Latina Superintendents in Texas:
A Case Study of Career Paths, Influences, and Motivation

by

Laura Yvonne Sanchez-Portillo, B.A., M.Ed.

A Dissertation

In

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Approved

Dr. Sylvia Mendez-Morse
Chair of Committee

Dr. Joann Franklin Klinker

Dr. Fernando Valle

Peggy Gordon Miller
Dean of the Graduate School

August, 2012

DEDICATION

This has been an incredible journey that if not for my wonderful family, I would never have been able to take. Thank you my LOVE, Jose Portillo (Joe), for being there for me and for encouraging me to pursue this endeavor which has always been a dream of mine. You have been my rock throughout this whole process and I can't even begin to tell you how much your support and understanding has meant to me. Your encouragement to stick through this process is truly a blessing that I will be forever grateful to you for supporting every step I took. I have loved you all my life and thank you for being my inspiration. I LOVE YOU!

To my wonderful children Eliana Yvonne and Joe, thanks for not complaining that mom was not always paying attention because of deadlines being met or tons of reading that had to be done. I want you to know that this process has been demanding but if not for your patience, I would not have been able to move forward. Thank you for not complaining when I took over your T.V. room and bombarded it with books, research, and notebooks. I hope that one day you too will accomplish your goals that will make you a better person for your families.

I also want to thank one of the greatest men I know, my father Antonio Sanchez. He never had formal education but always insisted his children attempt to learn as much as they could and to take advantage of this great country of ours. He has always been a cheerleader every time I told him I'm going "back to school". He always encouraged me to complete whatever I needed to and always encouraged me never to give up. He taught me how to be a hard worker and supported me in every way. Gracias Daddy por todo su apoyo! Lo estimo y lo quiero mucho!!

To all my angel in heaven, Elva Sanchez, I wish you could be here to celebrate this great accomplishment with me but I feel your presence each and every day. You always wanted the best for your children and your encouragement is still felt today even after many years of your absence. I think about you every day and thank God for giving you to me as a mother. I will forever love you!

To my sisters and brother who have heard all my complaints and heard me question myself over and over "Why am I doing this?" Especially Mercy who heard me on a daily basis. Thanks for your encouragement and telling me "This too shall pass". I appreciate all of your kind words and lending an ear when I was overwhelmed. Gracias hermana por todo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Texas Tech University had the foresight of providing a part of their institution to the city of Marble Falls and the surrounding areas of the Hill Country.   The support and encouragement of the School of Education and the professors at Texas Tech have my endless gratitude for giving the Hill Country this tremendous opportunity of having a great program such as this accessible to us. It has been a great asset to our community and has allowed me to take advantage and make my dreams come true in achieving this endeavor. I would like to thank this fine institution for this opportunity.

 Dr. Sylvia Mendez-Morse provided insightful and valuable assistance throughout these years. Thank you for giving life to education again and for your never ending encouragement. Thank you for always pushing me to the MAX and for your famous words....."ONWARD". Thanks for EVERYTHING!

Dr. Joann Klinker, thank you for providing me with information and for making me reach deeper and farther than I would have before.

Dr. Fernando Valle, thank you for providing me with encouragement and assistance in the writing of my dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Latina Superintendents are few in number in the education world. Although there has been an overall increase in the number of female superintendents in the last two decades, the number of Latina superintendents who hold a doctorate degree is not as high as those of other females in Texas.   There have not been many studies on Latina superintendents in school districts because of such small numbers of superintendents in the field. This study was conducted to find some answers regarding the Latina superintendent and her career path and barriers, family influences, motivations, and aspirations in seeking and obtaining the superintendent position. The study focused on the experiences of three Latina superintendents in Texas who hold a doctorate degree and found some characteristics and attributions they had in common. The central research question to this study was: What were the experiences of Latina superintendents with a doctoral degree in attaining the superintendency in Texas?   The sub questions to this study were: a) What are the career paths and barriers of Latina superintendents in Texas? b)What are the commonalities and differences in their career paths that contributed to or impeded their seeking and attaining the superintendency? c) How did their aspirations and motivations contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency? d) How did the family influence contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency? e) How has having a doctorate improved the attainment of the superintendency?

This study allowed the researcher and will allow others to increase their interest in the area of female superintendents who are leaders in a school district and will enable researchers to provide others with answers that might help Latina leaders. This study will

help researchers find answers to several questions pertaining to existing female superintendents and how they attained and have retained this leadership position. Most of the literature gears towards male superintendents and the attainment and experiences in this position. The superintendent position remains a male dominant position and therefore it is demonstrated through the lack of literature towards female superintendents and their experiences.

The study is a qualitative methodology and the data collected focused primarily through the interviews of three (3) existing Latina superintendents in Texas as well as open-ended questions were developed and emailed to the participants to gather information. The audio-taped interviews enabled the researcher to capture precise details and information given by participants.

The findings of the study provided significant similarities and patterns in all the participants. The findings include strong family influence and support to have a better education than that of their parents, they had spouses who believed in them and supported them throughout, they were exceptional teachers, they each had mentors or someone who inspired them to get a higher education because of their leadership qualities, and none really aspired to become a superintendent but their leadership qualities led them in that direction. Finally, holding a doctorate degree helped them with the attainment of their current position. All of the participants decided to acquire their doctorate because of programs accessible through local universities or universities close by.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Women have been in the educational system and have comprised the majority of the workforce in education for decades. However, they have not been the majority in the leadership position, especially the superintendency. Women have generally been the teachers and not the administrators. Although there has been an increase in numbers of women at the administrative level throughout the years, the numbers have not dramatic ally increased overall. The superintendency remains a complex political position, and several factors account for the small number of women in the superintendency. According to Sharp and others, after World War II, men returning from military service were able to go to school with the assistance of the Service Men's Readjustment Act, commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights (2004). Men were encouraged to become teachers and administrators; women were encouraged to remain home (Shakeshaft, 1989). Bjork, 2000, discusses the U.S. Census Bureau as characterizing the superintendency as "the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States."

Women are absent in the superintendency because of many factors. Glass states that the AASA (2000) findings lists seven reasons why females still fall behind in top district posts: 1) women are not in career positions that normally lead to advancement; 2) women are not preparing for the superintendency; 3) women are not as experienced nor as interested in fiscal management as men; 4) personal relationships hold women back; 5) school boards are not willing to hire women superintendents; 6) women enter the field of education for different reasons today; and, 7) women enter administration at an older age

(2000). They tend to get jobs at the central office in the area of curriculum and instruction and seldom get experience in school finance. Glass also states that women have a tendency to have a less-developed mentoring system—a situation that is detrimental to providing in-district mobility opportunities for women aspiring to the superintendency (2000). In the age of accountability, Lashway (2002) states that the superintendency faces more adversities because of the changing demographics and growing diversity, a fragmented culture, deregulation in the form of vouchers and charter schools, decentralization of power, and increased accountability.

Statement of the Problem

Although there are limited research studies focusing on women superintendents, in the past two decades there has been an increase in journal articles and dissertations. As of 2004, women served as superintendents in only 18% of United States school districts (Grogan & Brunner, 2003). Public education continues to lag behind other professions in the number of female executives. One should consider the fact that there are about 75% women teachers and yet the number of female school leaders does not reflect that number. The superintendency is still considered a male dominated position in the United States. This study will enable the researcher to identify some inconsistencies that exist and will provide much needed answers to questions related to Latina superintendents and their pathway to success.

Purpose of the Study

However limited research on women superintendents is, there is even less research on Latina superintendents in and around the state of Texas. The career paths (including barriers) of women toward the superintendency have been researched slightly. Being a minority female educational leader, I was interested in studying female

superintendents in Texas who have the same background as I do. Research sought was not just the career path and barriers but also their ambition, troubles and tribulations, and the personal qualities possessed that have enabled them to seek and obtain a superintendent position.

This study revealed the experiences of few Latina superintendents in Texas. It will assist researchers in the identification of commonalities these leaders share in successfully attaining a superintendent position. It also revealed the fact that they were exceptional educators who possessed great leadership qualities of such and someone took notice and made them aware of their outstanding qualities.

Research Questions

Several research questions were developed for the purpose of the study. Creswell (2003) suggests that in a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives or hypotheses. These research questions assume two forms: a central question and associated sub questions. The central research question to this study is as follows:

- What were the experiences of Latina superintendents with a doctoral degree in attaining the superintendency in Texas?

The sub questions to this study are as follows:

a) In what ways did career paths and barriers contribute to the attainment of the superintendency in Texas?

b) What are the commonalities and differences in their career paths that contributed to or impeded their seeking and attaining the superintendency?

c) How did their aspirations and motivations contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

d) How did the family influence contribute to the seeking and attaining of the superintendency?

e) How was having a doctorate degree influence the attainment of the superintendency?

Female superintendents in Texas School districts might have the same experiences, skills, and career paths and barriers as other females in other professional fields. The researcher found common experiences they all experienced that made these Latina educational leaders impressive in their careers as superintendents in Texas. The participants in the study shared their experiences which allowed the researcher to identify some commonalities that can possibly aid other Latinas with continuous progress in educational leadership.

Rationale for the Study

This study will contribute missing information that may be crucial to current studies on minority female administrators. Research studies fall short in the area of women superintendents and how they have contributed to the attainment of the superintendency. The study found answers to "old" questions in relation to the changes in career paths and barriers, attributes, and skills that might be the cause of the fact that the number of Latina superintendents are so disproportionately few in Texas. Most of the available literature gears towards male superintendents and the attainment and experiences in this position. The superintendent position remains a male-dominant

position, and therefore it is demonstrated through the resulting lack of literature depicting female superintendents and their experiences after attaining this accomplishment.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study is Shakeshaft's (1989) Six Stages of Research on Women in Administration:

- The first stage of research recognizes there is a lack of women in educational administration.

- The second stage of research includes identifying and focusing on the accomplishments of women administrators.

- The third stage identifies the barriers to women's underrepresentation in the superintendency.

- The fourth stage of research is the study of women and their own perspectives and their viewpoint from their experiences.

- The fifth stage identifies women administrators as a challenge to theory.

- The sixth stage of research reconceptualizes theories in other organizations.

Assumptions of the Study

The research questions were used as a guide to explore the answers which the participants gave in order to understand how Latina superintendents have attained and retained their leadership position. It is assumed that the questions were answered honestly and as accurately as possible. The information gathered by the researcher can be of assistance to other researchers in future studies of Latina educational leaders. The study offers Latinas insight to the qualities they possess and may motivate Latinas to seek higher leadership positions such as the superintendency.

Limitations

Possible limitations to this study would be the number of participants used for the study. The pool for selection was not large enough. According to Quinlantan et al., of the 1,175 superintendents in the state of Texas, 913 were male and 159 were female. Of the female, only 11 were Hispanic (Texas Education Agency, 2001). This study was done ten years ago; using the most recent information will help the researcher adjust the number of participants for the study and use the most up to date information of which school district t have female Latina superintendents. Although the most recent demographic information was utilized, the number of Latina superintendents in Texas is extremely small.

Another limitation might be the fact that I am a Latina in the world of education and I might unintentionally impart a bias based on my own experiences. Although I will seek the information in purest of form, I might unconsciously relinquish some information because of my own personal experiences. Another limitation is that the data was gathered from one geographical area and not from a larger area in Texas.

Summary

Chapter 1 is a brief introduction to the study. The purpose of this study is to find some answers regarding the Latina superintendent; her career path and barriers, her family influences, her motivations, and her aspirations in seeking and obtaining the superintendent position. The study explored three Latina superintendents in Texas and found five characteristics and attributes they have in common. The study used a qualitative methodology, and the data collected focused primarily through interviews of three (3) existing Latina superintendents in Texas. Ten open-ended questions were

developed to gather information, and the audio-taped interviews enabled the researcher to capture precise details and information given by participants.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Female Superintendents

The topic of women in educational administration have been researched very little. Some researchers have acknowledged that some barriers exist to women's advancement into the administrative aspect of the educational field. Shakeshaft (1987) stated that despite more women than men in teaching, we are left wondering why, if gender is not the overriding explanation of a profession structured according to sex, are men managers and women teachers? How is it that women, more than men, are in positions low in power and opportunity? Why is it that teaching is a high opportunity profession for a man but not for a woman?

Research on women in educational leadership roles has changed within this second half of the twentieth century. Many researchers such as Banks, 1995, Blount, 1998, Marshall, 2003, Shakeshaft, 1987, 1999 have described periods or phases through which research on women educational leadership have passed. Virtually, there were no educational female leaders prior to the 1960s. Especially within the past two decades, feminist epistemology and advocacy have played important roles in shaping the changes in the field (Young & Skrla 2003).

According to Blount (1998), hundreds of ambitious women taught in schoolhouses scattered through remote regions of the country in the nineteenth century. As teaching opportunities opened to them, hundreds of thousands of women prepared themselves for their new careers. In spite of women's increasing presence in teaching, men still presided over most classrooms, especially in urban areas. Blount (1998) recounts that in the early 20th century and during World War II, there were women in the

superintendency just as women were in several other male dominated occupations during that time. By 1930, however, 11% of all superintendents were women. The percentage began to plummet after the end of World War II as the women's movement lost its intensity and masses of men returned to postwar life and sought work in just as women were in several male roles during that time (Shakeshaft, 1989). Grogan (1996) states that by the time we reached the mid 1990's, women were superintendents of only five percent of school districts in the United States. Although the women's movement contributed to the growing acceptance of women working outside the home, leadership positions were less available to them Grogan (1996).

Not many research studies of women superintendents but there are more studies now than in the past two decades. Brunner (2000) stated that the investigation of women superintendents has been a "previously neglected" area of research. According to Derrington and Sharratt (2009), recent research indicates more women are moving into that top educational spot. Data from a study conducted by Glass and Fanceschini (2007) indicated that the percentage of female superintendents nationwide increased from approximately 12% in the late 1990s to 22% in 2006.

More attention for research in this area is being sought and has increased in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. As of 2004, women served as superintendents in only 18% of United States school districts (Grogan & Brunner, 2003). Public education continues to lag behind other professions in the number of female executives. One should consider the fact that there are about 75% of the teaching staff are women teachers and yet the number of female school leaders in no way approaches this striking number. The superintendency is still considered a male dominated position in the United States.

According to Brunner (1997), researchers have examined traditional theories of leadership and have found them to be based on traditional male experiences and understandings.

Historically, since 1873, women have been the major contributors to the U.S. Public Educational System. Despite the overwhelming percentage of women in the teaching ranks, representation of women in administrative positions, particularly secondary principalship and superintendency positions, remains minimal, whereas men continue to ride a "glass escalator" (Williams, 1992).

Minority Female Superintendents

According to Tallerico and Burstyn (1996), a study showing that women in the superintendency concludes that there is a hierarchy of school districts, arranged according to desirability, with women and persons of color occupying the superintendency in those districts lowest in the hierarchy. Some of the key indicators for the hierarchy are such characteristics as district wealth, district size, demographics, geographic location, academic reputation, and budget. In the population of Superintendents in the United States, comprised of mostly men. African Americans account for 5.3 percent, and Hispanics account for 2.7 percent. The school districts where most minorities serve as superintendents are located in the Southwest and Southeast; these are areas that have large minority enrollments (Glass, Bjork, and Brunner 2000). Most of the Latino superintendents were men which comprised of 1.4 percent as opposed to the female superintendents which comprised of 1.3 percent.

The underrepresentation of women in the superintendency has prompted many (Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1997; Glass, 2000, Grogan, 2005; Kowalski, 1999, Skrla, 2000)

researchers to investigate the reasons why more women are not superintendents. The underrepresentation of minorities and women in educational administration employment had been well documented for almost two decades (Glass, 1992, 1983). Tyack & Hansot (1982) have provided a consistent picture of the types of individuals occupying top administrative positions. These position were usually occupied by white males: married, highly experienced, and Protestants who were active in their churches (1982).

According to Bjork and Keedy (2001), data and literature on superintendents of color tend to be devoted to African Americans; although recent large-scale studies recorded participation by Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Most of the African American superintendents were employed in predominantly black districts in Southern states (American Association of School Administrators, 1983). The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), in its "Report Women and Racial Minority Representation in School Administration" (1993), stated that superintendents of different racial minority backgrounds tended to serve in areas where persons of the same race are living in significant numbers. Bjork and Keedy (2001) reported that the most recent nation-wide study of the American Superintendency by AASA (Glass et al, 2000) differentiated among groups also included under the minority category. They found that 8.4% of superintendents in the USA were of color including 5.3% African American, 2.7% Hispanic, 0.07% Native American and 0.07% Asian American. These numbers astoundingly demonstrate the under-representation of women and people of color as opposed to white males.

According to Glass et al (2000), the career patterns for males are different than those of females. By age 27, men position themselves for the superintendency by moving

into assistant principal positions; women do not make that transition until their early 30s. Women also take a different route to the superintendency and have greater success moving into administrative positions at the elementary level rather than at the secondary level. Consequently, it is more difficult for women to achieve career mobility since board members searching for superintendents see administrative experiences in the secondary level as being more attractive (Glass et al 2000). According to Bjork and Keely (2001), women are less likely to follow a traditional career track from teacher to principal before becoming a superintendent. They more frequently move from the classroom directly to a central office position before serving as a chief executive officer. The central office positions are usually in the area of curriculum and instruction.

Bjork and Keely (2001) state that there are different perceptions of barriers faced by women entering the superintendency. Women view the lack of recruiting by boards of education, the scarcity of opportunities to gain professional experience, limited professional networks, and likelihood of a glass ceiling to career advancement as important factors that may hinder them from entering the superintendency. Also, there is a large discrepancy with regard to perceptions of discriminatory hiring and promotional practices between women and men.

Latina Female Superintendents

The number of Latina women in positions of administration has not significantly increased. There is almost no research that has focused on barriers impeding the selection of Latina females in administrative positions. Just as in public education, the number of women and ethnic minorities in higher education continues to grow but female and minority administrators does not. According to De Los Santos (2008) a need

exists for information concerning the strategies successful Latina women have employed to obtain administrative positions. These strategies will help educate other Latina women seeking positions of educational administration so these women can receive appropriate mentoring.

Not only is the superintendency underrepresented by women, but equally disturbing is the extraordinarily small number of minority women who reach the superintendency as well. According to Mendez-Morse (1999), information on Hispanic women superintendents is almost nonexistent. There have been studies such as a publication by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) describing a national survey in which issues of career pathways and perceived barriers for women superintendents were examined. There were 2,262 respondents in the AASA study. Of that total, 297 were women while only four were Hispanic females who contributed responses (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner).

According to De Los Santos (2008), Latinas have experienced even greater challenges then women as a whole and the glass ceiling is a significant factor affecting their ascension into positions of educational leadership. De Los Santos states that a glass ceiling does exist among Hispanic women in educational institutions as the numbers of Latina women reaching leadership positions in higher education are not proportionate to the numbers of Latina women seeking and obtaining degrees in education.

Mendez-Morse (1997) stated that perhaps it could be argued that the low number of female Latina superintendents justifies the neglect of educational administration researchers. However, it is precisely because of their low, almost invisible, numbers that attention should be afforded to this singular group of women who have become the chief

executive of a public school system, especially when that position, the superintendency, is synonymous with white male educational leadership.

Latina women, mentorship and sponsored mobility create more opportunities as do role models who are same-sex ones because they become significant in the formation of expectations. Hispanic women in the superintendency are greatly absent; consequently role models are scarce (Ortiz, 1999).

Research in the area correlating female superintendents to student academic success and district/campus academic ratings is almost nonexistent. Melendez de Santa Ana (2008) describes the superintendency as a sense of calling that is more than an occupation. According to Melendez de Santa Ana, the most successful superintendents stay focused on the needs of the children in their districts, in spite of all the obstacles. She states that women and minorities who aspire to be superintendents have many things in common. The main goal is that these women have made it a career to help children. Most have made certain that they had the appropriate credentials and degrees. According to Melendez de Santa Ana, most female superintendents have a doctorate; therefore, they will be more academically qualified than other candidates for the same job. When these superintendents are better qualified and educated to their highest potential, then the districts and/ or campus will most likely gain a better and more effective person for the job.

Barrios (2004) researched the factors influencing the underrepresentation of women in the role of the superintendency. The data from the study revealed women's concerns of limited time for career mobility, career aspirations being placed behind family responsibilities, and family commitments being a priority for them. Because of

these barriers, many women do not aspire to become superintendents, and therefore, will not be in a position to lead a successful district. Quilantan and Ochoa (2004) thought that the limited concentration of Hispanic female superintendents presented an opportunity for further study. Reed and Patterson (2007) examined how female superintendents apply strategies to move ahead in the face of adversity and become more resilient in the process. This study showed how resilience meant using energy productively within a school environment to achieve goals in the face of adverse conditions. Reed and Patterson (2007) found that all the female superintendents stated they were value-driven, not event-driven leaders. The most frequently mentioned concepts were focus, alignment of decisions with values, and the modeling of these values.

According to Reed and Patterson's (2007) findings, virtually all participants spoke about the importance of not deviating from their core values. Furthermore, each of the superintendents put their values about student achievement on the line each time they made decisions. Other themes that emerged from this study were: 1) comprehensively assess past and current reality, 2) stay positive about future possibilities, 3) maintain a base of caring and support, and 4) act on the courage of your convictions.

Padilla (2003), researched the demographic, educational, and socio-cultural characteristics which Hispanic superintendents in Texas share. The findings reported were based on the responses from a census-type, descriptive survey mailed to every Hispanic school superintendent in the state of Texas. Of the 66 superintendents that responded to the survey, 11 were women. The study examined their demographic backgrounds, including childhood and family experiences, their formal academic preparation experiences, including institutions attended and degrees held, career paths

and experiences, including positions previously held and their route to the superintendency.

Padilla (2003) found several characteristic patterns in childhood or family background and formal academic preparation. Most superintendents were born in Texas and well educated pursuing or having either earned a doctorate degree. Similarities were found in career paths, and most were appointed to the superintendency between ages 41-46. Most tended to be High School teachers, principals, central office administrators, and then eventually superintendents. Most of the superintendents serve in districts with less than 3000 students, and many with fewer than 800 in rural areas of the state. The results of the study also determined that there were perceived political, socio-cultural, or racial barriers faced by those Hispanics who have achieved the position of superintendent. They tended to perceive a "good old Boy" network in place, but, once they acquired the position of superintendent, they then became a mentor.

Women face many challenges in the educational leadership profession. The "glass ceiling," the transparent barrier that keeps women from rising past a certain point in administrative positions, continues to suppress the advancement of women who aspire to positions of leadership in the educational and corporate worlds (Quilantan & Ochoa, 2004). Walker and Barton (1983) stated that an added challenge of overcoming common stereotypical sex-role expectations is also a problem for Latina women. They are perceived to have certain behaviors which they must display to be culturally correct. Some behaviors include being passive, submissive, and reluctant to compete with the opposite gender (1983). Often school boards have selected male applicants over female

applicants, even though there is evidence in the literature that females are often better at curriculum and instructional leadership than males (Shakeshaft, 1999).

Manuel and Slate (2003) researched the personal and professional experiences of Hispanic females in their pathway to the superintendency. They were interested in ascertaining what work experiences, academic achievement, and lifestyle choices characterized their ascension to the superintendency. They also wanted to determine if the women felt differently in their perceptions of barriers for themselves, as opposed to women in general. The participants were 23 Hispanic female superintendents of public schools across the United States. The selected superintendents responded to a survey which was a 53-item questionnaire to measure their responses to career pathways and perceived barriers to the superintendency. The information on the questionnaire addressed demographic information, educational background, educational experiences, career paths to superintendency, school/superintendent relations, and responded to questions about the barriers that precluded a woman's ascension to the superintendency.

Manuel & Slate's research study findings related to the school district information of Hispanic women superintendents in the study was consistent and inconsistent with the existing literature on the size of school districts women have been reported to lead. According to their study, the highest concentration of Hispanic women superintendents (21.7%) reported leading districts with less than 300 students which is consistent with Glass et al. (2000) stating that the average school district size across the nation to be 3,000 students. Conversely, the data of the present study showed that close to 45% (43.7) of Hispanic women superintendents served in districts with 3,000 or more students. This study was also consistent with other studies whose findings asserted that minority women

(50%) are often leaders of disadvantaged school districts where 71% or more students receive free lunch. This study was also consistent with Glass et al. (2000) national study of superintendents which stated that minority and female superintendents were more likely to have achieved a doctoral level of education in comparison to white male superintendents. Another study by Ortiz (1999) stated that of 12 Hispanic women superintendents, nine of them had obtained a doctoral degree.

Research Studies

There are few research studies of women superintendents, but more current studies have focused on women superintendents than in the past two decades. More attention for research in this area is being considered and has increased in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. As of 2004, women served as superintendents in only 18% of United States school districts (Grogan & Brunner, 2003). Public education continues to lag behind other professions in the number of female executives. One should consider the fact that there are about 75% women teachers and yet the number of female school leaders does not reflect the striking number. The superintendency is still considered a male dominated position in the United States.

A study by Garn and Brown (2008) discerned how 15 women superintendents in southwestern state school districts perceived gender bias and how it affected their progress and work in the superintendency. The study consisted of 15 female superintendent from a southwestern state who experienced gender bias. They came from a mix of urban, rural, and suburban districts that varied in size from 150 to 25,000 students. The researchers used in-depth interviews and a transcendental

phenomenological qualitative approach and examined how these women perceived that gender bias affected their accession to and work in the school superintendency.

The research provided true accounts of 15 women superintendents and how they perceived gender as being partly responsible for inequity in their jobs. The experiences were shared by all the participants. Some of the implications are that women feel that because of their gender, they are not seen as equal from the very beginning of their careers. Most women do not aspire to be superintendents because they have never been pushed to think they can be and are great leaders.

Historically, female superintendents are not high in numbers. In the early 1900's, the percentage fluctuated from 9% in or around 1910, went up to 11% in the 30s and went back down to 9% by 1950. The percentage in 1970s was extremely low at 3% and by 1990 went up to only 5%. By 1992 there was a slight increase to 6.6%. Grogan and Brunner (2003) have documented a continued expansion to 13.2%. Although there is an increase in the number of female superintendents in school districts, this percentage is extremely low. According to Grogan and Brunner, it is at 18% as of 2003.

The superintendency is seen as being the most male dominated executive position of any profession in the United States (Bjork, 2000b p. 17). There has been some research investigating what limitations there are for women in this area of supervision. Some studies have focused on the career paths of women and how that might limit experiences. Other studies have investigated the importance of mentoring and the quality of professional guidance. The fact of the matter is that no matter what the explanation, women are underrepresented in the district superintendency.

The methodology used in this study was a phenomenological approach which focused on describing the life experiences of participants. The participants were identified through the State Department of Education's List of Public School Superintendents. Out of 48 female superintendents, 12 responded to a letter which had been sent to them to solicit participation in the study. Through the snowball technique, three other participants were identified and contacted by phone. The three agreed to participate providing 15 participants for the study. The participants in the study ranged from 37 to 64 years. Eleven of them were born in the southwestern state. Four identified themselves as minorities. The participants were from a variety of geographic regions of the state and they led districts that enrolled as few as 150 students to as many as 25,000 students.

Three themes were identified in the study: 1) obstacles in the career path, 2) the importance of mentoring, and 3) the necessity of overcoming female leadership stereotypes. One of the common themes in the career path included experience in the elementary schools. Twelve of the women started out as elementary teachers and all but two of the women were elementary school principals as well. This goes along the same lines as Brunner's findings that men and women have different career paths.

The participants were able to overcome limitations in an elementary career path by taking on additional informal and formal leadership roles such as improving school safety or student performance and but not aspiring to administrative roles. Most of them were striving to be the best teacher on campus or in the district. The findings align with other research that say that women do not aspire to administrative leadership positions early in their careers.

Another theme that emerged was that of the importance of having a mentor. This support was extremely important to them because they were unsure of what their role as a superintendent was going to entail. The participants viewed the mentors as a very important part of becoming a superintendent. The mentors included someone who noticed their potential and encouraged them to pursue the superintendency. These mentors were people who truly encouraged the women to strive for the leadership roles.

The third theme that emerged from this study was that of leadership and gender stereotypes. The participants described instances or tests when they thought they were being challenged by the community, other educators, coaches or other administrators. These instances were thought of as being gender-related and would not have been an issue for male superintendents. Women are thought of as being more sensitive, emotional, and not aggressive enough and that might contribute to the gender bias of the superintendent role.

There are a considerable number of discussions regarding gender and the superintendency. These discussions are reflected in Manitoba, Canada. The fact that during the 2004-05 school year, only 5 of the 37 public school division chief superintendents were women is an astounding number. A study in Manitoba focused on the question of whether the low representation of women in the superintendency was contributed to the suggestion that females do not experience the same level of encouragement, mentorship or sponsorship as do males, and that they continue to face gender bias and gender discrimination.

The purposes of the study were to determine whether the experiences of female superintendents in Manitoba are comparable to the findings in other studies on women

and the superintendency; to provide opportunities for both male and female superintendents to offer their understandings of superintendent leadership style in Manitoba; and to compare the discourse of male and female superintendents to determine whether their talk illustrates particular gendered assumptions regarding the leadership styles of men and women.

The participants included four female and five male superintendents. All of the participants were told that this study was a gender-related study, and all consented to it. Qualitative inquiry and analysis methods were utilized to identify emerging themes, or topics of talk. The researchers were both female, and one of them had been a superintendent in Manitoba. The study asked questions in two areas that the researchers thought to be affected by gender. The first area was in leadership style and the other in mentorship experiences. The respondents were also asked a culminating question whether they believed men and women exhibited different leadership styles, and if so, to characterize those leadership styles. The answers to the culminating question were the main focus of this study.

There were questions and discussions from both male and female superintendents. These discussions included whether or not they believed that gender was issue when it came to why there were so few female superintendents in the schools. The perceptions from the male and females were different in that the men were extremely uncomfortable when asked the question. The research includes some of the responses that both groups gave to given questions. Six topics of talks came about from the research. These topics include stereotyping language, mixed messages, a blending of styles, isolation, women as dynamic leaders and males as aggressors.

Stereotyping language was found in the male responses in the interviews. The male superintendents responded with possessive language when they spoke about women. For example, they would say "my ladies" do a great job in our district or "my female administrators" do a great job. The topic of mixed messages was illustrated when the male superintendents did not know how to answer the question of whether or not there were differences between female and male leadership styles. The blending of styles topic occurred when most of the males and female superintendents stated that the leadership styles of men and women have begun to blend. The topic of isolation was a revelation when the female superintendents alluded to a sense of isolation and lack of support experienced in the early stages of their career. The last two topics that women were dynamic leaders and males were the aggressors came about when the females talked about the sharing of leadership at their districts and blending of leadership styles. The males were seen as aggressors simply because the females had fought hard for their work and for the position they held.

There are many women who attain positions that are male dominated like the superintendency. Some of them find themselves in no win situations; when they are caring and collaborative, they are deemed weak and not tough enough for the job. This topic of whether or not gender is the issue of why the number of female superintendents is so low, or if it is the actual role of the superintendency is a reason for more needed research.

Women historically have had few employment opportunities in K-12 educational administration and so the selection of a woman superintendent still remains the exception in public education. Women moved into leadership positions, becoming lead teachers,

instructional leaders, or supervisors, mid-level administrators, and sometimes ultimately superintendents (Blount, 1998).

According to Reynolds (2002), in the United States, organizational theorists Rosabeth Kanter (1997) and Kathy Ferguson (1984) and historians David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot (1982), among others, have tried to explain the gender division of labor in schools. In Canada, these themes have been explored by sociologists such as Dorothy Smith (1987) and by historians such as Allison Prentice (1977), who have pointed out that the development of publicly funded schools was largely accomplished because of a gendered division of labor whereby teaching, particularly of very young children, was viewed as most appropriately done by women, while management, administration, and official leadership work, such as that done by the school superintendent, was seen as most appropriately "a man's task" (Abbott 1991).

The lack of female superintendents should be a significant concern (Brunner, 2000; Grogan, 1994; Keller, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1995). The majority of the teachers are females and yet more males than females are currently employed as superintendents. Female representation in the superintendency has fluctuated in the past 60 years, yet the number of female superintendents has not been equitable with the number of males (Manuel & Slate, 2003). In 1928, 1.6% of the nation's superintendents were females. That percentage had only increased to 7.1% by 1993 (Montenegro, 1993). Today, females comprise a mere 12% of superintendents nationwide, whereas males constitute 88% of superintendents (Hornbeck, 1999).

Not only is the superintendency underrepresented by women, but what is also disturbing is that there is an extraordinarily small number of minority women who reach

24

the superintendency as well. According to Mendez-Morse (1999), information on Hispanic women superintendents is almost nonexistent. There have been studies such as a publication by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) that described a national survey in which issues of career pathways and perceived barriers for women superintendents were examined. There were 2,262 respondents in the AASA study. Of that total, 297 were women and only four were Hispanic females who contributed responses (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner).

School districts in Texas range in size from tiny districts with less than 10 students to large populated school district such as Dallas Independent School District. One commonality found across the state of Texas is that nearly all of the superintendents are men (Skrla, 2000).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This study was designed to determine factors that facilitated Latinas' attainment of the superintendency in Texas. It focuses on her career path and barriers, family influences, motivations, and aspirations in seeking and obtaining the superintendent position. The experiences of the participants have profoundly exhibited similarities in these participants' lives as they attained the highest level in the public school system.

This chapter reflects the procedures followed in order to articulate the findings of the purpose of the study.

Research Design

This research study used a qualitative case study design. Case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions (Berg, 2004). Given the versatility of the case study method, they may be rather narrow in their focus or they may take a broad view on life and society (2004). Yin (1994) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. It is mostly an end product of field-oriented research. Guba and Lincoln (1981) state that the purpose of a case study is to reveal the properties of the class to which the instance being studied belongs.

Case studies focus on situations, events, programs, or phenomenon; it ends with a rich and "thick" description of the phenomenon under study. Yin (1994) states that the thick description is a term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description

of the incident or entity being investigated. Extremely rich, detailed, and in-depth information characterize the type of information gathered in a case study (Berg, 2004).

A qualitative research procedure was a good way of acquiring and reporting the information that such a study would produce. Patton (1990) states that a qualitative approach enables an in-depth, interactive understanding of the participant because it permits the evaluator to study selected issues in depth and/in detail. Creswell (2003) states that the researcher will understand the participants of a small group through a prolonged engagement by in-depth interviews. Qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg, 2004). Researchers using qualitative techniques examine how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others (2004).

Interviews with the participants were an exceptional way to establish a rapport with participants. It allowed the researcher to acquire a profound amount of information needed to be able to develop a detailed understanding of experiences and perspectives of the participants. Qualitative research is a preferable way of reporting information that has been acquired through a natural setting depicting the true nature of the participants' experiences. Patton (1990) states that this method of research typically produces a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. Qualitative research can encompass different ways of acquiring information by using diverse methods of questioning. Semi standardized interview process questioning was used. This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics (Berg, 2004). These questions are typically asked of each

interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but interviewers are allowed freedom to digress and to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions (2004). Depicting the participants' information in a case study approach was the best way to conduct the research.

Qualitative research is satisfying to its practitioners because it tells the whole story with all of its variations, including patterns documented in previous related research literature (Borman et al). Qualitative research involves good, people-oriented researchers who will be certain that detailed information brings meaning to relationships of the participants. Utilizing a case study approach enabled the researcher to get information rich in context directly from the participant. The rich information gathered from their perspective and experiences is holistic in nature, giving the researcher a true picture of how the participant feels and of her understanding of the personal attributes they possessed. Research problems tend to be framed as open-ended questions and therefore were the most suitable methodology for the purpose of this study. This form of methodology supported the discovery of new information. The ability of qualitative data to more fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration not only from the researcher's perspective, but from the reader's perspective as well.

Qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. As it is attitudes and experiences which are important, fewer people take part in the research, but the contact with these people tends to last a lot longer.

Research Questions

Creswell (2003) states that in a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives or hypotheses. These research questions assume two forms: a central question and associated sub questions. The central question is a statement of the question being examined in the study in its most general form; the inquirer poses this question as a general issue so as to not limit the inquiry (Creswell, 2003). The central research question to this study is:

- What were the experiences of Latina superintendents with a doctoral degree in attaining the superintendency in Texas?

The sub questions to this study are:

a) In what ways did career paths and barriers contribute to the attainment of the superintendency in Texas?

b) What are the commonalities and differences in their career paths that contributed to or impeded their seeking and attaining the superintendency?

c) How did their aspirations and motivations contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

d) How did the family influence contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

e) How has having a doctorate degree influence the attainment of the superintendency?

Population of Sample and Instrumentation

The researcher selected three (3) Latina superintendents from Texas who have a doctorate degree. The researcher generated a list from the Texas Public Schools

Personnel Director from the Texas Education Agency website. The researcher navigated

through the list of superintendents who are female. The following criteria were used to

identify possible names:

- The name is traditionally a female name (e.g. Maria, Laura, Margarita, etc.);

- An initial was used as a first name without the title Mr.;

- The name had the title Ms., Mrs., or Miss;

- The last name was of Hispanic origin (e.g. Sanchez, Aguilar, Garcia, etc.);

- The last name was hyphenated with one of the two last names being of Hispanic

  origin (e.g. Sanchez-Davis, Aguilar-Foster, Garcia-Stewart).

- The name had the title Dr.

- The name includes PhD, EdD

The method of identifying participants by their names and surnames produced

only 17 possible participants. The females who fit the criteria were contacted via email

with an invitation to participate in the study (Appendix A). The method of identifying

participants proved to be difficult because it was not completely reliable. Of the 17

participants who were identified, seven candidly responded to the email saying they were

not Latina but were married to Latino men thus having Hispanic surnames. Only three (3)

females who responded fit the criteria and were sent a survey (Appendix B) which

included questions for brief background information about their family, education, and

career paths. Although the number of participants is small, a discussion took place with

my committee chair, and it was decided to move forward with the study. Based on the

information revealed, the participants selected a time and avenue for formal interviews.

The questions for the formal face-to-face interview were emailed, and the participants

were encouraged to send their responses (Appendix C) . The same questions that were asked in the email were asked to the participants in the formal interview setting. These interviews were designed to elicit information from the participants and make them feel comfortable during the interview. The participants were interviewed using open-ended questions and their responses were audio-taped and later transcribed. During the interviews, the participants were encouraged to talk in depth about their personal experiences to gain access to the experiences of a Hispanic female superintendent.

A Consent Form was discussed and delivered at the interview (Appendix D). The consent form stated the procedures for the interview. Pseudonyms will be used for the finding of the participants in the study. The potential risks for the participants were minimal and are estimated as being narrowed down to bad recollections or memories the participants might have while answering some interview questions. The participants' answers to questions via email or tape recording were accessible to the researcher only. The data collected will be stored for two (2) years and then will be destroyed. Ejournal prompts (Appendix E) were emailed to the participants to solicit additional information that was used to expand data from the interview and to maintain an ongoing dialogue with the participants during the data collecting phase of the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The participants were interviewed using open-ended questions and were audio taped, which were later transcribed. Metzler (1996) states that open-ended questions are a good way to elicit responses from participants. During the interviews, the participants were encouraged to talk in depth about their personal experiences to gain access to the mind of a Hispanic female superintendent. In addition to audio taping the interviews, the

researcher also took notes during the interview. Creswell (2003) suggests that researchers record information from interviews using handwritten notes, audio taping, or videotaping. Notes should be written in the event that recording equipment fails.

Qualitative research is satisfying to its practitioners because it tells the whole story with all of its variations, including patterns documented in previous related research literature (Borman et al). Qualitative research involves good, people-oriented researchers who will be certain that detailed information brings meaning to relationships of the participants. Utilizing a case study approach will also enable the researcher to get information rich in context directly from the participant. The rich information gathered from their perspective and experiences is holistic in nature, giving the researcher a true picture of how the participant feels and her understanding of the personal attributes they possess. Qualitative methods are appropriate in situations where one needs to first identify the variables that might later be tested quantitatively, or where the researcher has determined that quantitative measures cannot adequately describe or interpret a situation. Research problems tend to be framed as open-ended questions, and therefore will be the most suitable methodology for the purpose of this study. This form of methodology will support the discovery of new information. The ability of qualitative data to more fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration not only from the researcher's perspective, but from the reader's perspective as well.

Qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. As it is attitudes and experiences which are important, fewer people take part in the research, but the contact with these people tends to last a lot longer.

Data Collection Analysis

The researcher selected three (3) female superintendents who are currently in that position and have a doctorate. The questions asked were recorded and transcribed in written form. The same questions were asked to all participants allowing one to two hours per interview. The researcher communicated with the participant and found which avenue would best work for her for the setting of the interview. These interviews were designed to elicit information from the participant and make her feel comfortable with the interviewer. Using predetermined questions, the participant's answers were noted as best as possible.

The researcher conducted the interviews in the participants' choice of location. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions and a digital recorder was used in an effort to capture the complete conversations with the participants. These conversations were also partly recorded by the researcher's handwritten notes taken of significant responses during the interview. The handwritten notes allowed the researcher to keep track of the conversation and allowed her to stay focused on the questions that needed to be answered.

Data Analysis followed each recorded interview and each email interview. The researcher read and reread each interview to find possible themes that would allow the researcher to interpret and analyze by color coding each theme to see if they deemed further study. The themes were compacted into five for the sake of the study. Numerous outlying themes were generated therefore the researcher had to select the most common themes in order to concentrate on them with a more powerful lens.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify some commonalities in career paths, barriers, aspirations, and motivations of Latina superintendents in Texas who hold a doctorate degree. The research questions guiding this study assumed two forms: a central question and associated sub questions. The central research question to this study was as follows:

- What were the experiences of Latina superintendents with a doctoral degree in attaining the superintendency in Texas?

The sub questions to this study were as follows:

a) In what ways did career paths and barriers contribute to the attainment the superintendency in Texas?

b) What are the commonalities and differences in their career paths that contributed to or impeded their seeking and attaining the superintendency?

c) How did their aspirations and motivations contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

d) How did the family influence contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

e) How has having a doctorate degree influence the attainment of the superintendency?

The list of participants for the study was generated from the Texas Education Agency website. The website provided a list of current Texas superintendents in which the following criteria was use to identify possible names for the study:

1) the name is traditionally considered a female name (e.g. Maria, Laura, Margarita, etc.);

2) an initial was used as a first name without the title Mr.;

3) the name had the title of Dr.;

4) the last name was of Hispanic origin (e.g. Sanchez, Aguilar, Garcia, etc);

5) the last name was hyphenated with one of the two last names being of Hispanic origin (e.g. Sanchez-Davis, Aguilar-Foster, Garcia-Stewart).

The method of identifying participants by their names and surnames produced only 17 possible participants. The females who fit the criteria were contacted via email with an invitation to participate in the study. The method of identifying participants proved to be difficult because it was not completely reliable. Of the 17 participants who were identified, seven candidly responded to the email saying they were not Latina but were married to Latino men thus having Hispanic surnames. Only three (3) females who responded fit the criteria and were sent a survey which included questions for brief background information about their family, education, and career paths. Although the number of participants is small, a discussion took place with my committee chair, and it was decided to move forward with the study. Based on the information revealed, the participants selected a time and avenue for formal interviews. The questions for the formal face to face interview were emailed and the participants were encouraged to send their responses. The same questions that were asked in the email were asked to the participants in the formal interview setting. These interviews were designed to elicit information from the participants and make them feel comfortable during the interview. The participants were interviewed using open-ended questions and were audio-taped and

later transcribed. During the interviews, the participants were encouraged to talk in depth about their personal experiences to gain excess to the mind of a Hispanic superintendent.

This chapter will include the introductions of the participants with descriptions of their family, career paths, aspirations and their motivations in acquiring the superintendency. The five major factors they have in common that contributed to the attainment of the highest position in public education were:

1) their family influence in getting an education was strong;

2) these women were exceptional teachers;

3) they had mentors who thought they possessed leadership qualities;

4) they obtained their doctorate after several years of teaching;

5) none aspired to be a superintendent at the beginning of their career.

The participants in this study represented different size districts but the demographics and the district size will not be presented due to the small number of participants and in order to maintain their confidentiality. The participants at the time of this study were all married, had children, had strong family ties with their parents, and they all loved education. None of the participants had school-age children and all three are contemplating retirement in the near future. The responses shared for the purposes of this research are presented in a manner to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. Pseudonyms of Nora, Merced, and Leticia were given to them.

Participants

Nora

Nora is a married Hispanic woman with three (3) children. She has been in the field of education for the past 30 years. Her parents always stressed the importance of

education and her mother especially stressed the importance of education for women. They were farm migrant workers and believed that education was the way out of poverty. Nora attended the University of Texas to work on Fashion Design under the College of Home Economics. She got married while she was in college and decided to minor in education as a back-up. After graduation, she and her husband moved and she got a teaching job which focused on teaching high school and middle school students Apparel Design. She and a colleague decided to go back to school a few years later to obtain their Masters, Mid-management, and the Superintendent certification. After receiving her degree and certifications, she was hired by the same district she was working in as an Assistant High School Principal.

As an Assistant Principal, she took the initiative to address areas that would help teachers be better educators and administrators be better supporters of teachers. Her work was recognized by others and because of her motivation and initiative, she applied for a central office director's position and was hired. Her new position allowed her get critical experience working with a large budget and overall experience in every area of the district. While working at Central Office, Nora was also working on her PHD from the University of Texas.

Merced

Merced is married with two (2) children. She has been in the field of education for 32 years. She has been an administrator for 14 years. Both of Merced's parents were from Mexico and they migrated to the United States before any of their children were born. They were extremely poor but very hard working people. When they came to the U.S., they made a commitment to each other that their first priority would be to

encourage each of their children to get an education and a better, more prosperous life than they had. Merced was successful during her school years and attended the University in Kingsville.

Merced was a teacher for several years until she decided to pursue her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and specialized in Supervision. While working on the superintendent certification, she was encouraged to pursue her doctorate. She had an administrator who encouraged her to pursue an administrative position. While applying for administrative positions around the district and other districts in the area, an opening at their local region center became available and with the help of her mentor's persistence in applying, was hired for her effective leadership qualities.   While working at the region center, she went back to school and continued pursuing her doctorate.

Leticia

Leticia is married with three (3) children. She has been in the field of education for 34 years. She was in the classroom for four years and decided to go back to school to get her Mid-Management certification. She has been an administrator for 25 years. Her family influence in her education began with the encouragement of her parents. Both parents were High School dropouts due to a necessity to work. She acquired her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and after a few years was encouraged to get her Master's degree in Supervision. She then got her Mid-Management and Superintendent certifications and eventually worked on her Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Leticia followed what is thought to be the traditional path to the superintendency. She was an elementary teacher for four (4) years and then became an Elementary

Assistant Principal, Middle School Principal, High School Principal, and eventually went to Central office as a Special Programs Administrator. An opportunity to apply for the Superintendent position in her district arose and she applied and has been the Superintendent there for the past seven (7) years.

Factors Facilitating the Attainment of the Superintendency

Strong Family Influence

The participants gave accounts of their family lives with their parents. Their parents were a strong influence in obtaining an education and were the backbone of their career beginnings in the field of education. All of the participants were married to men who encouraged them throughout their obtaining additional certifications and never once hindered their pathway into obtaining their doctorate. They all felt blessed in being part of families who set higher standards for them and for having families which believed that the way out of poverty was through education.

Nora

"My parents always stressed the importance of education. They believed that education was the way out of poverty, especially for women." Nora was from an immigrant farm working family whose mother dropped out of school in the eighth grade and her dad only had up to a second grade education. Her mother always encouraged her to further her education in order to be self reliant. She expressed the importance to her daughters to believe that women had to get an education because of the uncertainly of what the future holds was real. She would tell her daughters that even if they got married and had a husband that could support them, women could not count on them to support them. Nora understood that education was important in order to be self-sufficient regardless of her marital status, but because she enjoyed learning as well."

Merced

"I was raised in the Projects and so I would always look back at my life and say, look how far I've come." Merced lived in the Projects all throughout her schooling until a couple of weeks before her high school graduation. "I've watched my parents work hard and struggle to reach the American dream because

even though they were descendants directly from Mexico, they came to this country wanting more." Merced's parents did not want more for themselves, but they wanted more for their children. "The story I told over and over throughout my life because I think that it has been the foundation for everything that I've achieved. It's my parents' desire to make sure that we appreciated the value of an education."

Leticia

"My parents had to drop out of high school in the ninth grade due to a necessity of working to provide for the family." Leticia's mother was mostly a homemaker because there were 6 children in the home. The father had as many as 3 jobs at one time in order to feed the family and provide what was necessary. "They were always very encouraging to all of us in regards to going school." Leticia added, "Although mom dropped out of school out of necessity, I will put her up against anybody. She is so intelligent - she reads, she's an avid reader, she's always reading, she's educated herself. An you know that hunger she had for wanting to finish school transferred over to wanting the children to go to school and to continue."

Summary

The strong family influence was a strong factor for the attainment of the superintendency for the women in this study. They all grew up in poor homes with either uneducated or minimally educated parents. None of these parents had graduated from high school, and some of these parents had no formal education or their education was only to mid-elementary years. Therefore, the low level of education the parents acquired pushed them to make sure their children received the most education possible and the best education they could possibly provide for them. All of the participants lived in the same town with or close to their parents. Their strong family ties and cultural background has made them aware that family comes "first". They all have the perception that the need to be close to their aging parents is most important. All the participants are married, and their husbands have been their primary support system. The three participants wanted to give up at one time or another because of the stress level the job

41

entailed; but, their husbands were the "glue" that kept them together and focused on what they needed to do.

Exceptional Teachers

The participants in my study were excellent teachers. All three participants had been selected to be in different committees either for campus improvement or district improvement. The participants started off with their administrators as mentors in some form or fashion. These administrators saw something that the ladies did not see. Their hard work and dedication to their teaching and to their students made them love the profession and as they exhibited leadership skills, these administrators became mentors to them and helped them realize that they possessed a gift that not many people have.

Nora

"I loved my teaching job. It was a great job for someone who wanted to continue her love of design and working with economically disadvantaged students was very rewarding. Once I started working on my Masters, I had three children already, with my youngest being one year old. I enjoyed the networking with fellow educators and felt I became a better teacher when I started my administrative work. Once I finished my Masters and Mid-management, I was hired by my same district to be an Assistant Principal at the High School. I took my responsibility very serious and took the initiative to address some areas that I felt administrators needed to focus on to be supportive of their teachers."

Merced

"I taught homemaking for about 12 years. after that I wanted something different because I wanted to be closer to home, so I moved closer to home and I taught pre-K at that time. And so I moved from a high school setting to pre-K. At that time my appraiser was this older gentleman that was retired and he would just come as a second appraiser, told me he had seen me twice, as an appraiser for high school and an appraiser for Pre-K. So at that time he remembered me and told me he had the opportunity to see me in both settings throughout the years and he told me I was a natural. He told me I had to participate in more activities and he was right. I became part of the Site Based Decision Making committee in the district so after that I shined. It was a springboard into going into a leadership position after that and I was asked to be the chair."

Leticia

"My principal insisted that I go back for my mid management certification because he insisted that I had leadership qualities. He told me I had to be a principal! I was hardworking, dedicated, loyal, committed, had a humanistic approach, empowering, data driven, good listener and a good communicator. I applied for a Middle School Principal position and was told in the interview that the school was in trouble and the scores were very low. They told me the kids were not in control but that if I wanted to get the school. I told them absolutely yes because I wanted a challenge! So I became the principal and the school became recognized."

Summary

All of the participants were outstanding educators. As they progressed in the field of education in capacities such as a teacher, director, supervisor, or any form of administrator, they exhibited overwhelming leadership qualities which made them surpass their peers. Their track record in education far exceeded that of any other candidate, and their wealth of knowledge was superior to the others as well. The Latinas in this study had been educators for many years and had always challenged themselves to learn more about the educational process in the area of instruction in order to be the best educators.

Mentors

Although the participants in the study did not have one "mentor" per se, they had individuals who recognized their hard work and skills that a great leader must have. These mentors were either administrators who thought they possessed the qualities of a great leader or colleagues who thought their work ethic was above and beyond and needed to be recognized and pursued.

Nora

"I had a mentor that helped me meet the required first year mentorship. He was available with guidance on day-to-day problems that arose. But of more help

was our regional superintendents, who met regularly to support each other. We could meet every Friday morning for breakfast and laughed and joked about the stress of the job, as, helped each other with problems that would come up. We developed a close friendship with each other that allowed us the comfort level to call each other whenever we had a problem or question."

Merced

"When I was a teacher, the superintendent of the district asked me to serve as the leader of the District SBDM Committee. After he saw my leadership ability, which I personally didn't know I possessed, he encouraged me to seek the administrative path. He was my mentor and has always been supportive and has always been an excellent reference for me. He was very helpful in helping me get my positions with the ESC and as principal and principal/superintendent. By the time I applied for my current position, I used more current references instead of using my mentor."

Leticia

"I had a wonderful mentor. He was a much older gentleman. I always saw him as a father figure, even though I did have a wonderful father, and he's the one that brought me into the office day and asked what was I doing? As I told him that I was teaching, he said, oh no, no, no, you need to go back to school and get a masters! So I went back to school and got my masters in supervision, which no longer exists these days, and I did that and still my confidence level wasn't where it needed to be because of the fact that I had been told I wasn't college material at one time."

Summary

All of three participants had a mentor in some form or fashion. A couple of them had several mentors throughout their educational careers. There was always someone who believed in them and made them aware of their leadership qualities and encouraged them to move forward to acquire higher education. Even though they did not think initially about going back to school, one they were made aware of their qualities as a leader, they went back for more formal education. Their mentors directly affected their move for higher education.

Doctorate

All of the participants in the study hold a doctorate degree. They obtained the doctorate because they each decided to go back to school and get their Masters, Mid-management certification, and the Superintendent certification. While they were aspiring to become principals, they each had the opportunity to continue their studies and obtain their doctorate degree due to program proximity to their home town.

Nora

"Once I finished my Masters and Mid-Management, I was hired by my same district to be an Assistant Principal at the High School. I took my responsibility very serious and took the initiative to address some areas that I felt administrators needed to focus on to be supportive of their teachers. Some of my initiatives caught the eyes of central office and I was asked to apply for the Career and Technology Director's position two years later. I did and I got the job. I was there for eight years and that was the same time I was working on my Ph.D."

Merced

"I got my Bachelors and my Masters. Then along came a couple of certifications, management, superintendency, and then the drive of it all. The university had a doctoral program in educational leadership, how could I not take advantage of something that is right here? One more goal that my parents will feel is another accomplishment for me. So I started working on my doctorate. My father became ill with Alzheimer's so my goal became to try to complete as quickly as I could because I wanted him to go, because he has been in all of my other graduation ceremonies."

Leticia

"After I got my supervision, I stayed out of school for a couple of years but then went back for my mid management. My principal kept insisting I needed to become a principal. Then after I got my mid management I went back to school because of the opportunity of the doctoral program being in town. I really never aspired to get my doctorate but simply because I had been told at one time or another that I wasn't "college material" I had to go for it. I knew that I wanted to get as far as Assistant Superintendent because I wanted to make sure that my lifelong goal was to teach at the university level when I finished with public schools."

Summary

None of the participants ever aspired to obtain a doctorate early in their careers. Obtaining a doctorate was an option after they knew they would be able to because of their accomplishments. Without hesitation, they pursued their doctorate because of their confidence and because it was attainable through local universities.

Career Paths and Barriers

The participants were asked to talk in depth about their career paths and if any barriers existed during the time of their attainment of the superintendency. As stated earlier, it was important to examine the experiences of women superintendents who can share their stories with aspiring Latinas who seek the superintendency. During the interviews, it became clear that these three women did not experience any barriers in the attainment of the superintendency. The only barriers they encountered were that they were mothers and it was hard to go back to school while their children were young. Even though their absence from everyday activities with their families created some strain in their lives, they had spouses who unyieldingly stepped in and took over what these ladies thought was their responsibility as mothers.

Nora

Nora attended college with a major in fashion design. Her minor was in education as a back-up to her design major. The decision to have a minor in education was a good one because there was no market for fashion design and began teaching at the secondary level Apparel Design which was under the Home Economics umbrella. Nora started working on her Master's in Education with a fellow teacher. She had three children already with the youngest being one year old. At this time She enjoyed going

back to school and networking with fellow teachers and felt she was becoming a better

educator and immediately started working on her administrative work. Once she finished

her Masters and Mid-management, she was hired by the same district as an Assistant

Principal at the High School. She was asked to apply for the Career and Technology

Director's position two years later and got the job. She stayed in that position for eight

years and was working on her Ph.D. at the same time. As soon as she finished her Ph.D.,

she applied for the superintendent's position at a neighboring district and got the job.

When asked if she confronted any barriers in achieving the superintendency, she

answered:

> "I did not experience barriers because I got the first superintendent's job I applied
> for. But I really believe that the timing was right and my qualifications were right
> for the district when I applied. The previous superintendent had been a political
> selection and he had not really addressed the issues that needed to be addressed.
> The district was in the red financially and they needed some who understood
> budgeting and curriculum very well."

Merced

Merced followed what she thought was the traditional path, except after being a

teacher, she went to work at the Educational Service Center as an Education

specialist/Consultant. The path she followed was a teacher, ESC consultant, principal,

principal/superintendent, assistant superintendent and finally superintendent.

When asked if there were any barriers she confronted in attaining the

superintendency, she said:

> "The only barrier I confronted was that two current administrators in the district
> were also in contention for my current position and the outgoing superintendent
> was really supporting and pushing for one of the administrators to take over his
> position. It was also a little difficult/awkward to get the position and then be over
> the two current administrators who applied for the same position and didn't get it."

Leticia

Leticia's career path was that lead her to her present position was that she was a teacher, Migrant resource Teacher, Elementary Assistant Principal, Ninth Grade Campus Assistant Principal. This position later became a Middle School Assistant Principal position. She then became a High School Principal, Central Office Special Programs Administrator, Central Office Curriculum and Instruction Administrator, and to superintendent.

When asked if she encountered any barrier in achieving the superintendency, she said, "Didn't really have any; just proved that I could do a good job. I was the Middle School and High School principal in the district I am superintendent in. I had done a good job at both schools."

Summary

The participants in this study had similar career paths. They started their educational careers as teachers in either elementary school or middle school. Two of the participants were Home Economics teachers which was interesting to see where their interests were initially. The three participants all had similar goals as teachers. Their main focus was on the students and how to make sure they were the best educators they could possibly be to their students. Their ambition to be the best teacher and to obtain that level of expertise by learning more in their field of expertise was the beginning of their career path into the superintendency.

Aspirations, Attributes, and Motivations

The three women interviewed never aspired to be a superintendent at the beginning of their careers. It was not until they continued to pursue their Master's did

they decide to obtain their superintendent certification. Even after that was obtained,

they aspired to get their PH.D. and then pursue the superintendency.

During their interviews, the biggest motivation each one of them had was what I

think was their love of education. Each participant was a great teacher who wanted

nothing but the best for kids. This drive encouraged them to pursue other degrees and

ultimately obtain their doctorate.

Nora

Nora stated that she never had any aspirations to be a superintendent.

"I worked on my Masters Mid-Management Superintendency, and Ph.D., just
because I enjoyed learning and going back to college. I never had intentions to
apply for a superintendent's position. When I completed my Ph.D., I was
encouraged by my husband and sister to apply because we had witnessed some
very weak superintendents in surrounding districts at the time and were critical of
some of their actions. So again, I was challenged and decided to put my money
where my mouth was and applied and got the job."

When asked about her personal attributes in obtaining the superintendency, Nora

stated:

"My experience with budgeting and curriculum became the one strength that beat
out the other candidates. Coming from a large district, my CTE budget was larger
than the entire district's budget which I applying to. I was also fortunate to have
varied training in my old district in all aspects of curriculum. As a central office
administrator, I was included in all staff development and developed a strong
understanding of school improvement strategies. I was actively involved in
curriculum development and teacher evaluation so I had a strong understanding of
effective instructional strategies and how to help teachers improve. I believe that
I appeared as a strong instructional leader and a strong manager to the board that
hired me."

Merced

Merced confided that her previous experience as a principal/superintendent for

four years and as an assistant superintendent for three years was an advantage for her

obtaining the superintendency. "My ability to communicate my vision for the district

under my leadership was an advantage over the other candidates. I also believe that my

servant leadership style and my strong belief in collaboration and teamwork as the

foundation and success of an exemplary school district are strong attributes."

When asked about her aspirations to become a superintendent, Merced said:

"After each position I held, beginning with teaching, I found myself wanting to
continue learning a growing professionally. After becoming a principal and
serving in that position for four years, I wanted to move to a small district as
superintendent. The district I moved to had a position that had the dual
responsibilities of principal and superintendent. This dual position really inspired
me to want to become a superintendent in a larger district."

Leticia

"I think my personal attributes that helped me get the superintendent's position
were that I am a hardworking, dedicated, loyal, and committed person. I am
transparent in that I am not going to tell you everything there is to know. My
logic is to keep everyone well informed and you will solve a lot of negative issues
that might transpire. I frankly never aspired to be a superintendent because my
goal in life was to have experience from the lower level and get as high as
Assistant Superintendent and then go teach at the university. The opportunity to
apply for Superintendent at the district I worked at became available so I applied.
There were five candidates and had three interviews. I almost withdrew my name
but my husband reminded me that I wasn't a quitter."

Summary

The three (3) participants in this study had almost identical aspirations, attributes,

and motivations for being the best educator they could become. Their primary focus was

always to do the best job possible for the students. As they tried to be a great educator,

their ambition to learn more about the educational processes in the success of children

made them aware of what great opportunities they could have in administrative positions

in their school district or in others. These women obtained the highest level of education

and also obtained the highest position in a school district.

<center>**CHAPTER V**</center>

Summary of Findings

This chapter includes the conclusions and discussions of the findings to the inquiry into the factors that facilitated Latinas' attainment of the superintendency in Texas. It focuses on her career path and barriers, family influences, motivations, and aspirations in seeking and obtaining the superintendent position. The study was guided by research questions. These research questions assumed two forms: a central question and associated sub questions. The central research question to this study was as follows:

- What were the experiences of Latina superintendents with a doctoral degree in attaining the superintendency in Texas?

The sub questions to this study were as follows:

a) In what ways did career paths and barriers contribute to the attainment of the superintendency in Texas?

b) What are the commonalities and differences in their career paths that contributed to or impeded their seeking and attaining the superintendency?

c) How did their aspirations and motivations contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

d) How did the family influence contribute to the seeking and attaining the superintendency?

e) How was having a doctorate degree influence the attainment of the superintendency?

This chapter will include a brief description of the participants with descriptions of their family, career paths, aspirations and their motivations in acquiring the

<center>51</center>

superintendency. As many themes began to develop, the five major factors they have in common that contributed to the attainment of the highest position in public education were as follows:

1) their family influence in getting an education was strong,

2) these women were exceptional teachers,

3) they had mentors who thought they possessed leadership qualities,

4) they obtained their doctorate after several years of teaching,

5) none aspired to be a superintendent at the beginning of their career.

The participants in this study represented different size districts, but the demographics and the district size will not be presented due to the small number of participants and in order to maintain their confidentiality. The participants at the time of this study were all married, had children, had strong family ties with their parents, and all loved education. None of the participants had school-age children, and all three are contemplating retirement in the near future. The responses shared for the purposes of this research are presented in a manner to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. Three women participated in the study, and the pseudonyms of Nora, Merced, and Leticia were given to them.

Family Influence

The factor of have a strong family influence was shared by all three participants. They all grew up in poor homes with either uneducated or minimally educated parents. None of these parents had graduated from high school, and some of these parents had no formal education or their education was only to mid elementary years. Therefore, the low level of education the parents acquired pushed them to make sure their children received

the most education possible and the best education they could possibly provide for them. All three participants said similar words such as, "While my parents had several jobs to ensure we had everything we needed, they wanted their children to be educated and to continue learning since having an education is something no one can take away from you."

All of the participants live in the same town with or close to their parents. Their strong family ties and cultural background has made them aware that family comes "first". They all have the perception that the need to be close to their aging parents is most important. All of the participants are married, and their husbands have been their primary support system. The participants, at one time or another, wanted to give up because of stressful situations in their jobs. Their husbands were the "glue" that kept them together and focused on what they needed to do. These women had a strong family background not just with their parents and brothers and sisters, but they had a strong marriage that allowed them to persevere and continue on with their journey.

Fortunately, having a family was not a barrier for these three women. Shakeshaft (1989) stated that related to the issue of support for women are expectations of traditional roles for women. Not surprisingly, family and home responsibilities, including the major responsibility for child and home care, were listed as barriers to women's achievement in administration. Shakeshaft (1989) added that as a result, many women in administration have either never been married or are divorced or widowed.

Outstanding Educators

All of the participants in my study were outstanding educators. As they progressed in the field of education in capacities such as a teacher, director, supervisor, or

any form of administrator, they exhibited overwhelming leadership qualities which made them surpass their peers. Their strong will and dedication to their school district made them marketable when acquiring the superintendency. Their track record in education far exceeded that of any other candidate and their wealth of knowledge was superior to the others as well.

Hispanic superintendents are well-educated/ as supported by the findings of a research study by Padilla (2003). His findings also support studies by Cardenas (1995) and Steinberg (1996) which suggest that first and second-generation immigrants have achieved greater educational and professional success than others before them or those that follow. Shakeshaft (1989) and Holliman (1996) support these findings that determine that educational administrators are apt to be first born and second born children, if not an only child.

Mentorship

Some of the participants had several mentors throughout their educational careers, but they all had at least one outside their family. There was always someone who believed in them and made them aware of their leadership qualities. Even though they did not think initially about going back to school to get a Master's degree, once they were made aware of their qualities as leaders, they went back to get a higher level of education. Early in their educational careers, none of these participants realized they possessed leadership qualities.

Aspirations and Obtaining a Doctorate

None of the participants in the study aspired to become a superintendent at the outset of their educational career. As they acquired multiple certifications throughout the years, all three of the participants were faced with obtaining their doctorate. Without

hesitation, they pursued it because of their thirst to acquire more knowledge and because accessibility to a doctorate at local universities made it possible.

Limitations

Possible limitations to this study would be the number of participants used for the study. The pool selection was not large enough. According to Quinlantan et al., of the 1,175 superintendents in the state of Texas, 913 were male and 159 were female. Of the female, only 11 were Hispanic (Texas Education Agency, 2001). The study was done ten years ago and using the most recent information will help the researcher adjust the number of participants for the study and use the most up-to- date information of which school districts that have Latina superintendents. Although the most recent demographic information was utilized, the number of Latina superintendents in Texas is extremely small.

The method of identifying participants by their names and surnames produced only 17 possible participants. The females who fit the criteria were contacted via email with an invitation to participate in the study. The method of identifying participants proved to be difficult because it was not completely reliable. Of the 17 participants who were identified, seven candidly responded to the email saying they were not Latina but were married to Latino men thus having Hispanic surnames. Only three (3) females who responded fit the criteria and were sent a survey which included questions for brief background information about their family, education, and career paths. Although the number of participants is small, a discussion took place with my committee chair and it was decided to move forward with the study.

Another limitation might be the fact that I am a Latina in the world of education and I might unintentionally impart a bias based on my own experiences. Although I will seek the information in purest of form, I might unconsciously relinquish some information because of my own personal experiences. Another limitation is that the data was gathered from one geographical area and not from a larger area in the state.

Recommendations

This study raises the question of "Does a Latina have to have a doctorate in order to get a superintendent position?" It stands to reason that the attainment of a doctorate facilitates the ability to obtain the highest position in education, especially as a woman, but, are times changing in that more women are able to get a superintendent position if they aspire to and are confident enough to follow through?

Further study should include a comparison of Latinas who hold a doctorate butare not given a superintendent job. Also, further study should include the reasons why Latinas do not aspire to get their doctorate and thereby get further into the administrative areas in education. Building resiliency among aspiring Latinas would support the fact that the enhancement of confidence would only help them in acquiring higher levels of employment and higher levels of education.

There are many Latina educators who are strong, confident, and possess great leadership qualities in our public school systems. Women must learn that even if they don't have the encouragement of a "mentor", they must encourage each other to learn more and be more independent about their jobs. Women must be informed as to what educational opportunities are available in order to not be reluctant get additional education and therefore be able to acquire better employment through the attainment of

higher education. If this stands true for all women, it logically stands true for the Latina in higher education, one of the most unrepresented and unresearched minority.

REFERENCES

American Association of School Administrators (AASA). (2001). 2000 study of the American School Superintendency. Washington DC: C Press.

Barrios, Vivian (2004). Factors influencing the underrepresentation of women in the role of superintendency as perceived by selected school board members and superintendents of school districts in Region XX, Education Service Center in Texas. Doctoral dissertation, Texas A & M University.

Berg, B.L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (5th ed.)*.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Betz, N.E., & Fitzgerald, L.F. (1987). The career psychology of women. Orlando: Academic Press, Inc.

Bjork, L. (2000b). Personal characteristics. In T.E. Glass, L. Bjork, & C.C. Brunner (Eds.), The 2000 study of the American school superintendency: America's school leaders in a time of reform (p.15-32). Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Bjork, Lars G. and Keedy, John L. (2001) 'Changing Social context of Education in the United States: social justice and the superintendency'. Professional Development in Education, 27:3, 405-428.

Blount, J.M. (1998). Destined to Rule the Schools: Women and the Superintendency 1873-1999. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Brunner, C.C. Invisible Limited, and Emerging Discourse: Research Practices That Restrict and/or Increase Access for Women and Persons of Color to the Superintendency. [Part of a special issue: Women in Educational Leadership]. Journal of School Leadership v. 18 no. 6 (November 2008) p. 661-82.

Brunner, C.C. & Grogan, M. (2007). Women Leading School Systems: Uncommon Roads to Fulfillment. American Association of School Administrators.

Cardenas, Jose A. (1995). Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy. Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster.

Creswell, John W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods. Approaches*. (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

De Los Santos, Rebecca (2008). A qualitative Ethnographic Study of Barriers Experienced by Hispanic Female Administrators in Higher Education. (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Phoenix).

Derrington, M.L., et.al. Female Superintendents: Breaking Barriers and Challenging Life Styles. The Delta Kappa Gamma Bullentin v. 75. no. 2 (Winter 2009) p. 8-12.

DuBois, C. (2008). Latina academic success: The role of K-12 school experiences and personnel. (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin).

Dugger, K. (2001). Women in higher education in the United States: Has there been progress? The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 21 (1/2), 118-126.

Evans, C. L. Women in the Superintendency: A Study of Accumulative Disadvantage. Academic. Leadership v. 4 no. 2 (Spring 2006) p. 1.

Garn, Gregg & Brown, Casey (2008). Women and the Superintendency: Perceptions of Gender Bias. Journal of Women in Educational Leadership, Vol. 6, No. 1 49-71.

Glass, T.E. (2000), Where are all the women superintendents. AASA School _____Administrator [on-line]. Available: http://www.aasa.org/SA/june0005.htm.

Glass T.E., Bjork, L.G., & Brunner, C.C. (2000). The study of the American superintendency: 2000. Arlington: American Association of School Administrators.

Glass, T., & Franceschini, L. (2007) The state of the American superintendency 2000: A look at the superintendent of education in the new millennium. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Grogan, M. The Short Tenure of a Woman Superintendent: A Clash of Gender and Politics [Part of a special issue: Women Educational Leadership]. Journal of School Leadership v. 18 no. 6 (November 2008) p. 634-60.

Grogan, M., & Brunner, C.C. (2003). Women leading systems. The School Administrator, 62 (2),46-50.

Grogan, M. (1996). Voices of women aspiring to the superintendency. Albany N.Y.: Sunny Press.

Hansot, E., & Tyack, D. (1981). The dream deferred: A golden age for women_school administrators (Policy Paper No. 81-C2). Vol 27, no. 3, Mar 2004.

Harris, Sandra (2007). Motivators and Inhibitors for Women Superintendents. Advancing Women in Leadership Journal, v 23, (Spring 2007).

Holliman, K.L. (1996) A Descriptive Survey of Women School Superintendents in Texas. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin.

Hollinsworth, L., et. al. Race, Gender, and School Leadership in a State with Shifting Student Demographics. Journal of Women in Educational Leadership v. 7 no. 4 (October 2009) p. 175-94.

Lashway, L. (2002). The Superintendent in an Age of Accountability. Clearinghouse on Educational Policy and Management.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Littleton , M. (1997). *Texas teachers, reality vs. myth.* Austin, TX.: State Board of Educational Certification.

Manuel, Margaret & John R. Slate. Hispanic Female Superintendents in America: A Profile. Advancing Women in Leadership Journal (Fall 2003).

McCaslin, M & Scott, K (2003). The five-question method for framing a qualitative research study. The Qualitative Report, 8 (3). P. 447-461.

Melendez de Santa Ana. T. Opening Up the Superintendency. Leadership v. 38 no. 1 (September/October 2008) p. 24-7.

Mendez-Morse, S.E. (1997). The Meaning of becoming a Superintendent: A Phenomenological Study of Mexican American Female Superintendents. (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin).

Mendez-Morse, S.E. (1999). Redefinition of self: Mexican-American women becoming superintendents. In C.C. Brunner (Ed.), Sacred Dreams: Women and the Superintendency (pp.125-140). Albany: State University of New York.

Metzler, (1996) *Creative Interviewing.* Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice Hall.

Merriam, S. (1998). Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Miller, Claire Michael (2009). Overcoming Barriers: Women in the Superintendency. (Doctoral Dissertation, Georgia State University).

Miller, S.K. et. al. Female Superintendents: Historical Barriers and Prospects for the Future. Journal of Women in Educational Leadership v. 4 no. 4 (October 2006) p. 219-42.

Montenegro, X. (1993). Women and racial minority representation in school administration. Arlington: American Association of School Administrators.

Ortiz, F.I. 1999. Seeking and selecting Hispanic female superintendents. In Sacred dreams: Women and the superintendency, ed. C.C. Brunner, 91-101. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods (2nd ed.) Newbury Park CA: Sage 532, pp.

Padilla, Vincent P. (2003). A Descriptive Profile of Hispanic Superintendents in Texas. (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin).

Polka, W., et. al. Female Superintendents and the Professional Victim Syndrome: Preparing Current and Aspiring Superintendents to Cope and Succeed. Journal of Women in Educational Leadership v. 6 no. 4 (October 2008) p. 293-311.

Reed, D., et. al. Voices of Resilience from Successful Female Superintendents. Journal of Women in Educational Leadership v. 5 no. 1 (January 2007) p. 21-40.

Reynolds, Cecilia (2002). Women and School Leadership: International Perspectives. Albany: State University New York Press.

Richards, Thomas J. & Richards, L. Using Computer in Qualitative Research.

Shakeshaft, C. (1989). Women in educational administration. Newbury, CA: Sage Publications.

Shakeshaft, C. (1999). The struggle to create a more gender-inclusive profession. In J. Murphy & K. Louise (Eds). Handbook of research and educational administration (p. 101). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Sharp, William L., et.al. A Three-State Study of Female Superintendents. Educational Research Quarterly v.27 no. 3 (March 2004) p. 22-37.

Sherman, W.H., et. Al. The Great Divide: Women's Experiences with Mentoring. Journal of Women in Educational Leaders v. 6 no. 4 (October 2008) p. 239-59.

Skrla, L. (1999, June). Feminity/masculinity: Hegemonic normalizations in the public school superintendency. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.

Skrla, Linda (2000).'The social construction of gender in the superintendency. Journal of Education Policy, 15: 3, 293 — 316.

Steinberg, L. (1996). Ethnicity and Adolescent Achievement. Washington D.C.: American Educator. V.20. n.2 (p. 28-48).

Suarez-McCrink, C. (2002). Women in higher education in the United States: Has there been progress? The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 21(1/2), 118-126.

Talerico, M. & Burstyn, J. (1996). Retaining Women in the Superintendency: The Location Matters: Education Administration Quarterly, vol. 32, 642-664.

Tyack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980. New York: Basic Books.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UniversityPress.

Walker, S., ad L. Barton. Eds. 1983. Gender, class, and education. New York: International Publications Service, Palmer Press.

Wallin, Dawn C. and Carolyn Crippen (2007). Leadership Style: A Gendered Discourse Analysis. Journal of Women in Educational Leadership, Vol. 5, No. 1. January, 21-40.

Wesson, L., & Grady, M. (1994). An analysis of women urban superintendents: A national study. *Urban Education*, 8(4), 412-424.

Williams, C. (1992). The glass escalator: Hidden advantages for men in the "female" professions, Social Problems 39(10), 253-267.

Women in U.S. corporate leadership: 2003. (2003). New York: Catalyst.

Yin, R.K. (1994). Case study research: Design and methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Young, Michelle D. & Linda Skrla. Reconsidering: Feminist Research in Educational Leadership. State University of New York Press, Albany. 2003.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INVITATION

(Please respond via email)

<Date>

<Name>
Superintendent
<District>
<Address>
<City, State Zip Code>

Dear <Name>:

You are invited to participate in a study of Latina Superintendents in Texas.   My name is Laura Portillo. I am a doctoral candidate at Texas Tech University at Lubbock, in the Educational Leadership Program. This is my dissertation study to complete the requirements of an Ed.D. degree in educational leadership. I hope to learn about the experiences of and the meaning of those experiences for Latinas as they attained the superintendency position. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your name appeared in the school directories furnished by the Texas Education Agency. Should you decide to participate in a survey, you might be considered as one of the six subjects selected for this study.

If you are selected to participate, I will interview you one time for approximately one hour with a possibility of a second interview. In addition, you will be invited to provide feedback on the interview transcripts. The interviews will occur at a date, time, and site that are most convenient for you. The interview will be conducted in person but if that is not feasible, the interview will take place via telephone. With your permission, the interview(s) will be audio taped and consent for audio taping will be written as well as verbally recorded.

The interview will be more like a conversation, asking you to reflect on your career as an educator and to describe your experiences in becoming a superintendent. The interview will be transcribed verbatim and then analyzed to identify the themes of your experience in becoming a superintendent. The transcribed interview and my analysis of the interview will be sent to you to provide you with the opportunity to make any comments, reactions, changes, or feedback you may wish concerning the written transcription of your interview and my analysis of the interview.

Your participation in this study will contribute to the much needed research, or lack thereof, about Latina superintendents in Texas and the commonalities you might have in

obtaining the superintendency. Your participation in this study will help remedy the lack of research in the area of Latina superintendents in this area of the country.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential for two years and then properly disposed. Pseudonyms will be used on transcriptions. I, the researcher, will be in sole possession of audio tapes and any data that can link you to a transcribed interview.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your present or future relations with Texas Tech University at Lubbock. If you decide to participate, you are free to refrain from answering any interview question(s) or to discontinue participation at any time during the study without prejudice.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at:

2503 Mormon Mill Road
Marble Falls, Texas 78654
(325) 212-8697
lportillo@mfisd.txed.net
laura.portillo@ttu.edu

Dr. Sylvia Mendez-Morse, committee chair, is also available to answer any questions and can be reached at:

Sylvia Méndez-Morse, PhD
Associate Professor
Educational Leadership Program
Texas Tech University
Box 41071
Lubbock, TX 79409-1071
(806) 742-1997 x367
SYLVIA.MENDEZ-MORSE@ttu.edu

Thank you very much for your attention. I look forward to hearing from you by email and I sincerely hope that you agree to be a participant in this study.

Sincerely,

Laura Portillo

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Preliminary Questions

Name:

Marital Status: Single: Married: Divorced:

Number of Children:

Educational Level of Parents: Mother: Father:

Brief Description

How many years in education?

How many years teaching?

How many years as an administrator?

Have you been an Assistant Principal (how many years and what level (s)?

       Elementary?

       Middle School?

       High School?

Education:

       Bachelor (year and area)

       Masters (year and area)

       Doctorate (year and area)

Areas of Certification:

       Elementary: Yes/No   Area(s):

Secondary: Yes/No   Area(s)

Mid Management: Yes/No   Year:

Superintendent: Yes/No   Year:

Present Position and how long have you been there?

Contact Information: Mailing Address, email, phone (phone or office), email for study (if different)

Availability for Interview:

Day:

Time:

Place:

(Please block the minimum of 45minutes to 1 ½ hours for the interview)

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell me about the influence of your family on your career path.

2. Was there a person who encouraged you to pursue an administrative position?

3. Tell me about your career path and what made you decide to enter the administrative arena.

4. What educational steps lead you to your current position?

5. Did you have a mentor? If so, how did she or he help you in your current position?

6. What barriers did you confront in achieving the current position you hold?

7. What personal attributes do you think helped you get this job over the other candidates?

8. Since when have you held aspirations to be in your current position?

9. Did you connect yourself with a good ole boy system to achieve your goal or did you stay away from it? Explain.

10. Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in the qualitative research study entitled *Latina Superintendents in Texas: Career Paths, Influences, Aspirations and Motivations.*

I will make myself available for an interview on _____at _____.
                                                (date)   (time)

The location of said interview will be at_____.
                                                (location)

I, _____, understand that all information will be kept confidential and destroyed in 2 years. I understand that the formal interview will be tape recorded and then transcribed. The transcription will be sent back to me via email in order for me to provide feedback such as corrections, clarifications, or added information to the responses and I will be able to make any comments that I may deem appropriate. I have the right to not answer any question that I am not comfortable with. I have the right to discontinue participation at any time during the process which includes the interview or feedback review.

_____   _____

    Signature of participant   Date

APPENDIX E

EJOURNAL PROMPTS

What were your:

Interests in administration

Reasons for post-secondary education

Career choices and why you hold current position

Predecessors' gender and ethnicity

Similarities or differences apparent between respondent and predecessor

Cultural influences

Cultural views of education

Personal barriers

Glass ceiling barriers

Barriers exclusive to women

Institutional barriers

Hiring process when applied for current position