to put minorities in, Hispanic women that is why she made it in. What he neglected to mention was that the previous year he had submitted the identical documentation and they didn’t accept it then. So he probably figured that nobody was going to read it. Well, obviously it wasn’t of caliber. I heard it and it upset me for a short time period of time, but then I said, what do I have to prove to him, you know, he is still a PE teacher. So that is the only incident that I can truly, really remember that would have affected me that bothered me.

6) What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

L. I think that when you are good at your job that other people recognize that, so ... I think knowledge is something that I can contribute – professional development. Things that I would be able to share with Latina women to say, if you have the knowledge and you have the fortitude, you can do this just like anyone else. You know, going back to

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

your question about obstacles, then, nothing should hold you back. So I think it would be just giving someone else the confidence, because sometimes I do think that people or maybe women, because you know this whole culture in education, women look at it carefully - in schools that’s dominated by women but when it comes to administration, it is dominated by men and the higher you go the more men there are. But that, I think there is a factor – it is encourage woman to say, you can do this, it is ok. Some women think that because they have an accent, you know a thicker Spanish accent or something that that would make a difference. That has nothing to do with your capacity or intelligence. So, sharing with people and saying, go forth, do what you think you can do. If you are capable of it, then do it, but you have to have the knowledge to do it.

M. Have you ever had Latina women come to you and ask you should I or shouldn’t I do?

L. Yes, I have had conversation with some women and I’ll say...to be quite honest with you I would talk to them almost the same as any other women, but you know sometimes, and it’s probably in only my eyes, I don’t see it so much as a Latina, as a Latina women, I see it first of all as being a women, period. And how this male dominant environment treat women, because they either want to intimidate you or they want to treat you in a very condescending manner. So, for women, period, is hard. But then like I said you put the Latina on top of it, or you have a slight accent, or like me when you have your hair curly – you just don’t, you just don’t look like others, you just don’t look like everyone else. And believe me if I can go into an environment, and educational environment, and it has happened to me, with a subordinate of mine who is male and white and they know

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

that an assistant superintendent is coming, I would say the majority of the time, they would go ahead first assuming that he is the one that has the upper level position. So you just take those things and move on. Oh, like oh no, nice to meet you.

M. You take care of that right away.

L. If not they do.

7) Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

L. No, again this is a personal thing and I would say, no. And I think I mention this to you at one other time, the only time I ever had any kind of difficulties such as that is when I had another Latina woman who wanted to move up in a very speedy fashion. She wanted to be the first Hispanic principal and the first this and this. That is the only time that I have dealt with something such as that.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #1 – Mrs. VX

1) M. What are Hispanic females’ perceptions on how they came to be principals? Tell me as much about you as you would like me to know.

V. I am a native Floridian, born and raised in Tampa. My parents are Cuban and Spanish descent. I am married. My husband is Puerto Rican and I have three children. I started in education in the early 1980 as a teacher, secondary math teacher. Then I became an elementary teacher. About 1991, I became a resource teacher at the district office in the area of reading and language arts and at that point I kinda decided that I’m going to work on my master and started shortly after that. After I finished my master I became an assistant principal. I was an assistant principal for two years and then I became a principal. I was a principal for seven years and I have been in this position for three years.

2) M. When did you first know you wanted to be a school principal?

V. I knew that I wanted to go into just leadership outside of the classroom when I became a resource teacher. That opportunity opened a lot for me – that was around 1993, that was when I decided to get my masters. Within those next two years, I came to the conclusion that I wanted to be a school based administrator and part of that was just the ability to impact change and I felt that you could do more at the school level than you could as a district level position which is what I would have been starting out.

3) M. What was your motivational in becoming a principal

V. Well part of it was the challenge and the excitement of just building your own school and greeting people. I always wanted to try new things and learn as much as I could, so

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

that was one motivator. And then the other motivator was financial restraint. My family was young so it was a good opportunity for me to work towards that at that time.

4) M. What or who were the influences that made you decide to be a principal?

V. I've had some wonderful mentors. One of them was one of my school principal and she was phenomenal. Her name is Dr. C. B and I was a teacher and she always found opportunities to build me up outside of the classroom. Another person that influenced me was Dr. P. L., she is a district administrator. But she worked here for several years and she was always talking to me about my strengths and what it would take for me to really follow that dream –become a principal. She was very supportive. Ironically, it was not my family. My family did not want me to go into teaching. In fact, when my father found out that I had even ventured into education it was quite a stir.

M. Why?

V. Because he did not value that position. I was a chemical engineering major and in my junior year, I switched. I didn't say anything for a year either so when it was time for me to do my senior internship they called my house to give me the placement. Actually my father did not speak to me for a couple of month he really wanted me to go that other route. He felt that I had a lot more to contribute in that area. He since has changed his mind, but my family never steered me towards being an educator, they valued education greatly. They thought that I could do more – that was my dad's dream. That he felt had more prestige.

5) M. How was your family supportive of your education and administrative goals?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

V. Now once I decided to get my masters, they were wonderful. At that time my kids were young. In fact, when I started in on my Masters program, I had Elizabeth was maybe 5, no Elizabeth was younger, Elizabeth was 3 and Stephanie was 1 and midway through my masters I got pregnant with my third child. So my family was phenomenal. When I went to classes they cooked dinner for my husband and kids. Once I became an administrator they were just, they took care of them, there were things I could get to, they were there, they been extremely, and even now, you know. When I became a principal in that first year it was very, it was a difficult school and I was coming into a very difficult situation, I had a long, long weeks and days, my mom would always calling me making sure I was eating. Can I come up and take care of the kids and you can just relax, you want to come up for the weekend. So very, very supportive and they were very interested in my work. So once I got into administration very interested in the things. And my in-laws actually took care of my kids because they did not want them to be in a daycare situation.

6) M. Did you have a role-model? If so, who, and was she or he someone of your ethnicity?

L. In becoming or once I was a principal?

M. Either way

L. Ok – In becoming - Actually, not a lot of role models because even – I had been a principal for seven years – I think at that when I became a principal A and A were the only other two Hispanic principals in our district. The principals right because we had some APs. So I can’t say that I had Hispanic role models because they just weren’t

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

around. But I did, like I said I did have CP was just phenomenal, you know, pushing me to just do the best that I could. And when I became an assistant principal, my very first principal was a minority, African American women, who was also very good. She knew the school knowledge, but then she would make sure to tell me, things like you know your finances, make sure you’re going to be getting a big bump in your salary and you want to make sure you plan how you will deal with taxes, or we plan out this week – you going to be out for three so do you want to come in later so that you can spend time with the kids in the morning. She was just very attune, and I think part of that was because, even though when she became an administrator her children were older and she was like a single parent, she really saw how her family help support her, so she was very good about that. So she is also very near and dear to helping me get through a lot. And then I had several colleagues, I don’t want say they were necessarily minority, but definitely female that have also been very, very instrumental getting me through low points, or you know, I can’t believe I did this, just that collegial atmosphere that we’ve been able to create. And now as I am going through my doctorate A. and I are much closer. We talk I think more so than we had ever before just because of where we are. And I see myself mentoring other principals and in particular some of the minority ones. I have on gal who is in my our program who is an assistant principal in Miami and I talk to her probably once or twice a week and she’s had a couple of situations in her job and she feels very comfortable calling. She was over the holidays at our house and I think I am more into that than I was before and I really been rewarding.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

7) M. As an aspiring principal, did you perceive your support system from your district was effective for you?

V. It was and I will tell you why, because of the situation I was in. They brought in a consultant that worked with some of the other schools that were having some issues and this gentleman is still working. There were perceptions that there were racial issues at the school were I was principal as my first principalship. He and I, since he didn't work, he was contracted so whether he worked for me – well I knew the district had brought him in – I could tell him anything of what I thought was going on – I can't believe this is happening, well what about this, even though I thought it was something totally stupid, how he would not know that – but I didn't have the feeling that he would go back to my boss to say, because he was hired to make sure that that environment had a much positive climate and to help me...and he did. He was, we talked on the phone all throughout the night and his wife is also involved in the school system and we are good friends. She told me, “ you know I didn't think you were going to make it through that first year –but I knew you would. So she was instrumental in doing that. My family was totally, my husband – I would work late hours at different functions and it was a K-8 school so I had elementary and middle school and it was also and ESE center school. So, it was very complicated but it was wonderful and I would never trade the experience – it was phenomenal – so they were wonderful. While I was in the district office I was able to build relationships with people and make those contacts and that was great because if I had a question about something I knew the person, they had a face so whatever I needed I always felt and I knew who to call so I really felt very, very supportive. I felt that way

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

when I got into this school and I think that it just goes back to the number of people that I know in Seminole, people that I know in Osceola that I knew I could contact that I would ask can you help me out. I always have thought of being surrounded by a lot of people that would be able to support and help me and in turn I would do the same for them.

M. What were your perceptions of the principalship before becoming one?

V. I thought it was going to be a lot easier. I didn't realize the enormity of the responsibility of having the school. I can still – like I said that I really started out in a situation with special needs. The school was split, there were political issues involved with it and so there had been district personal that had kept the school going for – cause I think the principal was initially released of his duties let's say the end of July beginning of August the investigations didn't begin until September and I remembered when they handed me the keys and I said my God it's me there is nobody to shield me and I really learned how important it is to be true to your values and how important it is to have them. Because if somebody thought it was the wrong decision and I had based that decision based on my values and beliefs, I could live with that. If I allowed myself to make a decision too quickly and be influenced then it just really bothered me. I didn't let that happened to me too many times because by the third time I realized that this was just not worth it. But it was really important to say ok I am making this decision based on the core beliefs. The other thing that I didn't expect and I am grateful that I've been told that it is one of my strength, how important it is the ability to build relations in that position. Cause you can have all the curriculum knowledge and I have a strong curriculum background, you can know the finance, know the law, you can't built relationship I don't

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

you will be successful and I came on board with three other principals at the same time, two which were in schools that had some kind of transition issues and I was the only one that came through it, so, and still an administrator in O.C. So I didn’t know how important it was to be able to have strong interpersonal skills. That is just something in our culture...had something to do with that as well, cause we are big within our family, we are big with having a party every time we can, and it is about being with people, celebrating or just talking and I think that help me a great deal. I remember growing up we had lots of occasions where we had at our house or we would go to other people’s house and the kids were not secluded in one area-we were all together. So I think that helped me prepare as well, because I am not intimidated to talk to people. I feel that I can probably stand up and talk about almost anything in general terms. Enough to be able get something across and that helped me tremendously...the ability to build relationships and get people to work together was huge – you know you can’t do it yourself.

M. Did you feel your perception of your status or prestige in the educational community change when you became a principal?

V. Yes I think it did. I think people see you become a principal especially in the field of education, that is a huge thing. One thing that I never experienced until I became an administrator, which is odd - I never felt that I experience racism in all of my upbringing. We were raised in Tampa my parents were middle class, I did go to private school since I was four years old. I never wanted for anything because it was very...but I never saw myself as different. In my circle of friends we had people that were Hispanic as well as people that were not Hispanics. When I became an administrator was the first

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

time that - we had the little clippings of people – well she got that because they needed a minority. So, not a lot, but there were times you had to make it work no matter what. You didn’t feel that you could fail because it wouldn’t be, oh, she tried her best, you would have failed because you were a minority. I never experienced that in the classroom. That was hard. It was very, very strange for me. There are still people unfortunately, that will have those thoughts and those perceptions. I know that when I got this job that was for people who wanted a good job that said, Oh they needed a minority. Yeah sometimes it bothers me, but not enough to ruffle my feathers I just do the best that I can, you know I just do the very best that I can and I just go back to what I am able to accomplish, you know sour grapes. But it was weird because I never had trouble in the classroom.

M. How about specifically with Latinas?

V. Oh very, oh my gosh. I want to say especially when I became an assistant principal they started up a group of Hispanic administrators. It was a small group and most of us were assistant principals or aspiring to be an assistant principal. I think there were ten of us. A. was included in that. A – some that are now principals and they were just over excited and like yes somebody else has been able to do that. So, absolutely. They were, I want to say they were probably as happy as my family. I mean it was really touching. And, if we see each other in some place , you made a point of saying hello, how is it going?, cards that you got in the courier. And it is funny, because I think it has since then somewhat disbanded. There is still some of use that are Hispanic –that emerged from that original group, but I haven’t seen, we would have monthly, not monthly, but quarterly meetings and that has really has kind of died down, I don’t know if it is because there is

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

such a melting pot now, there are more people, or there wasn't the dry to continue it. I want to say absolutely. And I also think that that is something that I try to pull of. If I see a minority, Hispanic yes, but African American, Asian that I think has potential, I really try and go as far as I can to make sure –have you tried this, have you thought about working on your masters –here's some things you can do. I give them my card – call me, because I had somebody else do that for me and I learned how to open the doors and it wasn't something I was looking for – it's just somebody that saw the potential

M. Do you ever try to discourage Latinas?

V. No, because I think what I have discouraged, and I can only think of one individual in my entire career – they were not meant for teaching. So I guess if you are not a teacher it is hard to be the administrator. What I tried to do, I think you can be a leader in different ways. I have a young Hispanic man, he was young when I first met him. He was a bilingual teacher in PR he really struggled with the English language...he was having a really hard time passing the test. You can see, he was so creative and so good with the kids, but he never wanted to be a principal, but he had leadership in other areas. What I tried to do was let me see what his interests were and based on his personality what he could end up – and he did – he got his masters in Second Language Learning. He is a curriculum compliance teacher. He is now working on his doctorate. So, if they don't feel comfortable in that arena, that I tried to see how they can be leaders. Because most of them have that potential within teachers, parents and the more we can bring them out and give them that confidence the better our children are served.

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

10) M. Did you feel your ethnic background was a limitation or an asset when being selected to become a principal? Please elaborate.

V. When I first got it I didn't think it was either. Now I could be wrong. If ever asked because I guess I never wanted the answer to that question. But I do think that I am asked to do something that the fact that I am a minority had something to do to why I was picked. I mean like I said I don't think it bothers me because I am in that politic, I know, I am in the interview committee and I can't have all I people I have to have a well representation. I think it has helped me to understand why you need that diversity and not look at it as - oh you are picked because...but yeah I mean I am not foolish to think that know a second language as I do, being able to read, write and speak it hasn't helped me, it has helped me immensely but I think that if I didn't have the skills and if I didn't have the ability to do the job, I would not ever been a principal especially at that school, I wouldn't have this job. So I am grateful for that but I also know that it works the other way around. I am an excellent administrator and I am an excellent Hispanic administrator so when people what to doubt whether we can or can't do the job, I am definitely one of the most qualify in Florida. And I think what I have run across – we've had a situation where an individual should have something because they are a minority. It has been very interesting because I have been trying to work with an individual to say, you know you are being mean, male Hispanics – female Hispanics – our population is growing and we don't have that many role models, but you will not get it if you don't have all these skills learned and I think that some our younger-up and coming Y generation, they don't want to put in that time, I am finding that for some of those that knew this and because you

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

need it I don't have to invest the time in getting to learn more. So that's been and interested thing, because the one's I came up with we knew we had to put in that time. We knew we needed to know as much as we could and maybe more and sometimes that is not common in all individuals, and that's not to say just for Hispanics, I see it all the way around, but entitlement of you need this so I got that one factor. No it doesn't work that way. There are too many of us that are qualified that are Hispanics for you to have that attitude.

11) M. Do you believe you were placed in a school because of the high percentage of Latinos?

V. In fact, I know that and it is ironic because at one point, I don't think that district does this anymore, but when I started looking for a teaching job, they would actually have quotas, and the quotas were for African American not for Hispanics, so I was considered white. When I had my son on January and when I came back one of the district department needed a resource teacher and they needed a minority and what they were looking for was an African American, but I was the next in line, but I didn't find out about that until 2-3 years later, I wasn't even in the position when I found out about it, but what I found out is that they had been looking for several years to find a minority, because it was an all white team. And then they argued that she is a minority and she had the curriculum background so that when I said oh my gosh this is wild people actually do this stuff. For my principalship it was a hot, hot bed and they wanted somebody that would be able to fix it, so I don't care I don't think they cared if someone was blue just the right person to work out. I think it played a much bigger role in the past then it does

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

not, but I know it is out there. I think it will always be there as long as I am alive. Maybe my children will know different.

M. If you were, how do you feel about the placement? How do other ethnic groups feel about you being a Latina principal?

V. And this is based on my perceptions because it something that we talked about, but as I said that one of the people that did so much for me was an African American female. She really promoted me and wanted me to do well. When I was a principal I moved a lot of minority both African American and Hispanics into leadership roles and I maintained very good relationships with them. In fact two of them are hired as principals in my schools now. So I think that there is a very good relationship there. It’s the ones that I worked with and the ones that I have been able to become friends with and work on committees or just have become colleagues – we have really good relationships, but you know that we have never really talked about race. And I am reflecting on that we really haven’t.

12) M. What pre-conceived limitations did you have to becoming a principal based upon your ethnicity?

V. Well the area that I were I became a principal was of very high socio economic and everyone around me made more money than I did and I think that there were perceive issues of race whether not directly at Hispanic I was a little concern about that but I also felt this was going to be a positive, because they don’t want to be perceived as racists so I thought they are not going to challenge me that much. Face to face it came up two or three times, where parents were just adamant and upset how we were having children that

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

were minority bused into our school – it had been set years ago, since the school opened it was like that. But it became very clear there were racism when they said we have a Hispanic principal, an African American assistant principal and we have other Hispanic in the front office what would you expect? But they were racist, they were openly saying we should not have those kids here. It was weird. So I think I had a little bit that I really thought it would be positive as far as the race issue. Socio economic I think was a little bit different. The perception of those types of parents, you know they are successful, their kids are going to go to Harvard, they did it and they did it their ways and how are you going to tell them differently. That that was the truth for the majority of the parents, and that was my fault. I had really had misconception of them. The majority were really don't to earth. They were here for the kids; tell us what we can do for you. it was – and then of course you had those few Hispanic parents that were there they were in heaven that we had a alley, even though I don't really think I did that much different then what the other principal did –they really felt they had –and I think that has been interested to see as a principal when I mentored individuals, when I spoken with groups, they tend to latch, not latch on but see, identify that this is someone that could help me, even though I may not be doing anything differently than someone else, but because we have that common link they tend to just gravitate and that is fine if I can help anyone. It has been interesting to see that. It was bad on my part - the misconceptions of most of the parents. I think it was somewhat intimidating.

13) M. What role do you feel the English Language mastery or fluency had In acquiring your position?

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

V. I think getting – well it did for the resource position which gave me exposure to people who appointed principals and assistant principals – without that, I would like to believe that yes my skills would have surface eventually. Absolutely! I can’t even tell you how many committees because there were three Hispanic administrators in our district, because of that. It definitely played a role in opening doors.

M. As a Latina, what experiences have you had with a Foreign Language accent?

V. I don’t - you know that is so funny, because, my first language was Spanish. My parents would tell me stories, that when I came home from an all girls catholic school and in my parent’s bedroom they had these green books. I am coming home from kindergarten and I would pretend it was catholic prayer time. Oh my God we prayed all the time. I would use my parent’s bed and pretend that I would kneel front and step over the – go to the communion come back around. My parents would laugh because I would use the book as my prayer book. I would be reading base on the phonics I was taught in English. My father would laugh because some of the words were right and some were wrong, we couldn’t really understand what you were saying. But I remember the day when I realized oh my god I know that word – that’s a Spanish word and I connected that this is a Spanish book - I am reading in Spanish. It was wild. So I think that when people tell me that I don’t have an accent I was flabbergasted because I would have never realized that I don’t have an accent. Somebody told me that they can see me thinking, if I am going to talk in Spanish they can see me translating. I learned English when I was four years old. I speak and read and write in both languages. So I haven’t had much of a problem of with an accent. End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

Interview #2 – Mrs. VX

1) M. Share with me as much as you like can about your role as a principal.

V. I remember the first year being a very difficult one. You're coming into the role and that sudden realization that the buck stops with you and – trying to get a feel and handle of on the culture of the school where the strengths are, what areas need to be improved, how do we get aligned with the district's mission and their goals. So that my first year was spent a great deal time just getting information from the community. I held one-on-one meetings with every one of my staff members and we had over 100 at that time. I also had about 17 community meetings and basically asking the same three questions. What do you see as the strength of the school? How do you fit in to that? And, if you could change anything at the school level what would you do? After I was able to complete that process I got a better understanding of where we were and where we needed to go. And then I sort of built a three year plan. At the second year we had some turn over, which is expected. I see that now in my position I see that that's just very typical. And, I really had to work with those relationships, making people understand what it was that we were working towards. It's ok with that wasn't were you wanted to go – we would, you needed to find a place where you can get to feel you could fit in and you could live with all those expectations. One of the things that I found was that what the school was perceived to be. It was a k-7, it was going to be a k-8 and it was multiage – they didn't use any textbooks and they used alternative assessments. The perception of what that was and what it actually was in the school was very eye opening. I believed a lot in those values but they did not surface then with what the community wanted and

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

what the district wanted. It was right around the time before FCAT when we were seeing, actually it was the year before the FCAT, and our district was going into more formative assessments. The teachers were not prepared for that because of the trainings they had had. There was a divide in the faculty. You had teachers there since, about half of them, since the school opened – the other half was just brought on during the last three years. When I first started probably 30 percent of the staff was just newly hired. So there were issues with training, there were issues with common understanding of what an assessment meant, what did the portfolio assessment mean? How does integrated approach tie in with what you have to teach? And surprisingly, many of the teachers, one on one were not in favor – were not wholeheartedly into multiage. They cited problems with the huge span that they would have to cover. It was a school –upper middle class, but there was a group of students that were bused in from a very much an improvised area. So you had children in K-1 classrooms that were reading, came in to school reading and those who didn't color. So they had a hard time with grouping – it was just very interesting. So from that I had to really look at my leadership team who was going to be, how are we going to move forward together, how we are going to move into professional learning communities, how ESE is going to be included because they were all at one end of the building. Third year got a little bit easier, but still some of the struggles of everybody being on the same page. By the fourth year it was my school and that was a wonderful feeling that you didn't have the turn over, that you were building on your goals. That it was getting better. That the test scores were getting better. The cell groups were getting better. Teachers were more into their own professional development. More collaboration between regular Ed and

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

exceptional Ed. The community was coming in and volunteering. We didn't have issues about where those kids were coming from or that they were being bused in. And so it felt really wonderful. The fifth year, again it was like the first year where we can really sit back and enjoy and then by the sixth year you were looking, you know kind of felt well am I seeing everything I need to see? For me it was a time to see – ok what were the next steps. Ok, am I really- am I done here. And that's when I started maybe I could open a new school, go to a different level, and that is when this opportunity came – absolutely, timing was good.

2) M. What experiences do you find gratifying as a Latina principal?

V. I think that at that particular school because it was very high SES, excuse me, yes it was a high SES, a lot of parent involvement, typically minority principals are not placed in that type of schools. We are placed in either Title one schools, schools with a large Hispanic population. We did not have any of that here. So the ability to come in, take what was there, move it to where we wanted it to be collectively and be able to reap those results and hear people talk about all the things we were able to accomplish was very, very satisfying. I felt that they could not judge me because I was just a minority principal. It was - They could not argue that we were able to improve community involvement, test scores, we just turned over-it was a safe school. There weren't issues with discipline and we had done it together. So I think that was a great, great accomplishment –a great feeling. Being able to see my staff grow and develop without as much pushing was also very gratifying because they did buy into what we were trying to do and then they themselves saw the ability to lead. The other part that was gratifying was how my

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

leadership team worked. And I felt that they functioned as a team as an extension of me and what we were able to accomplish in those six years were – it just felt great, because we all worked together and we all had a common vision. We came at it from different avenues and that diversity was good, the diversity and ideas – and we are still very, very close and I think that if I were to go back to a school I think that they would leave their present job and come work for me.

3) M. Do you perceive there were any self-imposed obstacles to become a principal?

V. Well my children were very young, my youngest was, when I became a principal was four years old, so I had a four year old, a six year old and a eight year old and I think that getting to that part from getting my master getting an AP – Guilt that I wasn’t dedicating enough time to my family. I think that was probably the biggest obstacle. I never felt that I could not do the job. I never felt that I would not get it. So I really think that the juggle between the family and work.

4) M. How do you perceive other and by other I mean the majority culture, view you as a principal?

V. I think when I first got there they felt sorry because it was a very tough situation. The school was in the news in the media nobody wanted, in fact, there were any sitting principals that applied for that position. So I think at first –gosh, what did she get herself into, but because of that I also think they were very willing to help. I think there were maybe so some that thought that I could not do it for the simple fact that I was/am a minority and that I didn’t have the experience as a principal just coming in with only two years with assistant principal experience. But the majority of my colleagues wanted me to

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

be successful. They were there to help. I could pick up the phone whatever I needed they were there for me, whether it was just to say, Hey I am having a bad day and they just listened or I am looking to sending teachers to look at best practices do you mind if they come out. So I think that overall they were very, very supportive. I think that when they were able to see that it turned around they regarded me as a talented principal - I still think they do. I think I have very good relationships with my colleagues and that has helped me with that. I respect them and they respect me. I have many that call - I want to do this, what do you think about this, so I really think that for the most part they were very supportive and very respectful what I was able to accomplish. I know that some of the minority principals were very ecstatic that our school was able to do what it did do because it was a minority principal – in being able to overcome the obstacles that were there.

5) M. As a Latina principal do you perceive that you deal with situations (academic, district endeavors, and personnel) differently that your non-Latina peers?

V. I think that when it comes to working with some of the Hispanic families, I do. I think that is natural, I think that when you have a connection, whether it is – you are from the same town, whether the same religion, you find a common bond with someone that’s different. Sometimes I am more aware of possible prejudices that might exist in situations. I may have ideas for how schools could work better, especially if someone doesn’t quite understand where they are coming from. You know we are not all the same and a lot of times we are all guilty of lumping similar cultures together so all Hispanics are not the same. So I think that the families are calling here because they have just

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

moved here or they can't communicate with people at school because there isn't someone who can speak the language or their child is having issues at school. There may be a teacher who is not culturally sensitive or it's a new that is dealing with different aspects of it – I think because I am I am drawn to that I can look at it a little differently than someone else. Like someone who has as a high school I have not taught High School, so someone who has High School experience and a parent has an issue, because they lived it may be able to have better insights than someone who hasn't. And it has been interesting that there are families that would call me because I have helped someone else and they are Hispanic so typically the word gets out – oh you helped so and so and I know you can help me. I will try to help you and it's not that someone at school wouldn't help it just that sometimes they don't know the avenues to pursue. And they start of and the teacher says something, and then they go to the guidance counselor and then go to the assistant principal...oh I think they, I do. I hope that there are people that connect with me when I am having struggles that would help me as well.

6) M. Do you feel you have additional pressure to improve your improve your job or role performance as a Latina Principal?

V. Absolutely. I think that we talked about that in our first interview. Not as much now since it has be 10 years, 12 years since I became an administrator. But back then in Orange county there weren't many Hispanic principals and not many minority administrators, so when you got a position people sometimes assumed you got the position because you were a minority and so it wasn't good enough to do a good job – you had to do a great job and you had to make sure that people did not perceive you as

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

weak and that you were leaning too much on someone. I absolutely believe that! I believe that now in my position. I think there will always be a little bit of that just because of the generation that I grew up in. Hopefully my children will not have to experience that, but yes I do think. I even thing the best superintendent who is African American man – a brilliant man = but I think some people, he knows that some people judge him not by his actions, not by his merits but because of his color and you have to be more focused so that you don’t mess up and when you do I think you are harder on yourself than you might be if you were in a different situation. I think that that sometimes makes you a better because we are a little more careful, we might research things al little bit more. So it is two sided. Absolutely!

7) M. As a Latina principal what kinds of experiences did you or do you feel are based on Prejudice?

V. We had a situation, again. It was the area where I was a principal, a very high socio economic area. Neighboring schools were predominately white. Our school was the only school that had a group of children bused in. There was a group of parents that did not want the children bused in – they were very vocal about it. In fact, my second year they put out a website, they had a meeting at a hotel to try to resort to...it was awful. There were a lot, not a lot, there were a lot of situations from a small group of people that demonstrated their prejudices not only to the children, but also towards me. Not willing to work with me, not willing to come to me, trying to bring it up to the community, stirring the pot with individuals. And I was pretty fortunate that I had a group of people that felt differently than they did, that spoke out on my behalf and spoke out on the behalf

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

of kids and began to point to things that had literally begun to change –that literally shut them up. Many of them had to move out because they couldn’t continue in the community the way they believed. So I had the experiences with the parents that way. I had staff members who also left who were prejudice. Tried to undermine what I did in my first year in a half to two years and I probably will say that 95% left. Once you are aware of it then you can deal with it. One of the things I was never able to do is trust those individuals that stayed. And they might have changed their opinion, I don’t know, but I was never willing to take that risk –backstabbing, leaking out things to the community, giving out misinformation. We had one; it was on during my first year. I was doing my community meetings. One of the community meeting, it was at homes in the different families, in the different neighborhoods that fed into our school. Word got out about the questions that I asked. It was a standard procedure. They usually lasted about two and a half hours. They got to know me and asked me questions and I in turned got feedback from them. So one of the concerns they had was the issue of confidentiality. Things that may have happened with children got into the community. And they just said we know that you just bought yourself a new computer – I did- where is this going – and you spent more money than what the previous computer. And at that time we were switching from Apples to PC - I said well the district is going to change to a different platform next year so is stead of buying or, we would be obsolete, yes we went ahead and it was approved by our IT department. So you see how would we know that information? So if information like that is being leaked out it is also being leaked out about kids, kids who get in trouble, kids who probably not performing well academically. So, OK, point

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

well taken. Well I know who had leaked it out. It was only one person that had that information, so I called a meeting that very next morning, an office meeting, and I shared what happened, I said, What happens in this office is confidential and if you can't be part of that time then you need to find work elsewhere and I will help you do that. I know that it is hard to have loyalty to me when you feel you have you are being disloyal to your previous principal. I understand that, but you can't work here if you can't be loyal to me. And that puts all of us in a bad predicament because parents don't trust us. They are not willing to share information, not to mention the legal issues if something is leaked out. And my point went across to exactly the individual that needed it to and after everybody left that individual came back and apologize and I told her, I don't trust you. It is your job to win back my trust, but it is going to be very hard, so I suggest you start looking. And that person that eventually left. And it was things like that...and then things got out to the community that I had call that meeting that it was not going to be tolerated that there were going to be going to be discipline if things got leaked out, so out of that negative situation, parents started to see the trust and that I was listening to what they were saying and that I did value their opinion and that I would not tolerate things that were unethical. Same thing to the office...they knew that she was not afraid to tackle these issues she is coming head on and we either need to jump on board or find someplace else. But absolutely, you know they were small, but they were there and constantly had to guard yourself. Once you able to build and hire people that you know are going to take care of you, then it becomes a lot easier. And people who will tell you,

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

this is out there. You may not like it and may not want to hear it, but this is what's out there. And so you are able to help better informed individuals.

8) M. As a Latina principal have you experienced any type of hindrance from your Latina colleagues or peers?

V. No if anything they have been very supportive and very helpful. Checking in with how are you doing, if they see anything that might be of interest, sending it my way, if something good happens like some type of recognition calling and saying – hey I heard this happen, so I think they have been very, very supportive. I think we all are of one another. When we someone that is doing well we are not only happy for them, but for all of us because it helps to change people's perceptions, people's prejudices. So I have been very, very blessed that way. Very blessed.

End of Interview

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

Interview #3 – Mrs. VX

1) M. Share with me your experiences or beliefs in choosing school principalship as a career path for Latinas.

V. Well I love the principalship. It provided for me a lot of satisfaction in many levels. The problems, not problems, but some of the things that got in the way of that, and I think I alluded to this in another question earlier, was trying to balance the family. And not necessarily my three children and my husband, but when we go to the next level, or outer layer with my mom or my husband’s mom, the amount of time they perceive I should be spending at home versus at a school function you have to learn how to work with that. I think there is always that little guilt especially if there was something that was happening that I could not go to because of my job. I recall specifically one. It was early in my principalship and I had a conference in NY that had already been paid for and taken care of and my sister-in-law has her first baby that week that I am away. Oh my goodness, it was interesting to hear my mother-in-laws perception and I think maybe the difference is more with my mom was always was supported of me although there were times when she says, you know you have to make sure you take care of your husband and your children...that wonderful guilt, but my mother did go to college and she did have a profession, so I think that at times she understood some of that tug I was faced with, and my mom worked when I was growing up so it wasn’t like she was at home all the time. My mother was different so she always felt that I am may not have given enough attention. So I felt bad as a pressure As far as my colleagues and that support, I never got...I just thought it was a good career because you are constantly challenged

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

intellectually with solving problems, developing your vision, how are you going to achieve your vision. You have internal satisfaction when you are seeing kids accomplished things, when you are helping families, seeing teachers that are becoming better at their crafts, so for me that was very, very important. And my husband was very, very supportive, which I also attribute to him really understanding how much I really wanted to do that. But, I really never thought about it that much other than from my family at home.

2) M. How many Latina principals are in your school district?

V. I would probably say that no more than 15. We have two in our learning community, the East has probably more than any other area. I am trying to think as the east as males. The North has one male. So I would probably say no more than 15. That is not a lot.

M. Male and Female?

V. Total – Male and female

M. So female would be?

V. I would say around 10. I could give you exact numbers for you. High school principal we have two in MS in the entire district and the majority of them are in elementary and in predominately bilingual schools. So, it is something I had not really calculated and it's a lot from, I mean I think about it 15 and we have over 170 schools so really less than 10% of the population and we have a huge numbers of Hispanic children. Even when I am thinking about assistant principals I can't tell you that it is going either. So that's an area that we definitely need to tapped into.

M. It is interesting when you actually look at it and analyze it to see where it is at.

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

V. And at the cabinet level, the executive level which is the very, very top we don't have any. And at the executive level we have one and at the next level after that we have one. So there is, it's not huge, and there are other minorities many more, I mean many more minorities of other minorities than there are of Latinos.

3) M. Have you had a Latina mentor and if so describe how she has helped you?

V. We don't have, as far as principals, we don't have mentors. And funny that you should say that because I was just talking to one of my colleagues who is finishing her dissertation and hers is in leadership and in job satisfaction and that is one of the areas that came out a significant factor is the idea of mentor and so, no, I mean I called the people I knew who I had networked, but to say I had a mentor, never. I had never had one and I think it would have helped.

4) M. Did you perceive there were self-imposed obstacles as you worked towards becoming a school principal?

V. I do, again going back to the balance because my children were very young. My oldest was seven so there was a lot, a lot of guilt as to the time away. My oldest only came to school with me for one year, all of her other schooling she did it at her home school, but my other two spent, S. spent all of her middle school and her 4th and 5th grade with me, she is still in HS and R from 4th grade to 7th. So, even when I had them there, again, you face those things are we too hard on them are they too easy on them, what are they doing? Are they getting in to trouble? Are they doing their work? It's was interesting and the other thing that was funny – I am ashamed to admit this, ok no names attached – my children are not bilingual and let me tell you what – how warped this is. When my

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

children, well when they were little - both my parents and my husband’s parents speak English, so every time we were together we spoke English and my mother always, I want you to talk you to talk to those kids in Spanish – but we don’t talk in Spanish naturally – it was incredible. So we had huge issue with ESOL. And so when they were going in to school if you had checked yes to one of the questions they were tested and there was a really negative stigma on children that were, not necessary in our district because we lived in another district – of them not advancing, being put in different types of classes, so even though, yes we spoke another language, my children never did. So my son, who is a funny character, he would say, Yeah we talk Spanish and he would throw out phrases, “yo quiero taco bell” or really funny things. Well again he got tested and this is the school where I am principal at, well he qualified even though he did not speak Spanish – because he has a deficit in reading and he had a learning disability. So all of that – it was so funny because everything I thought might contribute to it and everything I thought I needed to do to kind of make sure my kids want – discriminated against or thought less of because of who they were...well we all are...I had my fair share of teachers that I worked with that are very, very prejudice and in the end well he qualifies...and I said ah no, he doesn’t speak Spanish he language is the English language not Spanish. So that is another guilt that my kids don’t know, they don’t know...now E. understands. She took it in HS and she is taking it in college and she speaks a little. My other daughter speaks German fluently. She...I crack up because she doesn’t speak Spanish but she speaks German. And my son is actually taking Spanish now. But, you

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

know, it is always something that I thought, oh it has been so helpful to me and it’s really opened so many doors for me.

5) M. What stereotypes about your culture did you believe in, experienced, or observed in others as you worked in school principalship?

V. Well, many did not believe that Hispanics could run schools, let alone a school that was not predominately Hispanic. I ran into that when I was made a principal of a non – maybe it had 10% of the population that was Hispanic- so I ran into some of that with some of the community. Not necessarily with my peers, because especially my Hispanic peers were very, very glad that I was in a environment that wasn’t typical and were always touting any small amount of success...sometimes you get discouraged, why is this happening so they were very supportive. With parents - not only Hispanic but also female, so I sometimes thought a double whammy, sometimes they did not feel I could not understand or relate to where they were coming from because of my background. As far as staying in touch with my culture, even though I grew up in a very Cuban household with a father who was extremely protective- I had a chaperone when I dated. When I went to school which was predominately, well I was the only minority in the entire school, I didn’t grow up feeling at I was a minority so, yes we believe in family big and I think that that has been interesting to see and hear and interact because let’s say something happens to my sister, my mother, my mother-in-law, any of them I would get calls during the day, or I am going to see my mom this weekend and people really couldn’t really understand why I did that –that strong connection to family. So I think that, I realized that somewhere in there, that despite that fact that my parents worked,

Appendix E – Principals' Interviews (continued)

there wasn't anyone that stayed at home, I believe that we had more connection to our family than some of the families that their parent came volunteering, you know all the time and they didn't work. Our family structure looked different, is different and I still think it is different. I work with some teacher that were prejudice with any minorities and depending on the type of child whether they were African American, Asian, Hispanic if they had a disabilities they had different expectations of them, different beliefs of what they could achieve, so we worked hard to help them understand of different cultures. That was slow going and we had some that left because they did not feel they could make those changes at that time, because as the school was growing –it was growing – we were growing 25% -30% percent. When I got there it was like 600 and when I left it was over 1,000 and with that growth came diversity, not economic diversity, but cultural diversity and that was hard for a lot of the teachers to understand that we just don't celebrate Hispanic month or African American month, we infuse it throughout the entire year so that we are cognizant of family needs, children's background why do they behave the way they do. Why is it that they might not ask you a question, you need to approach them. Because that is where I encountered most of it was with staff and helping them understand sometime, well if you didn't know my last name and even if you know my last name, people typically didn't mistake me for a Hispanic or Latina it is only when they hear me talk in Spanish, they say I don't have an accent. So a lot of time they –when I say something –oh so and so when I talked to the parents and they are doing such and such. And they say really how do you know about that, I go well I am Hispanic I know –

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

so that was another – so when they find out you are Hispanic it’s like they look at you a little differently. I babbled on that one – sorry.

6) M. What do you feel you can contribute to your field as a Latina principal that is unique to your culture and would help aspiring principals?

V. Well I think we have a growing population of Hispanic children and they are facing issues that American children had years ago. We used to attribute a lot of the learning problems and issues to language. We sometimes assume that they value education, because that is one of the stereotypes of the Latina culture, but we are seeing children with difficulties whose parents may or may not recognize that it is a disabilities, because that is another thing with the Spanish culture, you tend to – I would say the nuns will fix it – they are not as open to think there may be a medical problems or there may be a psychological problem. I am also seeing a lot of single lot of single parent, not with the abuelita or the abuelito. The kids come home and there is nobody there. We are also seeing them getting much more acclimated to the American culture, so a lot more sex, a lot more violence in young children. So I think that one of the things that I can bring to them is an understanding that culture changes. It is not stagnant, and yes we have an understanding and I have an understanding of what this culture is like, but as it is exposed to other cultures, other experiences they change for better or for worse. So we need to constantly keep that in mind, remembering what we call those roots of culture but recognizing that it is changing and that well this child is not progressing in reading and they have been in a second language for three years and maybe it is not language. Maybe they truly do have a processing disorder may they aren’t literate in their own language

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

and so we are attending to teach them another language and not understanding the issues in their native language. Understanding the issues of a single mom who may be embarrassed to ask for help or it is only mom and grandmother, there is not father. So I think getting a more broad understanding of what that Hispanic culture looks like today, because it is very different from when I grew up – very, very different and helping them understand how they can work with their teacher so their teachers have an understanding what has to happen in the classroom so that the children can be successful. The principals need to be able to reach out to those families so that they do become more involved. They are not afraid to ask for help or to be involved because of whatever perceptions they might have.

7) M. Do to your culture and ethnicity where the any obstacles in your career path that you perceived to be different from the obstacles for the non-Latina?

V. Well, I think that there is the issues of overcoming prejudices that individuals have about certain cultures, while I personally can't say that I can point to an individual that might have had the feeling towards me, I am not naïve that I am to think that it didn't happen, so whether it was to serve on a committee, to get recognized for something that it was influenced by somebody prejudice, I was very, very blessed to have worked for both principals and area superintendent that want and were very opened to diversity. And I only had one boss talk to me about being careful or being aware that there are people out there who will look to you to fail because you are a minority. At first I thought, oh my gosh this is so weird, and then I really as I had more experience I reflected on that and I said, oh my gosh this is so true, because I can pinpoint situation where people, you can

Appendix E – Principals’ Interviews (continued)

kind of just see, they were standing back they did not give you all the information or I would have to go through several hoops to get the information, or one of my Latina friends – hey did you know about this, this is coming up – or I heard this – and this person wasn’t a Latina, but they themselves have experienced where someone was looking for them not to be successful. And you know I think I could be wrong, I would be very curious to what the research is, I think that with the individuals I have interacted with there have been more African American experienced adversity and problems, and getting their goals met, and moving into position than Hispanic and other minority. Obviously I know more than African American, but it just seems to me and in just speaking to my colleagues, my friend next door who came from Texas, she has advanced, she’s been able to do a lot and I can probably point to – well I can tell you further – one of my principals who is African American stories and incidences that they have a shared about hardships and difficulties because of their race and I can’t say that for all of my Latina friends. So I would be curious to see if that is true.

End of Interview

Appendix F – Peer Review Notes

Interview #1

A group of colleagues from USF Lakeland Cohort reviewed themes generated from questions in Interview #1. The following information was gleaned from the group's discussion:

Discussion on Chart Format:

- Look at colors – use more or use 1 color only
- Write below the charts that themes are not listed in order of frequency.
- Can you do one column per theme?
- Use A, B, C, instead of the numbers 1,2,3
- Use landscape format for printing
- Write below the charts that colors do not reflect themes but are only used for the purpose of self-classification.

Question:

- Are there any outliers – No, no outliers

Suggestion:

- Make a list of implications for further study

Clarifications:

- Clarify Question #1 – Career paths leading to Principalship – Each interviewee described their movement up the career path leading to principalship

Appendix F – Peer Review Notes (continued)

- Question #5 – Why father was not supportive? Not because the father didn't want the daughter to study. The father was not supportive because the daughter was already enrolled in college to study engineering and didn't want her to change to education, which according to him was not a prestigious field of study.
- Question #5 – only 4/8 responded that their husbands were supportive because only 4 were married. The remaining four were either single or divorced.

Implications:

- There were no preconceived limitations on the part of the eight Latina principals interviewed, however they expressed concerns about other people's perceptions.
- Question #3 – on motivation – group noticed lots of variation in what was the motivating factor in becoming a principal.
- Question #8 - Discussion on the number of answers to this question – lot of variation – there is no clear perception of what the job of the principal is like. No common agreed upon perception.

Possible Future Study:

- Question about four (4) Latina principals who didn't believe they were placed in a school as principal because of the high number of Latino children – These principals didn't mind being placed in a school due to the large Hispanic student population, but they wanted to make sure that that was not the main reason why they were placed at the school.

Appendix F – Peer Review Notes (continued)

Interview #2

A group of colleagues from USF Lakeland Cohort reviewed themes generated from questions in Interview #2. The following information was gleaned from the group's discussion:

Suggestions:

- When you have a question that has multiple answers look to see if you find connecting words that would formulate a theme.
- Question #7 – Are the same five (5) Latina principals answering this question as a “yes” also answering similar question the same way?

Clarifications:

- Question 1 – Discussion about the possibility of combining phrases that are similar in thought to create themes – As the interviewer I didn't feel comfortable combining the responses since it was not truly representing what the interviewee expressed.
- Question #2 – Principals that expressed that it was gratifying that they were placed in schools with a high Hispanic population want to make sure that they are not placed at their schools only because they are Hispanic.

Implications:

- Question #3 – Not one Latina principal stated that they felt they couldn't do or wasn't capable of being a principal. Look at study of self-efficacy. However they were concerned with the obstacles “others” placed on them

Appendix F – Peer Review Notes (continued)

- Question #5 – Hispanic culture is brought to the job.
- Question #8 – The phrase “token” Hispanic came up more than once. Latina principals did not believe they were placed as “token” Hispanics, but only mentioned this term because other people mentioned this term to them in conversation.

Possible Future Study:

- Is the feeling of “guilt” self-imposed or is the Hispanic family relationships or ties strong enough to cause a Latina principal to feel this way?
- Is the term “token” Hispanic a perception from the Latino culture that has taken longer to eliminate than from the majority culture?
- Is “token” Hispanic a current practice when selecting school principals?

Interview #3

A group of colleagues from USF Lakeland Cohort reviewed themes generated from questions in Interview #3. This group was joined by another cohort group from the University. The following information was gleaned from the group’s discussion

Comments:

- Charts are easy to follow and understand. How did you come about them? A thorough explanation was provided on how the themes and charts were developed.

Appendix F – Peer Review Notes (continued)

- Impressed with the way the study was conducted (methods). Especially with the peer review format and documentation.

Questions:

- Did you have lots of comments on the perception of the Latina with accents?
- What do I consider to be my greatest challenge with my study?
- How were the principals reacting after interviewing them three (3) times?
- What “aha” did I find with the results of these interviews?

Implications:

- No surprise to them that stereotypes are still a problem for minorities
- The group talked about the under representation of Hispanic principals in their counties (4 counties represented in this peer review group)
- Interesting that no one knew exactly how many Latina principal are in their county. Wonder why?
- The term Token Hispanic was mentioned

Possible Future Study:

- How would the study differ in Miami or Lower California, or New York?
- Perception of “accents” of Latina Principal – not valued?

About the Author

Martha Santiago grew up in New York City. At the age of 18, she moved to Puerto Rico where she earned her undergraduate degree in education. She is a wife, mother and grandmother. She resides in Central Florida since 1979.

She retired from a large school district in Central Florida. During her tenure as a principal, she was the only Hispanic female principal in her district. She holds certifications in, Elementary teacher certification, ESOL certification, Spanish certification, Administration and Supervision, and K-12 Principalship. She serves on many local community and educational boards and organizations. She serves as a trustee to the local Community College Board of Trustees. She is an entrepreneur, owning a business, adjuncts at a private College, and is active in both local and state politics.

As a former Hispanic principal, she understands the complexities and realities that Hispanic women face as school administrators.