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K-12 LATINA IMMIGRANT LEADERS' EXPERIENCES WITHIN MINNESOTA

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The purpose of this qualitative study, employing a case study design, from a population of K-12 leaders located in an urban area of the state of Minnesota, was to explore the phenomenon of Latina immigrants, all who were non-native English speakers, in K-12 leadership positions. Latina immigrants have not achieved proportionate representation in K-12 leadership positions in school systems in Minnesota which might be losing the opportunity to add the Hispanic leadership perspective to solve critical educational issues in the 21st-century educational system. Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, are not well represented when compared with other racial groups. The following research questions guided this study: How do Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education achieve success in an urban area of the state of Minnesota and what role does emotional intelligence (EI) play in their success? The second question asked: What are the obstacles unique to Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education in an urban area in the state of Minnesota and how do Latina leaders use their emotional intelligence (EI) to overcome these obstacles? This study's methodology and design was a qualitative case study using one-to-one interviews to collect data. This study utilized a non-probability purposive/convenience sampling process to recruit four Latina K-12 leaders as participants. Data were transcribed and, using ATLAS.ti©, significant and consequential phrases, sentences, and keywords were identified. Patterns were characterized by: Parallels, variances, and

arrangement within the context of the data, ultimately revealing four themes as the results of this study: Latina immigrants are challenged in their college experiences but are able to obtain empathy and support in order to succeed; Latina immigrants are able to adapt to both family expectations or discouragement related to a college education; religious faith provides Latina immigrants with the strength to persist in their professional journeys; and Latina immigrants are challenged during their professional experiences, including racism, but also are able to obtain inspirational mentoring from K-12 school leadership. The conceptual framework of this study was emotional intelligence (EI). This study, through documenting and highlighting the experiences to Latina immigrant leaders, will assist all K-12 stakeholders. Through the participants' descriptions of their experiences of overcoming a variety of challenges to become successful, these Latina immigrants have provided awareness for existing K-12 administrators of possible inequities within their schools' policies and practices.

Keywords: Latinas, Latina immigrants, K-12 leadership, emotional intelligence, bias, racism, culture, education, immigration.

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Thank you to my parents for teaching me to believe in myself, in God, and in my dreams!

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father, Anacleto Morales Zabala, who passed away before I started my doctoral studies. Without his enormous personal sacrifice and unconditional love, I would never become the individual I am today. I had promised to make my mother and father proud by the achievement of this enormous academic goal. From a little girl living in a remote area in Mexico, whose dream was just to own a storybook, or to have a grownup read to her, to this person who was able to complete one of the most challenging projects as a student in the United States, I hope I have accomplished my promise. This would not have been possible if I would not have the two fundamental skills my parents taught me: Resilience and hard work.

The most emotional part of my dissertation journey was actually writing this dedication, as I could not stop my tears. Mission accomplished, Dad!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Even though the Hispanic population in the United States (U.S.) has increased at a rapid rate, the number of Latinos in leadership positions in K-12 educational systems is increasing at an extremely low pace (Valverde, 2009; Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018). Latinas (Hispanic women) specifically represent a sizable portion of the population of the United States. Catalyst (2020) stated by 2060 Latinas will make up almost 30% of the total U.S. female population, second only to White women, predicted to make up approximately 45% of the total U.S. female population. Latinas and White women are the two demographics predicted to be the largest sub-groups within the United States by 2060 (Catalyst, 2020; Vespa et al., 2018).

Unfortunately, statistics within K-12 school systems in Minnesota show a sad reality; there is a clear disparity in representation within the K-12 school systems between the Hispanic student population and the overall Hispanic K-12 leadership (Fey, 2018; Valverde, 2009; Vespa et al., 2018). Furthermore, Minnesota has the second largest White/Hispanic student achievement gap in the country (Stebbins & Comen, 2018). To solve complex educational issues related to the Hispanic population, it is important to increase the diversity of this workforce within the K-12 school systems in Minnesota. According to Lindsay, Bloom, and Tilsley (2017), increasing the diversity of the workforce is essential for student outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to identify both the barriers which prevent Latina immigrants from achieving leadership positions as well as the success factors that help certain women persevere to supply a profile, or a roadmap, aiding in the promotion of success for this demographic.

Due to the rapid growth of Hispanic residents across the United States, there is a need to increase K-12 leadership opportunities for Latina immigrants. K-12 leaders are those who focus

their work on the core issues of teaching, learning, and school improvement within elementary and high schools. K-12 leaders include teachers, assistant principals, principals, and district superintendents (Alsubaie, 2016). This study explored the topic of Latina immigrants in K-12 leadership positions in a rural area of Minnesota. Changing demographics in the state have turned K-12 educational classrooms from monolingual to multilingual, from monocultural to multicultural, and from monoracial to multiracial.

Background of the Study

The background section of Chapter One provides a history of the problem. It further includes a summary of results from prior research on the topic. Using results, societal needs, recommendations for further study, or needs identified in existing research studies, I have identified the gap in the literature and have justified the current study.

The History of the Problem

In the 1940s, Latinos were the largest ethnic group to enlist in the U.S. military serving in World War II, yet this group was facing discrimination and inequalities in many areas including employment, education, and in private and public places. The Fair Employment Practices Act (EPA) was passed in the 1940s in an effort to end such discrimination in employment. Even though Macario Garcia became the first Mexican-American to receive a U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor in August 1943, he was still refused service at the Oasis Café near his home in Texas (PBS, 2013).

In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act (BEA; Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). In response to the inequality in the public educational system. In 1974, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) to create equality in public

education as it began to extend bilingual education for Latino students (PBS, 2013). This 1974 EEOA extended the BEA in addition to prohibiting discrimination and segregation in schools. Because of the laws and opportunities which have benefitted the welfare of the Latino community, we now see more representation of Hispanics in leadership positions. For example, in 2009, Sonia Sotomayor, of Puerto Rican descent, became the first Hispanic to serve on the Supreme Court (McElroy, 2010).

Minnesota K-12 and Latino/Latina Leaders

The challenges which Latinos have overcome in their communities are a representation of their resiliency to build a better society for all. The Minnesota State Demographics Center (n.d.) emphasized that "the state has added four times as many people of Color as non-Hispanic White residents" between 2010 and 2015 (para.1). The Hispanic population alone grew by 13% in that period, adding 32,000 people to the state population (Minnesota State Demographics Center, n.d.). According to the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau (2016), the Hispanic population is 5.2% of the overall population of the state of Minnesota.

The drastic shift in the Latino population across the state has been reflected in school enrollment statistics. Per the Department of Education, in 2017, Hispanic enrollment in Minnesota schools represented 9% of the total student population (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017a; Vespa et al., 2018). Therefore, it was necessary to address the mandates and implications of today's changing demographics within K-12 school systems, with the goal of creating, increasing, or improving opportunities specifically for Latina immigrant women in positions of leadership within the K-12 school systems. However, within this effort, many

barriers persist, and Latina leaders appear to be almost absent within the K-12 school systems (NCES, 2015).

> Hernandez and Murakami (2016) referring to an earlier study by Bernal (1998) posited: The importance of giving voice to Latinas … [suggesting] the application of three important tenets: (a) addressing the lives and the knowledge of Latinas where they are the only ones who can speak, first-hand, about their experiences; (b) respecting their lives as different than other non-Latina or male experiences; and (c) the complexity of epistemologies of color as braided with issues of immigration status, bilingualism, gender roles, and religion. (p. 13)

Thus, with this study, I have documented and highlighted personal experiences of K-12 leaders through the collection of interview data to the Latina immigrants overcoming challenges and achieving success in the field of K-12 education in Minnesota. More specifically, I addressed the research questions of how and by what means these particular women have accomplished their goals of becoming K-12 leaders.

Researcher Role and Interest

The topic of Latina immigrants as leaders in education has been the focus of this study. My interest in the research topic originated from my professional and personal experience with the K-12 school system about the personal challenges I faced as a Latina immigrant trying to succeed as a leader in the K-12 system in the state of Minnesota. As a Spanish Immersion teacher within a Midwest school district, I had a mentor assist me and support me during my first year teaching; this individual met with several teachers in a group setting as the approach to mentoring. As I reflect on that time in my teaching career, I would have appreciated a one-to-

one relationship with my mentor rather than the group mentoring which took place. I never felt comfortable approaching my mentor individually as they did not establish a personal relationship.

This approach did not allow me to build trust with my mentor and consequently my job was more challenging. However, I came to this position as a native language speaker, in addition to having prior experience in leadership. To overcome the challenges and to be successful, I improved my emotional intelligence as I bridged what I considered a leadership gap in the system. As a result, I was able to build positive rapport with parents, students, and the community, becoming a successful Spanish immersion school teacher.

Statement of the Problem

Latina immigrants have not achieved proportionate representation in K-12 leadership positions in school systems in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Education might be losing the opportunity to add the Hispanic leadership perspective to solve critical educational issues in the 21st-century educational system. Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, are not well represented when compared with other racial groups. In the 2016-17 school year, the Minnesota Department of Education reported less than 21 Hispanic women in K-12 leadership positions compared to almost 1,329 White women (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017b). Examining diversity in the classroom in Minnesota, 8% of the entire student population is Hispanic compared to 2% Hispanic teachers. In addition, in one of the most populated cities in Minnesota, Minneapolis, 11% of the student population is Hispanic while just 3% of teachers are Hispanic (Lindsay et al., 2017). Furthermore, there are less than 68 Hispanic women non-instructional staff compared to more than 7,900 White staff (Professional Educator Licensing

and Standards Board, 2018). The Hispanic population is increasing, and enrollment of Hispanic students is increasing as a result, but the number of Hispanic leaders in education is not reflective of the changing demographics (Vespa et al., 2018).

Conceptual Framework

To complete this study, I used a conceptual framework that individuals hold skills and abilities of emotional intelligence (EI), a concept which appeared in the 1990s. Keskin, Akgün, Ayar, and Kayman (2016) noted EI is "the ability to respond to emotional, social, and environmental conditions" (p. 282). Northouse (2019) defined EI as an ability to perceive and express emotion, to use emotions to aid in critical thinking, to understand and influence with emotions, and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others. To address the purpose of this study, the concept of emotional intelligence was utilized to explore the perceptions of the Latina immigrant participants. I discuss the concept of emotional intelligence further in Chapter Two.

Purpose of the Study

Due to the gap in representation of Latinos in Minnesota K-12 school systems, there are few Latina leaders, both immigrants and non-immigrants, serving as role models, which perpetuates a cycle of underrepresentation of Latinas within those school systems. In a recursive and cyclical process, it thus becomes difficult for Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, to progress into K-12 leadership positions. The purpose of this qualitative study, employing a case study design, from a population of K-12 leaders located in an urban area of the state of Minnesota, was to explore the phenomenon of Latina immigrants, all who were non-native English speakers, in K-12 leadership positions. This study was an exploration of the challenges

Latina immigrants have faced during their journeys into leadership positions and the relation to their personal perceptions of emotional intelligence as a factor (or not) in their success. This study also explored factors for success so that a new generation of Latina leaders will be able to find a distinct path to careers in K-12 leadership.

Significance of the Study

This study has contributed to existing knowledge and K-12 leadership practice by exploring the challenges Latina immigrants have faced and/or overcome during their career advancements. A recent survey within several Hispanic communities in the United States revealed 75% of the participants agreed on the need for Hispanic national leaders to advance the concerns of Hispanic societies (Lopez, 2013). Therefore, new knowledge offers Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, a better understanding of how to overcome challenges to become K-12 leaders. In addition, this study will have an influence on Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, seeking leadership positions, helping to increase Latina representation in the K-12 system to advance the concerns of the Hispanic community within the state of Minnesota.

With the increase in Latino students in the classrooms, Latino leadership perspectives can enhance knowledge in efforts to solve complex educational issues related to this specific population of students, such as the achievement gap which exists between Latino students and White students. According to Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, and Lee (2008), diversity enhances creativity. Since Latinos have a distinct cultural knowledge, this creativity and unique knowledge can benefit the increasing Latino student population. Therefore, it is vital to grow and strengthen Latinas' perspectives in the K-12 systems in the state of Minnesota.

Research Questions

This study has expanded upon the understanding of success factors for Latina immigrants in K-12 leadership positions. The focus of this study was on K-12 leadership positions, such as principals, assistant principals, teachers, and counselors. This exploration focused on the perceptions and experience of four Latina immigrants who have reached success in the K-12 educational system in a significant leadership position and are currently employed. This study's participants provided an understanding of the success factors and obstacles of Latina immigrant K-12 school leaders in a rural area in Minnesota. Understanding the experience and success factors will aid the advancement of current and future K-12 Latina leaders and provide insight into why there exists an underrepresentation of Latinas in the leadership sector of the K-12 educational arena.

To explore these experience and success factors, the following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. How do Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education achieve success in an urban area of the state of Minnesota?

   a. What role does emotional intelligence (EI) play in their success?

RQ2. What are the obstacles unique to Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education in an urban area in the state of Minnesota?

   b. How do Latina immigrant leaders use their emotional intelligence (EI) to overcome these obstacles?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions help the reader to understand the terms used throughout this dissertation:

People of Color (non-White): "The term 'person of color' [or People of Color] is first recorded at the end of the 18th century. It was revived in the 1990s as the recommended term to use in some official contexts, especially in U.S. English, to refer to a person who is not White. The term has become increasingly common … but it still may not be familiar to all audiences; terms such as non-White may be used as an alternative" (Oxford University Press, 2017, para. 1).

Hispanic: A person "of or relating to the people, speech, or culture of Spain or of Spain and Portugal or of, relating to, or being a person of Latin American descent living in the U.S." (Santana, 2019, para. 4).

K-12: "A term used in education and educational technology in the United States, Canada, and other countries, is a short form for the publicly-supported school grades prior to college. These grades are kindergarten (K) and the 1st grade through the 12th grade (1-12)" (TechTarget, 2005, para. 1).

K-12 Leader: Effective school leaders focus their work on the core issues of teaching and learning and school improvement and include teachers, assistant principals, principals, and district superintendents (Alsubaie, 2016).

Latino(s) and Latina(s): These terms refer to either "a native or inhabitant of Latin America or a person of Latin American origin living in the United States. The main difference

of the term Latino is that it includes the people from Brazil and excludes those who were born in Spain" (Santana, 2019, para. 4).

White (as a race): "A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018, para. 1).

Chapter One Summary

The U.S. Latino population has faced many challenges which communities have turned into opportunities and have built a better society for all. Similarly, the public educational system in the United States is changing in the 21st century, experiencing a shift in demographics which brings an opportunity to explore the underrepresentation of Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, in K-12 leadership positions. This study has identified the success factors and challenges Latina immigrants in K-12 leadership positions faced in an urban area of the state of Minnesota, providing a new generation of Latina women, both immigrants and non-immigrants, a clearer path to success.

Chapter One has situated the basis for this study, while Chapter Two presents the conceptual framework as well as a comprehensive historical and scholarly perspective through a review of literature on the topic of Latinas in leadership positions within K-12 school systems. Chapter Three discusses the qualitative method for this research, utilizing a case study design, the data collection process, and data analysis procedures, as well as ethical issues related to the interview process. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. The concluding Chapter Five discusses the findings further and offers recommendations for future studies and additional research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A literature review of peer-reviewed journal articles was performed in primary databases such as EBSCOhost Academic Search Ultimate, EBSCOhost Education Source, Science Direct, Gale General OneFile, ERIC Education, PsychInfo, and Lexis Nexis Academic. Also used in the literature search were dissertation databases including ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global™, Digital Commons, and Cambridge University Library Theses Catalogue using the keywords *Latinas, Latina immigrants, K-12 leadership, emotional intelligence, bias, racism, culture, education,* and *immigration.* These searches produced limited literature on Latinas within K-12 leadership positions. For example, the terms *Latinas and K-12 leadership* produced a listing of approximately 500 academic articles. However, when narrowing the subject terms to include *immigrants*, sparse literature was offered and none was specifically related to the purpose of this study. The literature was generally associated with Latino student outcomes or statistical information regarding Latina immigrants in K-12 leadership.

One exception, however, was a related study by Fregeau and Leier (2016) which sought to investigate why Latina graduate students had different attitudes toward their higher education experiences than their U.S.-born counterparts. Fregeau and Leier's study was a rare find, similar to this current study, with results which included several overlapping themes. However, other than this one study, a dearth of literature exists on the personal experiences of Latina immigrants within the K-12 school system. This current is one of the only studies existing which explores explicitly Latina immigrant educators.

The Hispanic population is increasing in Minnesota, and enrollment of Hispanic students is likewise growing, but the number of Hispanic leaders, specifically women, in K-12 school systems is not expanding at a similar rate (Fey, 2018; Valverde, 2009; Vespa et al., 2018). Due to this gap in representation in Minnesota K-12 leadership, there are fewer Latina leaders serving as role models, perpetuating a cycle of underrepresentation of Latinas in education. Thus, it may be difficult for the next generation of Latinas to progress into leadership positions. This exploration includes details regarding barriers Latina immigrants have faced when attempting to achieve K-12 leadership positions, and how Latina immigrants have overcome those challenges to reach success.

In this chapter, I provide a deeper analysis of the history of Hispanics in the United States. I also discuss the conceptual framework supporting the study in further detail, with an emphasis on the overarching assumptions which grounded the method and guided the research process. Specifically, I used the conceptual framework based on the construct of emotional intelligence in relationship to Latina immigrants achieving positions of K-12 leadership. Empirical work has appeared drawing connections between emotional intelligence, intercultural skills, cultural competence, and empathy (Guntersdorfer & Golubeva, 2018; Washington, Okoro, & Okoro, 2013), allowing for an in-depth study of the research questions for this study. I follow this by a review of the literature and research related to the obstacles of Latina leaders and their success in the K-12 system. In my review, I identified several themes including Latina immigrants and leadership and race consciousness. The scope of this review discussed pertinent themes related to the research questions:

RQ1. How do Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education achieve success in an urban

area of the state of Minnesota?

a. What role does emotional intelligence (EI) play in their success?

RQ2. What are the obstacles unique to Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education in an

urban area in the state of Minnesota?

b. How do Latina immigrant leaders use their emotional intelligence (EI) to

overcome these obstacles?

Hispanics in the United States

The demographic landscape of the United States of America is changing, and the

Hispanic population is changing extremely fast (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). The U.S. Census

Bureau (2016) estimated that "natural increase (births minus deaths) accounted for 78% of the

total change in the U.S. Hispanic population from 2012 to 2013" (Brown, 2014, para. 2).

Krogstad (2014) indicated "the Hispanic population is expected to reach about 106 million in

2050, about double what it is today" (para. 1). Since 1970, the Hispanic population has grown

592%, one of the fastest increases in recent decades for a particular population (Krogstad, 2014).

By 2044, most of the U.S. population will be Hispanic and White, with Hispanics predicted to

make up 25% of the overall population and Whites 49%. School and community demographics

will reflect this trend.

Thus, much of the U.S. population is predicted to be people of color (Center for

American Progress, 2015). Currently, the number of Hispanic residents in the United States

stands at 57 million, making up almost 18% of the U.S. population, "up from 5% in 1970,"

meaning that Hispanics are the largest minority group (Krogstad, 2016, para. 2; U.S. Census

Bureau, 2016). In four states, California, Texas, Hawaii, and New Mexico, Hispanics currently

constitute the majority of the populations. In another eight states—including Arizona, Florida,

Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, and New York—people of

color make up more than 40% of the statewide populations and many states are on their way to

having a majority Hispanic population (Center for American Progress, 2015).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015) reveals the data below about

K-12 leaders. However, the total number of Latina (women) leaders was not revealed; rather,

only the total number of Latinos, (men and women) is provided. This fact can be an indication

that Latinas (women) are not often differentiated from Latinos (men), and, as a result, female

leaders are overlooked in research studies. NCES (2015) provided historical characteristics of

school leaders:

- In 1994, 34.5% of all principals in US public education were women. Of the total
  population, both men and women, 84.3% were White, 10.1% were Black, and 4.1%
  identified as Hispanics.

- In 2004, 47.6% of all principals in US public education were women. Of the total
  population, both men and women, 82.4% were White, 10.6% were Black, and 5.3%
  identified as Hispanic.

- In 2008, 50.3% of all principals in US public education were women. Of the total
  population, both men and women, 80.9% were White, 10.6% were Black, and 6.5%
  identified as Hispanic.

- In 2012, 51.6% of all principals in US public education were women. Of the total
  population, both men and women, 80.3% were White, 10.1% were Black, and 6.8%
  identified as Hispanic.

The outcomes of the NCES (2015) survey demonstrated that the number of women principals increased from 27,500 in 1993-94 to 46,360 in 2011-12; approximately 18,860 new female principals were employed during this timeframe. Within the same period, the number of White men principals decreased. While the number of White principals decreased from 84.3% in 1994 to 80.3% in 2012, the number of Hispanic principals increased from 3,270 in 1993-94, to 5,870 in 2007-08. Approximately 2,600 new Hispanic principals have taken up roles in the U.S. public school system, representing a 2.7% increase during 2011-2012 (NCES, 2015). Even though the number of public-school leaders is increasing, it is not representative of the growth of the Hispanic population nationally.

At the national level, Hispanic women in K-12 leadership positions are underrepresented (Rodriguez, Mireles-Rios, & Conley, 2018); this phenomenon is also true on a smaller, more localized level (MDE, 2017b; MDE, 2017c). In the 2016-17 school year, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE; 2017b) reported less than 21 Hispanic women employed in K-12 administrative leadership positions, compared to more than 1,328 White women employed in such positions. In the school year 2015, within Minnesota K-12, there were only 629 teachers representing 1.05% of the total number of teachers (MDE, 2017c). Based on this information, a greater representation of Hispanic K-12 leaders and teachers is needed to balance the changing demographics in public education.

Hispanic Enrollment

Shifting demographics are expected to continue to grow and continue to affect student enrollment in public education. In fall 2014, the percentage of students enrolled in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools who were White was less than 50% (49.5%) for the first time

and represents a sharp decrease from 58% in fall 2004. In contrast, the percentage who were

Hispanic increased from 19 to 25% during the same period (NCES, 2017). These changes in the

demographics of the K-12 population likely impact the ways in which teachers and other school

personnel hold potential biases or ideologies, including approaches to classroom management,

judgments of parents and children, and ways of interacting with parents and children from

diverse backgrounds

Hispanics in Minnesota

Minnesota was rated as the fifth-worst state for Hispanic residents based on the

unemployment rate, incarcerated rate per 100,000, and high school achievement. The state of

Minnesota has the fourth-highest high school graduation rate for White students in the United

States at 95.7%. However, Hispanic students' high-school diploma attainment is only 62.6%, the

9th lowest in the country. The concerning attainment gap of 33.1% between these two racial

groups is alarming since it is the largest gap in the country only after Nebraska (Stebbins &

Comen, 2018). Considering the changing demographics for Hispanics in the United States, I

argue that we must increase the number of Hispanic leaders in the K-12 school systems within

Minnesota to reflect the Hispanic enrollment trends.

<div align="center">

Conceptual Framework: Emotional Intelligence

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One form of skills and abilities that may impact Latina K-12 leaders' success is

emotional intelligence (EI), which appeared in the 1990s as a concept. Keskin et al. (2016)

noted EI is "the ability to respond to emotional, social, and environmental conditions" (p. 282).

Similarly, Northouse (2019) defined EI as an ability to perceive and express emotion, to use

emotions to aid in critical thinking, to understand and influence with emotions, and to effectively

manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others. Four domains of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (see Figure 1; Gribble, Ladyshewsky, & Parsons, 2017).

SELF-AWARENESS	SELF-MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL AWARENESS	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Empathy	Influence
	Adaptability		Coach and mentor
	Achievement orientation	Organizational awareness	Conflict management
	Positive outlook		Teamwork
			Inspirational leadership

Figure 1. Emotional intelligence domains and competencies.

The four domains include: 1) self-awareness, an emotional aspect; 2) self-management which incorporates emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and having a positive outlook; 3) social awareness requires empathy and organizational awareness; and 4) relational management which involves having influence, coaching and mentoring, conflict management, teamwork, and inspirational leadership.

Self-Awareness

Goleman (1998) defined self-awareness as "the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others" (p. 88). George (2000) suggested the ability to manage and understand emotions within yourself and others contributes to your ability to be an effective organizational leader. Consequently, the self-awareness of emotions is

worthy of consideration in leadership. George's study focused on essential components of leadership including inspiring followers by expressing gratitude for important work activities and generating and maintain enthusiasm, optimism, confidence, trust, and cooperation.

Self-aware leaders can manage emotions effectively and evaluate their impact on others. These leaders have elevated levels of EI (Richmer, 2015). While George (2000) argued that "ethical leadership begins with enhanced self-awareness and more effective self-management of emotions and behavior" (p. 31), Richmer (2015) presented that the effective and emotionally intelligent leader's qualities are grounded on cognitive psychology and leadership theory revolves around the process of fostering self-awareness. While an individual's life experiences (cultural, societal, educational) encourage self-awareness, this quality of self-awareness exceeds simply gathering knowledge about oneself; it is also about being attentive to one's inner being and developing abilities to self-regulate and self-develop. Specifically, for the Latina K-12 leader, her life experiences, as she becomes self-aware, self-regulates, and self-develops she becomes an asset within the classroom as she becomes a role model for Latino students. The self-aware Latina K-12 is likewise a constructive partner for all stakeholders who share her cultural background and experiences. A leader development flowchart is presented in Figure 2.
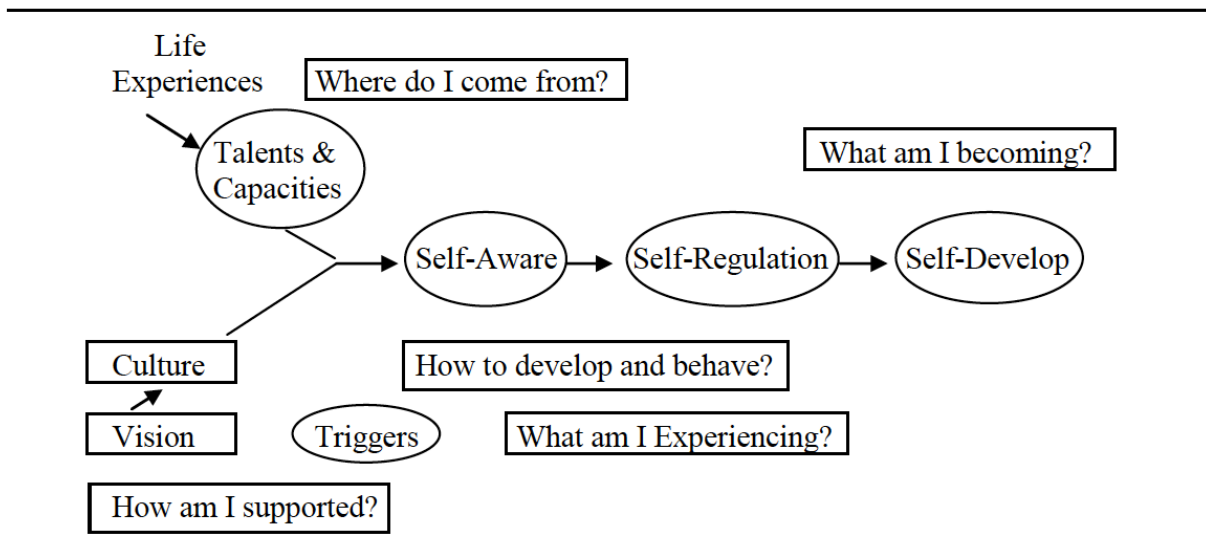
Figure 2. Fostering self-awareness [Sourced from (Avolio, 2005)].

Self-Management

Goleman (1998) equated self-management to self-regulation which he defined as:

… like an ongoing inner conversation, is the component of emotional intelligence that

frees us from being prisoners of our feelings. People engaged in such a conversation feel

bad moods and emotional impulses just as everyone else does, but they find ways to

control them and even to channel them in useful ways. (p. 85)

Heshmati and Ahmadkhanloo (2017) found a positive and meaningful relationship between

emotional intelligence and emotional self-management, thus clarifying self-management as a

vital leadership quality. As individuals' self-awareness increases about their emotions and

feelings, they begin to "regulate and control … [their] … abilities to improve them, so that they

haven't [a] negative effect on … performance" (p. 16). Thus, self-regulatory and self-aware

individuals are better at mediating negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, and worry.

Social Awareness

Social awareness is a skill which Goleman (1998) described as "… the culmination of the other dimensions of emotional intelligence. People tend to be highly effective at managing relationships when they can understand and control their own emotions and can empathize with the feelings of others" (p. 90). Effective communication and leadership are interrelated with each other (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015). Leaders must be skilled communicators within a variety of relationships and in various situations within their organizations—with their teams, their peers, upper management, and all other interested parties. An effective leader must be able to reason and communicate clearly as they share ideas and information with a wide range of personnel and stakeholders. For the Latina K-12 leader, her means of effective communication are strengthened by her shared culture and experiences with her academic community. Luthra and Dahiya (2015) stated that: "Great leaders are always considered as first-class communicators, they have a clear set of values and they always believe in promoting and inculcating those values in others" (p. 43). Encouraging those principles into their followers is a vital aspect of an emotionally intelligent leader.

Relationship Management

Brinia, Zimianiti, and Panagiotopoulos (2014) found that El is a strong factor for success. The main finding asserted within their investigation "depicted the role of emotional intelligence of the primary school principal on effective leadership, as well as the extent to which emotional intelligence is displayed" (p. 40). Per these authors, these skills and behaviors include mutual empathy, patience, persistence, optimism, hope, strength, respect for one's self and others, influence, humanism, cultivation, consensus, quality, encouragement, solidarity, and reliability. These skills all impact effective team-building and overall relationship management. This study

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highlights the importance of the aforementioned skills as they relate to EI. For instance, Brinia et al. (2014) argued that if leaders do not have empathy for teachers or other subordinates, such leaders will be unable to build a forceful team. Consequently, the success of principals will be hindered.

Mason (2018) studied the practices of school leaders, including teachers, and the role of EI in their daily work. One of the questions asked within this study was: "How do teachers report that school leaders use emotional intelligence when faced with challenges" (p. xx)? In Mason's study, all the school leaders agreed that emotions are considered essential in the execution of their duties. In particular, the teachers expressed the ability to build positive relationships by demonstrating an awareness of the personal aspects of peers and others.

EI is an essential practice for any effective leader. However, within this study, this proficiency is discussed in relation to the Latina immigrants' experiences as they sought to achieve positions of leadership within K-12 school systems. In the following sections, I review the existing literature related to Latinas in leadership roles.

<div align="center">

Body 1: Influences and Obstacles of Latinas in K-12 Leadership

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This section discusses the influences and obstacles of the Latina individuals achieving leadership positions in the K-12 public school systems within the United States. As noted in Chapter One, a better understanding is necessary on how Latinas can reach leadership positions within the K-12 school systems, specifically in the state of Minnesota. A Latina leadership perspective within the K-12 system can contribute significantly to advancing success within the Hispanic community and the overall K-12 school systems.

Influences and Positive Factors

Latinas are rare in K-12 public school leadership positions, such as principals, superintendents, and teachers. Nonetheless, recent research has shown some minor expanding representation of Latinas in these leadership roles (Kerr, Miller, Kerr, & Deshommes, 2016). Successful strategies aid Latinas in overcoming challenges and exploring roles of race and gender on leadership ascension and practice from the perspective of K-12 Latina school leaders.

The traditional role for Latinas has been that of the nurturer, made up primarily of family, as they aid with the care of children and elderly parents (Espinoza, 2015). In this traditional role as protectors of the Latino home, most women have become submissive to their parents and spouses. Mothers teach their daughters to take care of the family within the home, and the community revolves around family, church, and the activities occurring in those environments. Nonetheless, Latinos have a long history of valuing education (Quiñones & Marquez-Kiyama, 2014).

Martinez, Cortez, and Saenz (2013) conducted a qualitative study to determine Latino parents' perceptions of the role of schools in their children's college readiness. From this study, it is clear these Latino parents view themselves as significant and meaningful education advocates for their children, who together with school personnel ensure that students not only are college-ready but also are provided an *educación*, meaning an education which encompasses academic requirements as well as their spiritual and moral tenets. Thus, Martinez et al.'s study provides insights about how to build more effective schools, improve the educational prospects of Latino children, and increase understanding about what schools can potentially do to foster more supportive and effective relations with Latino parents. Since the majority of Latinos within Martinez et al.'s study were of low-income status, some of the recommendations included

providing transportation to school meetings and/or programs for both Latino parents and students, as well as supplying bilingual liaisons between community services and Latinos within those populations in need.

Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryallis, and Nero (2010) noted, that despite the belief that Latinos do not value education, Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrant parents of elementary-school children valued social skills more strongly than did their White counterparts. Likewise, Mexican-American and Mexican immigrant parents equally valued social and cognitive skills. Further, approximately 90% of the Latino parents in a sample study wanted their children to attend a university (Goldenberg, 2001). Ryan et al. (2010) concluded Latino parents valued their children's academic and social success in school equally, a vital aspect of this current study. Thus, while Latino parents demonstrated educational involvement in non-standard ways, as noted, there is evidence that Latinos place education at the forefront of their values (Quiñones & Marquez-Kiyama, 2014).

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) highlighted family influences and being a leader with compassion were two positive factors contributing to Latina women's success in educational leadership. Latina leaders were highly inspired and motivated growing up within families which highly respected education and reinforced its importance. Moreover, the participants' family members not only valued education but also those family members were working within the field of education, acting as role models. In addition to positive influences growing up, all these women referred to their leadership styles as being compassionate. They stressed leading with compassion allowed them to be more effective leaders. A sense of empathy or compassion is linked directly to the concept of EI, one of the conceptual frameworks of this study. Another

aspect of family influence in the Latina communities is a powerful sense of religious faith (Avila, 2018). Such spirituality is formed by factors, including, family, community, gender, and culture.

In a study by Łowicki and Zajenkowski (2017), using two instruments, the first being a standardized quantitative test, *The Emotional Intelligence Test* (Smieja, Orzechowski, & Stolarski, 2014), and the second being a series of queries by asking: Do I believe in God?; Do I believe in divine being who is involved in my life?; Is there no god or high power in the universe? (p. 3). Using these instruments, the researchers were able to discern levels of both EI and religious faith. Łowicki and Zajenkowski (2017) examined quantitatively the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and religious faith. Within their study, Łowicki and Zajenkowski considered EI as a "set of abilities: perception of emotions, understanding emotions, using emotions to facilitate thinking, and management of emotions" (p. 3). For understanding their participants' measure of religious faith, the researchers captured general attitudes toward religious belief, and included both religious and non-religious participants. The findings stated that a degree of religious faith was positively associated with ability in EI. This indicates that more religious individuals also demonstrate higher EI skills.

Rodriguez, Mireles-Rios, and Conley (2018) noted that minority women administrators, such as Latinas, required mentors to assist and support their career advancement. The early family lives of these women included informal mentorship from family figures such as mothers, fathers, grandparents, and cousins. These encouraging family-mentoring relationships aided in inspiring the participants to seek appropriate education and to pursue leadership roles as their careers advanced. Thus, the participants understood how to successfully seek and develop professional mentors which led to their K-12 career success.

Obstacles

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) further noted several professional struggles these women encountered. These obstacles included:

- balancing work and family responsibilities,

- overcoming discrimination as minority women,

- not having a voice and not being respected due to their gender (female), and

- not having a voice due to their youthful age (30s).

As one of the participants noted, it was necessary for her to repeat concerns multiple times to men leaders in order to be heard, causing her much frustration. It appears that those men lacked EI in not using relational management. These men were shown to be not accepting of a woman in a leadership role. These researchers asserted that traditional assumptions can be changed if new perspectives emerge in school leadership, including the use of EI (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). This study further found that Latina secondary school principals were exposed to gender-based prejudices and concluded it was vital to bring these issues to the forefront to address them. Some of these secondary women leaders felt "enslaved" by these perceptions causing them to question their own leadership abilities even though they have proven themselves as proficient (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

Poverty is one of the primary hindrances preventing Latinos from following the route to college and to professional careers (Gándara, 2015). Gándara (2015) noted:

One-fourth of Latinas live below the poverty line and more than half are living in near-poverty. This sometimes makes high school graduation challenging due to competing work and family demands, makes higher education difficult to access, and student debt

impossible to sustain. Low levels of education lead to lack of opportunity in the job

market where Latinas make only 56 cents for every dollar earned by white males. (p. 5)

It is therefore critical to raise the education level and living and working conditions of Latinas.

Even so, disheartening statistics place Latinos at a mere 21% of young adults achieving

bachelor's degrees in 2016 (Graf, 2017). With the existing disparity between Latino teachers

and administrators, and the growing Latino population of students, even if Latinos became

teachers and/or administrators at the same rate as White adults, there would still be a

considerable representational gap (Lindsay et al., 2017).

Another study by Hernandez and Murakami (2016) explored professional and racial

identity as impacting Latinas' success. Using Latina/o critical theory, also known as LatCrit,

these researchers explored the experiences of one Latina school leader. Of note, Hernandez and

Murakami stated: "Labels, such as Chicano, Mexican, Hispanic, Latino, and Illegals, are a few of

the historical and present-day designations that have and continue to be applied to U.S. Spanish-

speaking individuals" (p. 5). Within this study, it was noted that there is a gap in understanding

Latina leaders' development within K-12 administration. This includes the Latinas' "histories,

contributions, and experiences with issues related to racial identity, racism, sexism, and other

historically marginalizing emblems of identity, often undocumented and invisible in the school

leadership research" (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016, p. 2). The classifying of Latinas as

Chicano, Mexican, and the like does not support the EI factors of self-awareness and social

awareness, thus causing a lack of empathy toward those individuals creating obstacles for their

success.

Within another study of 530 immigrant participants (aged 18-23 old), Dillon et al. (2018) noted that higher levels of psychological distress were associated with undocumented immigration status, immersion in the dominant (U.S.) society, and included those individuals as having elevated levels of acculturative stress. Acculturative stress refers to psychological and social stress experienced due to an internal conflict of beliefs, values, and other cultural norms between a person's country of origin and country of immigration (Da Silva, Dillon, Verdejo, Sanchez, & De La Rosa, 2017). Specific to this current study, Da Silva et al.'s (2017) participants held that their spiritual (religious) growth was vital to their survival, indicated less distress, a similar finding of this current study.

In a study by Rodriguez et al. (2018), the researchers explored six K-12 Latina leaders within the state of California to understand their career progression. Despite positive encouragement from mentors and family members aiding in their success, these leaders reported pressure and anxiety associated with continually having to outperform in their duties as K-12 leaders. They experienced discrimination and preconceived notions based on their ethnicity and gender (Rodriguez et al., 2018). This anxiety and stress led to feelings of loneliness and disconnection from their peers, who likely lacked EI factors of social awareness and relationship management.

Latinas and Leadership

Bonilla-Rodriguez (2011) conducted a study consisting of 335 Latinas to understand the positive factors and obstacles associated with Latina women in the United States. Bonilla-Rodriguez asserted that the following positive factors influence the success of the Latina women in leadership positions in the United States: Successful educational attainment; participating in

leadership training; possessing self-confidence; access to mentors and role models; cultural and religious influence; family influence; and employment. Understanding these positive factors will ensure more Latinas pursue leadership roles in the United States. On the other hand, based on their personal journeys, participants in Bonilla-Rodriguez's (2011) study held a consensus that the lack of mentors, lack of opportunities, and cultural and family obligations were obstacles.

Bonilla-Rodriguez (2011) also found four essential characteristics unique to the Latina leader: Creative, good listener, optimistic/positive, and passionate. This study concluded that

this information could also be helpful for Latinas aspiring [to] leadership roles as it can shed light on what preventive measures to take to ensure the obstacles they may face do not hold them back from a successful leadership experience. (p. 119)

The outcome of Bonilla-Rodriguez's research included determining positive factors and obstacles to success in understanding how Latinas use their EI to overcome challenges to achieve success during their journeys to become leaders as well as the barriers they are currently facing within their leadership positions.

Similarly, in a qualitative study, Rivera (2014) found the characteristics of the Latina women and their leadership styles that contributed to their success in leadership positions. According to the findings, two major relational leadership styles were highlighted among Latinas: transformational leadership and authentic leadership (Ruiz-Williams, 2015). Northouse (2019) described transformational leadership as a process which alters and transforms individuals. Transformational leadership involves factors of emotional values, integrity, and long-term goals (Mayes & Gethers, 2018). This type of leadership accounts for the workers' goals and intentions, as well as gratifying their needs, and treating them as individuals

(Northouse, 2019). Choi, Goh, Adam, and Tan (2016) posited four characteristics of transformational leadership: a) individualized consideration; b) intellectual stimulation; c) inspiration; and d) charisma. Transformational leadership is the process wherein an individual (leader) relates to other individuals (followers) as they create a connection which raises the level of standards, motivation, and attitudes in both leader and follower (Northouse, 2019).

Likewise, authentic leadership is composed of four distinct, but related, components which include: a) self-awareness, which occurs when a leader knows who they are in terms of morals, motivations, goals, and even strengths and weaknesses of their character; b) internalized moral perspective consisting of strong internal standards and values; when leaders do what is right versus what is best, they are more likely to be perceived as authentic by their followers; c) balanced processing includes the vital characteristics of objectivity and openness to others' ideas. It is essential that the authentic leader impartially pursue and evaluate others' viewpoints to arrive at the best decision; and d) relational transparency comes about as the authentic leader reveals themselves to others in a genuine manner contributing to a sense of sincerity (Northouse, 2019).

Moreover, the authentic leader is trustworthy, a crucial characteristic. Being trusted by not only one's followers but also by one's peers and management, is one of the strongest assets a leader can possess (Otaghsara & Hamzehzadeh, 2017). Several studies have demonstrated authentic leadership ensures feelings of trust in the relationship between employees and their supervisors, directly benefiting employees' levels of commitment toward their organizations (Semedo, Coelho, & Ribeiro, 2016). Specifically, a compelling positive relationship appeared

stronger for employees under proficient and experienced levels of authentic leadership (Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016).

Specific practices of leadership styles furthermore value the leader being culturally competent and inclusive and expect the leader to recognize and respect followers' abilities to bring diverse ideas into working toward common goals (El Amouri & O'Neill, 2014). Linuesa-Langreo, Ruiz-Palomino, and Elche (2016) posited that both transformational and authentic leadership are ethical-based leadership styles. Particularly, transformational leadership is associated with worker engagement and other effective organizational outcomes, as well as an overall positive climate (Vila-Vázquez, Castro-Casal, Álvarez-Pérez, & del Río-Araúj, 2018).

Similarly, according to Banks et al. (2016), successful institutions strive to select leaders who have a natural desire to home their skills to improve the organizational atmosphere as perceived by its members. These researchers have noted that authentic leadership incorporates "many theories of leadership including transformational, charismatic, servant, and spiritual, along with other forms of positive leadership" (Banks et al., 2016, p. 635). Such types of leadership, as transformational and authentic, align with this current study since Rivera (2014) noted that Latina women and these management styles have aided in their successes within their leadership positions. Mayes and Gethers (2018) noted that the characteristics of transformational leadership include factors of emotional values, integrity, and long-term goals. These components of transformational leadership are notably correlated with the ability to both monitor and manage emotions in oneself and others, such as the emotional intelligent individual (Kumar, 2014).

In their journeys to reach a leadership position, "participants … recognize[d] the need to work harder than their non-Latino peers and to be assertive enough to prove that they are just as capable as everyone else" (Rivera, 2014, p. 70). Aside from understanding the leadership styles which have contributed to their success, when looking at the journeys of the Latina women, Rivera (2014) identified some challenges dealing with cultural expectations, language barriers, traditional values, and racial discrimination. In addition, the obstacle of being a woman brought with it such biases considered socially normal including gender-based family responsibilities and overall gender discrimination. Shared challenges among Latina leaders regarding barriers within organizations that prevent Latinas from progressing in their careers include: "Lacking self-confidence, being risk-averse, and being afraid of asking for help were some of the internal barriers that Latina leaders have had to overcome" (Rivera, 2014, p. 71). Rivera's (2014) findings emphasized the importance for Latinas to lead by example, to create a supportive environment, to be self-aware of their strengths and beliefs, to collaborate with a team, and remain honest to be successful as a leader. This study's outcome has aided in understanding how Latinas can succeed during their journeys to become leaders.

It is vital to understand the positive factors as well as the challenges Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, have faced in their journeys to achieve success in the K-12 setting. This section has explored positive influences, obstacles, and leadership styles related to the Latina K-12 leader. Some of the positive influences include childhood experiences as parents or other caretakers advocated for those children's education, valuing education, seeking mentors, and developing a compassionate leadership style. On the other hand, Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, have faced obstacles to leadership success including balancing

work and family responsibilities, overcoming discrimination, not having a voice due to their gender, and, in certain instances, due to their early age. Latinas' successes require adoption of essential leadership styles as well as overcoming gender challenges. Cultural awareness and EI may provide an understanding of diversity, especially to aid in the success of Latina immigrant leaders. Diversity within the K-12 leadership realm may promote involvement of culturally diverse parents and community members, and the academic and social success of both minority and majority group students.

Body 2: Gender in the K-12 System

Compared to men, women are less likely to become K-12 administrators (Wallace, 2015). Within the K-12 teaching profession, women make up a larger percentage, but the field of K-12 leadership has historically been comprised of men (Wallace, 2015). This next section reiterates those early encouragements of Latinas as potential contributing factors toward success as well as the element of race consciousness as a potential barrier in achieving leadership positions in K-12 public school systems.

Women and the K-12 System

Equity requires that educators support more proportional employment of women in K-12 leadership positions. Women have become the vast majority of individuals seeking and gaining principal certification/licensure (Fuller, Hollingworth, & An, 2016). In a study by Fuller, LeMay, and Pendola (2018), they examined 23 years of employment data for Texas public schools to determine the percentage of women K-12 principals. As women are also just as inclined as men to apply for school leadership positions, the expectation would be that the percentage of women principals would increase. Within Fuller et al.'s study of archival data,

statistics revealed that newly hired principals showed considerable progress in the hiring of women principals across the 23 years.

Fuller et al. (2018) found that women principals tend to lead in ways that are more effective in creating a community both inside and outside of the school. Additionally, women leaders promote collaboration and improve student success. These researchers also reported there is evidence that women in leadership positions can serve as role models for other women (see also Hoyt & Simon, 2011). "Having greater gender equity in leadership positions, in fact, sends an important message to students about who can and should be in a position of leadership" (Fuller et al., 2018, p. 1). Unfortunately, barriers still exist for women seeking to attain leadership in K-12 environments. One primary impediment for women is the existing organizational hierarchy of men leaders, whose biases toward women continue to prevent the advancement of women into leadership positions.

Clark and Johnson (2017) studied the process woman took to enter school leadership education to attain their certification in a non-traditional route, specifically deciding "to enter school leadership after receiving encouragement from a mentor and participating in a cycle of self-empowerment, and how this process culminated in their professional career advancement" (p. 17). In this study, women participants described verbal encouragement from a mentor as a key factor to pursue educational advancement. Prior to entering school leadership, the participants were overtly and verbally encouraged by a mentor in which "the myriad female role models to which the women were exposed and whose achievements they exalted facilitated this process" (Clark & Johnson, 2017, p. 10). The participants' lives were positively affected by the mentor and the verbal support was necessary to begin the process. Mentors were not of a

particular gender or position, but rather those whose opinions were highly regarded. This

process of women empowerment was essential as these women were insecure regarding their

ability to perform in leadership positions and they were content with their current positions. In

addition, self-doubt took many forms, yet the outcome was the same: A self-perception in which

women did not feel suited to be school leaders. Nevertheless, the empowerment process helped

them gain confidence to act toward educational leadership roles (Clark & Johnson, 2017).

Verbal encouragement from a mentor created the motivation for these women to pursue

leadership positions and to successfully attain a job in K-12 leadership.

Latinas and the K-12 System

Santiago (2008) studied the perceptions and experiences of the Latina leader. In his

findings, family support was one factor which contributed to individuals' achieving educational

and career goals, aligning with the purpose and aim of this study. Santiago highlighted the

importance of focusing on bringing the voices and experiences of Latina women into leadership

positions to tell their stories and make recommendations and suggestions for the benefit of the

next generation of Latina leaders. Santiago (2008) further recommended: "We need to draw

from their experience and voice" (p. 177). He found seven major themes attached to the

experience and perception of the Latina leader, including: Strong family support; no

preconceived self-imposed obstacles; high self-efficacy beliefs; the inclusion of a "token

Hispanic" being placed in a high Hispanic population school; no consensus regarding additional

principal roles; mentored by Latinas; and utilized the Spanish culture in their practice as a leader.

In his investigation, Santiago (2008) was challenged with the reality that there were few

studies on Latina leaders' experiences. The gap in the literature is likely attributable to the small

number of Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, as leaders and more specifically to the small percentage of those Latinas who hold such positions in urban areas in the state of Minnesota. Therefore, the need to augment the existing literature regarding firsthand experiences of Latinas in K-12 leadership positions in the United States is clear.

According to Palacio (2013), the Latina woman's experiences navigating her path toward a leadership position consisted of early influences related to family structure, core values, and traditional cultural values. These mothers raised their children with core values such as: "Confidence and assertiveness; aspiration for career goals and success; fairness; valuing people; work ethics; work in people-serving professions; collectiveness; perseverance; pride in one's presentation and communication; and educational aspirations for children" (p. 105). Palacio (2013) found that Latinas, who were raised by both parents with mothers who stayed at home to take care of the children, were afforded the benefits of love and caring of the mother.

The participants of Palacio's (2013) study shared how they focused on the core values taught to them by their caring mothers; those core values played a vital role in their successes in leadership positions. Thus, core values played a pivotal role in these individuals' decision-making and leadership processes. Latinas also expressed that traditional cultural values played a role in their experience. Some participants experienced traditional cultural values as strengths while others viewed them as challenges. However, the data "did not suggest that all Latina women were ingrained with the same level of traditional cultural values nor did it suggest that the participants experienced the same issues with traditional cultural values" (Palacio, 2013, p. 123).

The issue of gender equity in the K-12 school systems is an ongoing challenge. Within this section, a discussion of an archival investigation provided information about the inequities against women existing within K-12 leadership, although researchers advise that progress has been made in increasing the hiring of women K-12 leaders. Some women who have succeeded in becoming K-12 administrators have taken a non-traditional route, using encouragement from mentors to develop feelings of self-empowerment and self-efficacy. These women were afforded an opportunity to experience the factor of emotional intelligence relationship management from mentors whose EI influenced and guided their success. The studies in this section reiterated the importance of encouraging experiences including family encouragement and core values utilized to develop confidence and assertiveness for the Latina woman seeking to attain K-12.

Body 3: Latinas and Race Consciousness

Race consciousness occurs when an individual sees basic racial differences between people, holding that physical features, particularly skin color, can negatively impact certain people's life opportunities (Harris, 2008). According to Hernandez and Murakami (2016), Latina leaders are fearful to speak up because they feel that they would be judged more harshly than their White colleagues, resulting in a self-imposed silence in relation to race negotiation. The authors stated that "leaders of color have to be more diligent in their speech patterns more often than the majority leaders if they are to be seen as intelligent and thoughtful" (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016, p. 10).

Hernandez and Murakami (2016) also found that Latinas experienced how race consciousness became a factor in their roles and identities as K-12 leaders. Latinas experienced

the pressure to act "White" in their professional setting, to connect and to make sure they appeared as intelligent and thoughtful as their White colleagues (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). However, "most of the research related to the phenomenon of acting White is articulated in the context of African-American adolescents" (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016, p. 10). Acting White has been referred to in situations where minority students have been ridiculed by their minority peers for engaging in behaviors perceived to be characteristic of Whites (Fryer, 2006). Hernandez and Murakami (2016) stated that little research has been done regarding this phenomenon of Latinas' pressure to act White in their professional work setting. However, "institutional racism, particularly organizational structures and individual behaviors, continues to favor Whites" (p.10).

Hernandez and Murakami (2016) urged Debra, an interviewee, to talk about the meaning of acting White within the school setting. The following example is related to how she presented the phenomenon of acting White:

> I am conscious of getting dressed in the hair, jewelry, clothing, down to the color of the lipstick I will wear! For example, last week there was a group of us who were at the Capitol speaking with senators. I actually wore nylons and my pearls, and subdued colors. … If I am considered a professional, I want to present myself as one. (p. 10)

Hernandez and Murakami (2016) discussed the fact the Latina leaders need to act White or behave with certain manners to be viewed as more professional. Hernandez and Murakami's discussion of the phenomenon of acting White aids this study's purpose. It assists in understanding the challenges of the Latinas in the K-12 system, and more specifically to the Latinas who want to stay true to their cultural values instead of imitating certain characteristics

from the dominant culture. When an individual transgresses and acts White, that person disconnects from their cultural norms to behave artificially and thus is not in touch with their true emotions (Wildhagen, 2011). Acting White can therefore create a sense of "negative" emotional intelligence where a person is unable to respond to emotional, social, and environmental conditions.

According to Murakami, Hernandez, Valle, and Almager (2018), Latino K-12 leaders perceived that students and parents who shared their cultural backgrounds benefitted from their common cultures. The Latino leaders stated they were viewed as role models as they experienced common upbringings, common language, and common culture. The authors stated:

> The awareness of being a role model for both students and adults was an indication that these administrators were critical in their roles and intentional in their investments to improve the experiences of those in schools. These leaders also utilized their own experiences with discrimination to develop high levels of empathy for their diverse students. (Murakami et al., 2018, p. 13)

This sense of empathy is tied directly to the construct of EI, one of the conceptual frameworks of this study. Murakami et al.'s (2018) study highlighted the importance of increasing the number of Latinas leaders to serve as mentors for other Latinos aspiring to become leaders or to serve as role models for the Latino students in K-12 systems. This study focused specifically on these needs within the state of Minnesota due to the increasing Latino population state-wide.

Chapter Two Summary

This section discussed components of the literature review as it compares opinions and evidence explored in this chapter. The following is a final synthesis discussing all segments of

the preceding literature review. The evaluation/transition segment reiterates the need for this study due to the gap in the literature and provides a shift to Chapter Three.

Final Synthesis

The conceptual framework of this study was emotional intelligence (EI), an essential practice for any effective leader (Northouse, 2019). The four domains of EI include: 1) self-awareness; 2) self-management; 3) social awareness; and 4) relational management. All these characteristics entail having empathy, organizational awareness, and relational management skills, which involve possessing influence, coaching, and mentoring abilities, conflict management skills, team-building, and inspirational leadership (Goleman, 1988; Gribble et al., 2017). Emotional intelligence can be used as a tool for becoming a potentially effective leader, for developing effective leadership skills, and for overcoming barriers and challenges in the workplace.

Within Body 1, I explored the positive factors, as well as the challenges which both immigrant and non-immigrant Latinas have faced to achieve success in the K-12 setting. Some of the positive influences include parents and other family members advocating for those children's education and valuing education as necessary for success (Martinez, Cortez, & Saenz, 2013; Quiñones & Marquez-Kiyama, 2014). Ryan et al. (2010) further clarified that valuing education for Latinos include equity in academic attainment. In order to realize a leadership role, Latinas were obliged to develop a compassionate leadership style. In a study performed by Wrushen and Sherman (2008), the participants discussed the need to develop and utilize a leadership style which included compassion toward peers and others, an essential element of EI. Another positive for Latinas' career success was seeking mentors (Bonilla-Rodriguez, 2011;

Rodriguez et al., 2018). Early mentoring began in the family as parents, grandparents, and others acted as coaches in directing those children to understand the process of mentoring. These early experiences aided the individuals in their progression to leadership roles as they continued to seek mentoring as a means to gain insights into the positions they were seeking or had attained.

Conversely, Latinas have faced challenges to leadership success including discrimination (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016) as well as successfully creating a work/family balance. Latinas' leadership attainment requires use of specific leadership styles as well as overcoming gender challenges (Rivera, 2014; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Per Bonilla-Rodriguez (2011), Latinas use their EI within their leadership roles to overcome challenges and barriers. The development of EI for the Latina immigrant leaders was something they learned over many years during college and their early careers as they became self-aware. In addition, the Latina immigrants, immersed in the dominant cultures of the United States, used their cultural awareness to gain an understanding of diversity and empathy toward individuals of non-dominant cultures.

In order to become a successful K-12 leader, the Latina immigrant must develop self-confidence, a primary element for success, as she overcomes language barriers and discrimination. In addition, successful educational attainment, access to mentors and role models, as well as cultural, religious, and family influences are all vital factors in the professional success of the Latina. For the Latina immigrant K-12 leader, family and others may have acted as influential role models in directing young Latinas toward success. On the other hand, some families may have served as obstacles themselves for young women hoping to achieve such success. Understanding both positive and negative factors will aid Latina immigrants in pursuit of leadership roles within the Minnesota K-12 school systems.

Within Body 2, I explored and discussed the issue of gender bias in K-12 school systems (Fuller et al., 2016, 2018). Nonetheless, some women have succeeded in becoming K-12 administrators through a non-traditional route, often using encouragement from mentors to develop confidence and high self-efficacy beliefs, inspiring these women to pursue their leadership careers:

> Their lives were then transformed after a person, whom we term mentor, encouraged them to pursue first a degree in educational leadership and then an administrative position. This stimulus was the catalyst necessary to begin the cycle of empowerment the outcome of which was their entry into a position as a school leader. Their professional environment was a contributory cause and the verbal support was a necessary clause for the process to begin. (Clark & Johnson, 2017, p. 9)

These mentors utilized specific factors of EI, such as relationship management including coaching, conflict management, teamwork, and inspirational leadership. These encouraging mentoring experiences instilled in the Latinas the significance for them to lead as role models, to establish a supportive environment for their working community, and to cooperate with their teams to be successful as leaders.

Within Body 3, I explored race consciousness as a factor in Latinas' roles and identities as K-12 leaders. Latinas experienced the pressure to act "White" in their professional setting, to connect and to make sure they appeared as intelligent and thoughtful as their White colleagues (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). The outcome of this acting "White" causes these women to lose touch with their true selves and impedes their use of EI. Acting "White" is a tactic to

attempt to be successful, but ultimately it is a self-defeating approach to becoming a successful leader.

Evaluation/Transition

The problem is that Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, have not achieved proportionate representation in K-12 leadership positions in school systems in Minnesota. This disproportionate representation in K-12 systems hinders the advancement of the concerns of the Hispanic community, the students, and their families. The purpose of this qualitative study, employing a case study design, from a population of K-12 leaders located in an urban area of the state of Minnesota, was to explore the phenomenon of Latina immigrants, all who were non-native English speakers, in K-12 leadership positions. There was a gap in the literature in understanding Latina immigrant leaders' development within K-12 leadership. Furthermore, this gap did not focus on personal beliefs of K-12 Latina leaders utilizing the theory of EI and the inclusion of EI on Latinas' career successes. This study has closed this gap by conducting a series of four face-to-face interviews with Latina leaders. Chapter Three discusses the qualitative method for this research, using a case study design, the data collection process, and data analysis procedures, as well as ethical issues related to the interview process.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study, employing a case study design, from a population of K-12 leaders located in an urban area of the state of Minnesota, was to explore the phenomenon of Latina immigrants, all who were non-native English speakers, in K-12 leadership positions. This study explored and identified challenges which have prevented Latina immigrants from realizing leadership positions, including barriers they encounter once they attain a K-12 leadership position, as well as their successes in achieving positions of leadership. This study explored these women's perceptions of their personal use of emotional intelligence (EI) in concert with their understanding of the impact such beliefs have on their approaches to successfully reaching K-12 leadership positions. The research questions guiding this study were:

RQ1. How do Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education achieve success in an urban area of the state of Minnesota?

a. What role does emotional intelligence (EI) play in their success?

RQ2. What are the obstacles unique to Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 education in an urban area in the state of Minnesota?

b. How do Latina immigrant leaders use their emotional intelligence (EI) to overcome these obstacles?

Positionality

As a Latina immigrant K-12 teacher, I believe it is important to discuss my connection to this study. My early academic career was challenging. I grew up in Mexico in a remote area with no electricity or running water; I had 12 siblings, living in poverty. My mother and father

never attended formal schooling; however, my father was able to read and write because his parents had hired private tutors for him. Even though my parents did not have much formal education, my mother valued education, especially for her daughters. My mother was my first advocate for my education. My mother and father, brothers and sisters were all influential and supportive of my early education.

After sixth grade, my father informed me that I should not continue my schooling as I only needed skills to become a homemaker. These skills were what he believed I needed to succeed as a woman. Latinas have expressed that traditional cultural values, and the traditional division of men/women roles, influenced their roles in society (Palacio, 2013). My sixth-grade teacher was able to convince my father to enroll me in middle school. During this point in my schooling, I became a self-advocate for my education. I completed high school and graduated from college with a computer science degree. The extreme sacrifices my parents made during these years, such as going without food, motivated me even more to succeed. I knew that I must graduate so that my parents' sacrifices were not in vain.

I came to the United States at the age of 24 and I did not speak any English. I was married two years later and had two children who I raised as a "stay at home" mom; once my children began their formal education in grammar school, I returned to school to seek a career in K-12 education. I eventually graduated with a bachelor's degree as a K-12 Spanish language teacher, and then advanced to earning a master's degree in educational leadership. I proceeded to earn my K-12 principal's license, studying for an additional two years post-master's degree. Currently, I am seeking a doctorate in Educational Leadership.

After I graduated with a bachelor's in the Spanish language, I worked as a substitute teacher. After one year, I was hired as a Spanish teacher for a school year. However, I was laid-off because the position was discontinued. Being laid off motivated me to seek a master's degree in educational leadership. My resilience and perseverance can be tied to the conceptual framework of this study, emotional intelligence. I became more self-aware as well as utilized self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and a positive outlook (Goleman, 1988).

During this time, I was hired as an integration specialist in a K-12 school system. Once I graduated with my master's degree, I sought opportunities for promotion, and I was hired as a student support services specialist for a university in Minnesota. While working in this position, I earned my K-12 principal's license and began a doctorate in Educational Leadership. After five years of working in this position, I began to seek opportunities in the K-12 system, aligning with my K-12 educational and professional experience. I applied for many positions as principal, assistant principal, and dean of students; however, I had few interviews, and I was not hired. While applying for those leadership positions and not being hired, my former position as an integration specialist became available once again and I was hired immediately. Working in the K-12 setting allowed me to apply for internal positions and three months later I was hired as a Spanish immersion teacher.

Throughout the years, I have tried to maintain a positive outlook when encountering challenges and disappointments. I faced similar challenges as the participant of this study such as a language barrier, lack of mentoring support, and discrimination. In spite of those challenges, I developed self-awareness regarding my professional advancement and needs, and I believe I became more emotionally intelligent.

Bias

Within the interviewer/interviewee meetings, there was the risk of bias being present. However, since I shared many of the experiences as the participants, such as facing language challenges in college and encountering racism during my career, there was little or no risk for bias. The factors of trust and shared language and experiences eliminated a sense of hierarchy and bias within the interview settings.

Willis and Artino (2013) explained that a probing interviewer is one who is not completely satisfied to only record opinions and attitudes, but rather aims to delve into deeper layers of the participants' experiences. As a probing interviewer, I was able to build rapport primarily based on my own shared experiences, language, and culture with the participants. As an immigrant Latina myself, I was able to create a relaxed atmosphere during the interviews due to our common backgrounds. Throughout the interview process, I employed EI, specifically utilizing empathy in order to gain exact and honest answers to my interview questions creating an opportunity to gather more extensive data. This strategy of using EI was helpful for the participants' understanding of approaches to successfully achieving and reaching K-12 leadership positions.

DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) conveyed how semi-structured interviews explore firsthand experiences and individual meanings related to those experiences. The interviewer asks open-ended questions where they can re-word, re-order, or clarify any questions introduced by the participant. I asked probing questions and gained a rich and deep understanding of the experiences of Latina immigrants who were navigating the realm of K-12 leadership opportunities and accomplishments.

Moreover, I included the use of reflexivity, defined as "possessing an attitude of attending systematically to the context of [my] knowledge construction, especially to the possible effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process" (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 7). I developed a reflexive journal, or diary, where I entered meticulous notes prior to, during, and after each interview (Hsiung, 2008). I also documented all scheduling or interview planning decisions I made, noting the purpose for such decisions.

This reflective diary was used to record my personal observations at the conclusion of each interview. I made these notes as soon as possible following each interview to complement the interview data as I recorded my comments of the interview meetings, providing transparency in the research process (Moravcsik, 2014). Furthermore, the reflexive diary served as documentation of the soundness of my research processes.

Within this qualitative case study, I acted as the interpreter of the data acquired from the semi-structured and open-ended interviews (Yazan, 2015). I coded, analyzed, and reported the data about the participants' perceptions of their individual understanding and use of emotional intelligence. These interviews led to an in-depth understanding of the participants' behaviors, processes, practices, and relationships within the context of K-12 school systems in Minnesota (Stake, 1995; Yin & Campbell, 2018).

Research Design

Qualitative research provides an understanding of individual experiences which can bring a researcher closer to the experiences of individuals by using thoughtful descriptions of the meaning of those individual experiences (Babbie, 2016; Creswell, 2014). The study uses a qualitative case study about Latina immigrants' firsthand experiences within positions of

leadership in K-12 school systems in Minnesota. Within this study, it was essential to permit the participants to provide their insights of individual challenges and successes, as they aided in addressing the research questions and purpose of the study.

A researcher chooses a study's method and design based on the nature of the problem or the phenomenon being explored (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015). Such phenomena include, but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships (Teherani et al., 2015). A qualitative study provides a framework within which to explore a specific phenomenon from a range of different perspectives (Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2015). According to Yin and Campbell (2018), qualitative methodologies can be instrumental in supporting studies which focus on human factors and behaviors. By contrast, the quantitative method may limit the scope needed to measure the human element in a study (Yin & Campbell, 2018) and was considered insufficient to address the research questions or the purpose of this study. Case studies can be based on a constructivist approach, suggesting that truth is qualified by each individual's perspective, and is furthermore built upon that individual's social construction of reality (Bandura, 1977; Stake, 1995; Yin & Campbell, 2018). One advantage of this way of thinking is a close collaboration can develop between the researcher and the participants, empowering the participants to share their narratives (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

The participants in this study described their personal views of reality, enabling me to better understand their beliefs and experiences. A case study design was appropriate for this study, as I did not intend to influence the behaviors of the participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008;

Yin, 2014; Yin & Campbell, 2018). For example, in seeking to explore and understand

perceptions of Latina immigrant leaders, this study would be considered incomplete without

recognizing how the Latina immigrant leaders achieved success, but also why the participants

perceived barriers and difficulties to their successes. To fully understand the perceptions of the

key factors and barriers the participant might have overcome, I considered both the inquiry and

the context for the participant, the Latina educator.

As the interviewer, I served as the data collection tool for the interviews with the four

participants. The duration of each of the four interviews was approximately two hours (120

minutes) and all were audio-recorded. Each interview focused on several elements of the Latina

leader's experience as noted in the interview questionnaire (see Appendix A). At the end of each

interview, the pertinent audio recording was reviewed several times, and then transcribed via an

online service (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). If any of the transcriptions were in Spanish, I

translated those words or phrases into English. Both at the beginning and the end of each

interview, I assured the participants of their privacy rights. Audio-recorded data were stored on

a password-protected personal computer, with that password only known to me; furthermore, a

pseudonym was used in place of each participant's name to protect her privacy and

confidentiality.

Participants

K-12 leaders are those who work within teaching, learning, and school improvement and

include teachers, assistant principals, principals, and district superintendents (Alsubaie, 2016).

For this study, the inclusion criteria were: Current K-12 leader, woman, Latina immigrant, and

working in an urban Minnesota school district; the exclusion criteria were being a man, working

outside of an urban area of Minnesota, being a Latina non-immigrant, and working in the higher-education or non-education fields.

Description of the Sample

A purposive sample is a non-probability sample in which participants are selected based on specific characteristics of a population and the objectives of the study. Purposive sampling is a type of convenience sampling also known as judgmental or selective sampling (Babbie, 2016; Tongco, 2007). Purposive sampling is a means to acquire research participants, as the selection process is based on participants meeting the inclusion criteria for the particular study and is used when a "diverse sample is necessary or the opinion of experts in a particular field is the topic of interest" (Martínez-Mesa, González-Chica, Duquia, Bonamigo, & Bastos, 2016, p. 328). A non-probability purposive sample was comprised of four Latina immigrant K-12 leaders, with between 12 and more than 20 years of experience. This sample included teachers, assistant principals, and principals, who aided in this study's exploration of personal perceptions and experiences and how those experiences related to the individuals' understandings and use of emotional intelligence during their professional journeys. Relevant information for each of the participants for this study is displayed in Table 1. All participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Professional Position	Location
Nicole	Teacher / Special Assignment	School #1
Becky	Assistant Principal	School #1
Sonia	Teacher	School #2
Graciela	Teacher	School #3

Role of the Researcher

Within qualitative case study research, the main instrument in data collection and exploration is the researcher (Yin & Campbell 2018). As the researcher, I acted as an interpreter of the semi-structured and open-ended interviews and the ensuing data collection and analysis (Yazan, 2015). I was the only individual to code, analyze, and report on the data about the participants' perceptions of their individual understanding and use of emotional intelligence. The four interviews led to an in-depth understanding of the participants' behaviors, processes, practices, and relationships in the context of K-12 school systems (Stake, 1995; Yin & Campbell, 2018).

Research Ethics

The American Counseling Association (ACA; 2005) supplies researchers with protocols regarding fair and proper treatment of the research study participants. This association outlines researchers' ethical obligations to protect each research participant in the construction, implementation, and reporting of their research results (ACA, 2005). I obtained informed consent from each participant prior to the interviews. The informed consent detailed the boundaries and limitations of the study, ensuring the privacy of participant information, and

supplying the means I used to avoid any emotional, social, or even physical harm to the study participants.

To reach this goal I followed certain procedures. I explained to each participant the specific characteristics and the extent of the study and emphasized their confidentiality and privacy would be maintained; my contact information was given to the participants, if they needed me to answer any questions that may have arisen. The consent forms and information provided to the participants explained their role in the study. I provided reassurances of privacy and discretion throughout all segments of the research study.

Selecting leaders from the same region may have posed problems with confidentiality and biased responses. To prevent the likelihood of these problems, all participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity for purposes of reporting data. Furthermore, while K-12 school locations are included in the data results, they are not identified by name. Confidentiality documents were distributed to and signed by all participants. K-12 school leaders were selected by location on a voluntary basis. Interviews were constructed to address sensitivity, and all research was set up to be objective and to promote fairness and unbiased considerations.

Trustworthiness

Quality criteria for all qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016; Patton, 2015). Credibility is established when the study's findings represent convincing and reasonable information obtained from the participants and an accurate interpretation of the participants' views and insights (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017; Patton, 1999). Within this study, I ensured research credibility through documenting the method used and guaranteeing

that all steps were transparent. Every step of the research planning, from the design of the study, the sampling of participants, and data collection and analysis, to results and conclusions were validated for the study is to be transparent and organized (Harrison et al., 2017).

Member checking. Member checks take place when the researcher provides participants the opportunity to review the collected and transcribed data of their interview. During member checking, I asked each participant to confirm my interpretation of the conversation which took place during the interview (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Mutual trust and confidence are crucial factors in the member checking phase. Member checks are a type of quality control procedure wherein I improved accuracy, reliability, and integrity of what has been recorded, interpreted, and transcribed from each research interview (Harvey, 2015). Member checking provided a chance for self-reflection and was an important part of gaining trust between the interviewer and the interviewees.

Transferability. Additionally, transferability is the *degree* to which the results of the qualitative study can be shifted to other circumstances or settings (Moon et al., 2016). Transferability can be a challenge within qualitative studies due to the typically small sample sizes and the nature of the organization or population being explored. The standard for interviews is the in-person, face-to-face interview (Patton, 2015). To accomplish this, researchers must have direct access to participants, space to conduct the interview, and researcher and participant schedules must align. This potentially leads to a variety of concerns, since researchers must physically meet participants, potentially leading to smaller sample sizes and minimizing variability within the study and potential transferability of findings (Harrison et al., 2017).

It has been noted that some of these hurdles to qualitative interviewing can be overcome via the use of multimedia communication programs, such as Skype, which facilitate remote interviews. Such online interview methods include asynchronous techniques, including non-immediate responses from participants, and synchronous techniques, which include immediate responses, similar to face-to-face interviews (Fielding, Lee, & Blank, 2017). However, these various techniques are flawed, and the strengths and limitations of both asynchronous and synchronous approaches must be weighed considering the research questions. For this study, one-to-one interviews facilitated and elicited the data required to achieve answers to the research questions; however, transferability still is a constraint and limitation of the study.

Dependability. On the other hand, dependability refers to the stability of the study results over time. Dependability establishes the research study's findings as consistent and potentially repeatable. I aimed to verify that the results and findings were consistent with the data collected. Dependability implies that if other researchers were to examine the collected data, they would arrive at similar findings and conclusions (Houghton, Casey, Murphy, & Shaw, 2013). Dependability also includes participants' evaluation of the interpretations and recommendations of the study; both must be upheld by the data received from participants.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is closely related to confirmability; it is the process of critical self-reflection about oneself as a researcher—their own biases, preferences, preconceptions—and the researcher's relationship to the participants, and how that relationship affects participants' answers research questions (Maharaj, 2016; Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, & Caricativo, 2017). Reflexivity aids in providing transparent information about my views and personal values during the development of the research (Maharaj, 2016). In addition to field notes, I maintained a

reflexive research diary to notate observations of each interview session and to track my private opinions, beliefs, and interpretations.

I followed the guidelines of the outlined processes and documentation of all interviews. Mutuality and trust between interviewer and interviewees were essential factors in this qualitative study. I ensured the accuracy in which this case study's outcome addressed the research questions and the problem being studied. My analyses of the data from the four interviews provided validity of the findings to substantiate all conclusions and recommendations as I made every attempt to balance significance of the various issues, including participant concerns and the study itself. In this way, both the research process and results were assured of high rigor and durability (Leung, 2015).

Instrumentation and Protocols

For this study, using semi-structured one-on-one interviews with guiding interview questions, I served as the data collection instrument. Interviews took place in-person and were audio-recorded. A population of K-12 leaders (principals, assistant principals, and teachers) was the targeted population group, from which a sample of four individuals were selected for the qualitative study. The data elicited from this case study were analyzed to address the purpose of the study and the research questions.

Procedures and Analysis

Logical processes were used, describing the potential associations between the data collected and any conclusions I was able to infer from the results. Procedures and analysis adhered to the following guidelines.

Data Collection and Management

Within qualitative research, interviews are a common method of data collection and are generally considered either semi-structured, lightly structured, or in-depth. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews allow participants to express their beliefs in their own ways and at their own pace (Corbin & Morse, 2003). I employed semi-structured one-on-one interviews using open-ended questions because I was able to re-word, re-order, or clarify any questions introduced by the participant. I furthermore audio-recorded each interview. Before collecting any data, I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Participants completed an informed consent form, outlining the safeguards and options to take part in the interviews and questionnaires. To protect the confidentiality of all participants, data were encrypted and secured on a personal computer, specifically password-protected, with the password only known by me. All data will be kept in such a secure manner for a period of no more than three years, at which time it will be permanently deleted.

Data collection for one-on-one interviews. Using one-on-one interviews with K-12 personnel, I served as the data collection tool as the interviewer; all interviews were audio-recorded. Three interviews took place in-person, face-to-face, and one interview was conducted using Zoom technology software which provided the ability to interview this participant at a distance. Prior to each interview, and again at the conclusion of each interview, I reassured the participants of the privacy and confidentiality of their information. I answered any questions or concerns which stemmed from the interviews.

Since I audio-recorded the interviews, the recordings had to be transcribed precisely and reliably (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I reviewed the audio recordings of the interview sessions

numerous times prior to transcription. Each audio interview was transcribed after the interview via an online transcription service, Rev. Participants were sent a copy of the transcription of their interviews during the member checking process. I gave participants seven days to review and possibly revise the transcriptions.

I created and maintained field notes to supplement the recorded and transcribed interview data. My field notes allowed a means for my commentary about intuitions, manners, and other non-verbal prompts including participant voice tone and word choices (Maharaj, 2016; Sutton & Austin, 2015). I hand-wrote the field notes in a notebook following each interview's conclusion. "Field notes can provide important context to the interpretation of audio-taped data and can help remind the researcher of situational factors that may be important during data analysis." (Sutton & Austin, 2015, p. 227). My field notes will be kept secure in the same way as the audio recording and transcript data, as they too hold private and personal information.

The functions of field notes in qualitative research have been described as:

- Prompting researchers to closely observe environment and interactions;

- Supplementing language-focused data;

- Documenting sights, smells, sounds of the physical environment, and other researcher impressions shortly after they occur;

- Encouraging researcher reflection and identification of bias;

- Facilitating preliminary coding and iterative study design;

- Increasing rigor and trustworthiness; and

- Providing essential context to inform data analysis. (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Mulhall, 2003; Tsai et al., 2016)

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative data analysis is considered a "dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing" (Basit, 2003, p. 143). The aim of qualitative data analysis is to "… tell the participants' stories using exemplars from their own narratives, thus grounding the research findings in the participants' lived experiences" (Sutton & Austin, 2015, p. 228). By using inductive reasoning, I was aided in interpreting and structuring meanings— within emergent patterns and themes—developed from data (Thorne, 2000).

The representative sample of four Latina immigrant K-12 leaders supplied rich information during the interviews about their personal and professional experiences. After each interview, a transcript was created and read multiple times. Using ATLAS.ti©, significant and consequential phrases, sentences, and keywords were identified. Patterns were characterized by: Parallels, variances, and arrangement within the context of the data (Saldaña, 2012).

Most identified phrases and keywords were related to the research questions and were coded in meaningful ways to begin the analysis process. I searched for patterns in the data as they related to the purpose of the study and integrating those patterns to address the research questions of this current study. By assembling the codes, I was able to see clear patterns begin to emerge. I began to cluster similar patterns into themes and structured the data by participants' descriptions of their methods of success and overcoming barriers, extracting content not relating to the research questions. As themes were identified, participant quotes from the interview transcripts were used to substantiate each theme.

One-on-one interview results. I analyzed each interviewee transcript following a three-step process:

1). I reviewed each transcribed interview for how well it described the interview experience, to ensure accuracy of the transcription;

2). I documented all significant and pertinent statements, allowing for an in-depth analysis; and

3). I differentiated data which appeared superfluous or possibly coincided with other data, permitting the identification of emergent patterns and themes.

Saldaña (2016) noted that novice researchers ought to code by hand supplying control and ownership of the work. In addition to much hand-coding type work, I used the software ATLAS.ti© to arrange and classify my initial raw data. One way to think about coding and coding trees is to view them as a system of organizing data (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). The researcher places data in the code in the same way someone would file an item into a physical folder. A systematic way to code the data is to ask what the data is trying to convey in anticipated detection of certain patterns and themes (Powell & Renner, 2003). Coding trees worked well with open-ended qualitative interview questions, since the goal was to create new knowledge from raw and unordered data (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Coding trees allowed me to explore the data by reviewing each case in isolation, and then reorganizing the data to examine all cases holistically and systematically (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Figure 3 shows a simple coding tree example.
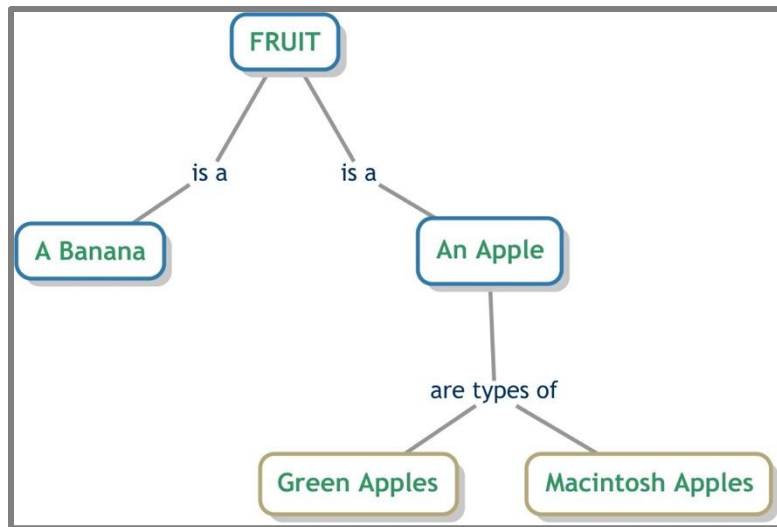
Figure 3. Sample coding tree.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are part of all research studies. Assumptions are facts researchers must accept, but which they cannot necessarily verify (Nkwake, 2013). Assumptions are a necessary element in any type of research, as they are required to enable and carry out the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). Limitations are certain influences related to this study which could not be controlled and could shape the results and the findings. Delimitations refer to the choices made which have determined what was to be included in this study. The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this research are described below.

Assumptions

Assumptions are a necessary element in any type of research because they are required to facilitate and conduct the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The primary assumption in this study was that the participants would be reliable historians of their firsthand experiences, capable of providing accurate historical information as to how they, as Latina immigrants, overcame barriers to succeed in the realm of K-12 leadership positions (Harrison et al., 2017).

This research was conducted via means of four separate one-on-one interviews, and an assumption was made that, to some extent, this research sample would be representative of the population about which more broad inferences might be surmised (Kukull & Ganguli, 2012). It was further assumed that the four participants would respond honestly and without malice or favoritism toward the research process. This research was additionally based on the assumption that, as the primary data collection instrument, I accurately recorded and reported the information gathered during this study. This authenticity includes an accurate and objective description of the participants' perceptions (Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway, 2017).

Limitations

Limitations are possible weaknesses in a study beyond a researcher's control and often flow from research method and design choices (Simon & Goes, 2013). I have learned much from the four interviews and followed up with the participants if there were any ambiguities or gaps in the ability to address the research questions of this study. I treated the participants with respect and consideration and listened to their opinions with full attention and provided as much time as was needed for each interview.

A major limitation of this study was that the sample was obtained from school districts located solely in urban areas of Minnesota. Within the state of Minnesota, approximately 54% of the population resides in urban areas (APM Research Lab, 2018). Urban and rural areas can differ vastly in the levels of formal education, race and ethnicity, and birthplace of the populations (Caldwell et al., 2016).

The choice of one-on-one interviews potentially limited the outcome of insight for the researcher due to the limited amount of data collected. A broader sample may have generated

more in-depth responses from non-immigrant Latinas, potentially garnering additional insights related to Latinas who are not immigrants and English is not their second language. Limitations are discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five.

Delimitations

Delimitations are deliberately-placed limitations on the research study and result from limitations within the scope of the study. In other words, delimitations result from conscious decisions made during development of the study plan (Simon & Goes, 2013). Delimitations of this study included that the geographic location was restricted to the state of Minnesota. Another delimitation was that the four participants were all Latinas immigrants who are currently K-12 leaders working in the specific realm of the K-12 schools and include: Principals, assistant principals, and teachers.

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Chapter Three Summary

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This chapter emphasized, expanded, and clarified details presented in Chapter One regarding the methodology for this project by introducing specific details about the research method and design, the sample selection, the sources of data. Chapter Three discussed the noteworthy topic of trustworthiness in a qualitative study and the importance of mutual trust between the researcher and the participants. Finally, data collection and analysis were discussed in detail. I described certain limitations of the study related to potential biases. To address these limitations, the researcher ensured participants of the confidentiality and objectivity of the data.

Next, Chapter Four presents the results of the face-to-face interview data. This data source was used to confirm and substantiate conclusions and interpretations. Furthermore,

Chapter Four offers insight into the research questions within this study with any discoveries

described meticulously and carefully.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The previous chapters focused on the background and significance of this study, the conceptual framework, the review of literature on the topic of Latinas in leadership within K-12 school systems, and the method utilized, a qualitative case study. Chapter Four focuses on the data analysis and findings developed from the interview responses of the sample of four participants as they relate to the study's research questions.

Reiteration of the Domains of Emotional Intelligence

As presented in Chapter One, the four domains of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Gribble, Ladyshewsky, & Parsons, 2017). These domains are directly related to the research questions for this study connecting the role of emotional intelligence (EI) to the successes as well as overcoming the challenges of the participants (see Figure 1). The four domains include:

- Self-awareness, which includes emotional self-awareness;

- Self-management, which incorporates emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, having a positive outlook;

- Social awareness, which requires empathy and organizational awareness; and

- Relational management, which involves having influence, coaching and mentoring, conflict management, teamwork, and inspirational leadership.

The following section presents recurring patterns found within the collected data and aligned with the four domains of emotional intelligence.

Description of Patterns and Themes

Patterns emerged during analysis of the data based on keywords and phrases. Interview one focused on the participants' experiences in college, while interview two concentrated on the participants' professional leadership experiences. The patterns include:

- Language challenges in college

- Mentoring in college

- Parental expectations

- Family influence in education

- Impact of religious faith

- Challenges related to culture within leadership

- Successes related to culture within leadership

- Leadership mentoring

- Leadership bias

Table 2 displays the emergent themes derived from clustered patterns, which I discuss in detail in this chapter.

Table 2

Emergent Themes and Supporting Patterns Clustered

	Emergent Themes	Supporting Patterns Clustered
1.	Latinas immigrants are challenged in their college experiences but are able to obtain empathy and support in order to succeed.	• Language challenges in college • Mentoring in college
2.	Latinas immigrants are able to adapt to both family expectations or discouragement related to a college education.	• Parental expectations • Family influence in education
3.	Religious faith provides Latinas immigrants with the strength to persist in their professional journeys.	• Impact of religious faith
4.	Latinas immigrants are challenged during their professional experiences, including racism, but also are able to obtain inspirational mentoring from K-12 school leadership.	• Challenges related to culture within leadership • Leadership bias • Successes related to culture within leadership • Leadership mentoring

Thematic Analysis

The data analysis of this study focused on interview responses from two distinct interviews. The first interview was based on the Latina immigrants' youth, early education, and experiences in college, while the second interview focused on the participants' professional careers in K-12 educational systems. The information of the diverse and individual experiences of the four participants was obtained during the two separate interviews using an inductive

analysis procedure (Armat, Assarroudi, Rad, Sharifi, & Heydari, 2018). The data were initially organized and categorized using ATLAS.ti© computer software; thereafter hand-coding and analysis were used.

Within this data analysis, multiple factors of emotional intelligence (EI) emerged from the experiences and views of the participants. The aspects of relational management, including coaching and mentoring and inspirational leadership, were prominent. Other significant EI factors that emerged during the analysis were self-awareness which included emotional self-awareness and social awareness requiring empathy and organizational awareness. As the thematic analysis will show, these factors aided the Latinas in succeeding in college.

Theme One

Latina immigrants are challenged in their college experiences but are able to obtain empathy and support in order to succeed. New knowledge offers Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, a better understanding of how to overcome challenges to become K-12 leaders. This theme emphasizes that Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, seeking leadership positions, must overcome specific challenges and barriers. In doing so, there will be an increase in Latina representation in the K-12 system to advance the concerns of the Hispanic community.

The topic of language challenges in college was significant. Three out of the four participants expressed these language challenges. Sonia stated that she needed to do extra work while most of her peers did not understand the difficulty of learning a new language. During class lectures, Sonia felt that she did not understand the entirety of the content from the professor. She stated:

… and then the poor professor who would see me almost every day in his office. He would have office hours, but I was there the whole time and he would go over time and he would go over his whole lecture again. He would repeat it. There were things I was like, "Oh, now I get it."

Sonia also expressed how she enrolled in extra courses not required for her degree to facilitate learning the new language. For example, she stated:

I realized that my language was going to be a barrier, so I started with really simple math classes. I didn't have to because I had finished all the way through algebra and trigonometry in school, but I still wanted to take those classes just to get the language of the math.

Another participant, Graciela, struggled with her second-language writing skills.

I was very self-aware of I cannot turn in a paper like this because … I sweated. I really sweated final exams where the final exam was on an essay form. I really sweated. I worry about that. I remember approaching several of my teachers to explain to them my situation and how conscious I was about my English that I even begged them if I could have some kind of, instead of a written form of test, I asked them if I could do an oral test.

Becky stated something quite similar related to written language difficulties: "The first time that I went to college here, writing the different projects would take me forever."

These language challenges required the participants to seek extra time during their college studies in order to complete their assignments. The extra time involved searching for additional support from professors and taking extra classes to increase their English proficiency.

Not being proficient in English was a significant barrier for most of the participants during their college years.

Language barriers were not the only challenge participants faced. Time spent studying was another key factor. In response to the interview question: "Tell me about your experience as a Latina college student; what were some supports, what were some barriers? Sonia expressed her college challenges in this way:

> … there wasn't a lot of support in trying to switch my language. I had to study everything three times as hard because I would read it, I didn't quite understand it, so I [had] to read it again, and then I highlighted and then I went back and I still didn't know all the terms … all the verbs are different. All the combinations of chemicals are different … [for example, in Spanish] *ácido carbónico* [in English is] carbonic acid … [International students] spend hours in the library because you have to go over things much harder than an American student would.

Similarly, Graciela stated that she invested as much time preparing for class as Sonia did. However, Graciela believed that spending this extra time was worth it to be able to be prepared and to keep pace with her peers, those born and raised in the United States. In doing so, Graciela also established respect toward her professors. She further demonstrated emotional self-control by using a positive outlook thus creating an optimistic relationship with her professors. Graciela stated:

> I really believed that they were professors that were, that I think they helped me out because I showed respect. I show that I care, and I wanted to perform well for them. So, I say, I made it to class. I read the material. I read a little more. I feel like I needed to be

double prepared than the regular classmates because I have two factors against me. One, the language and the second one was my age.

Becky reported a third significant challenge as she felt she was compelled to represent all people of color at her college; her acquisition of English language skills was also daunting and problematic at times. She stated:

Getting the last six credits at [University], I was the only person of color in one of my two classes that I had to take. I was the only one. Teachers would ask me things; a professor would ask me things to represent all the people of color. You know, I would represent the Native Americans, the blacks, the Asians and … everything in between because I was the only person of color. Any questions regarding feelings of people of color, that was me … [t]hat was being in the mainstream. That was the hardest part.

Nicole was discouraged by not having the opportunity to present her final project in her native language as she felt that it was appropriate due to the particular audience.

When I got my principal's license, I was trying to do my panel, my presentation, in Spanish because I work for a bilingual program, but that was for the [University] … I asked my professor if I can do my presentation, my panel, in Spanish. So, she said she was going to consult and then let me know. Because I knew that we had Spanish speaking principals and I said I can present to them. So, then a couple of months later she came back and said, "No, the University is pretty set. The main language has to be English and you can't present in Spanish." So that was a little bit like, hmm. It didn't really make sense to me because I was going to present to Latino principals or Spanish speaking principals. I guess that was one of the problems that I had.

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In spite of these challenges and barriers to succeed in college, these Latinas were able to solicit extra support from professors in order to have supplementary mentoring. During class lectures, Sonia felt she did not understand the entirety of the content from the professor. However, her professor was dedicated and showed empathy toward Sonia to aid in her success. Sonia's professor invested more time outside the classroom to provide Sonia extra support. She expressed that her professor would go out of his way and spend more time assisting her with understanding the lecture by repeating the entire session.

By seeking assistance from her professor, Sonia identified with the EI domain of self-management due to her ability to be self-aware and maintain a positive outlook. Sonia's ability to be proactive in seeking extra help and assistance from her professor also showed her self-awareness in that she understood the complexities of the organization (her professor) and how to navigate it. Sonia was also self-aware in that she was willing to reveal her needs and difficulties to be successful.

Graciela noted how her mentor, who she greatly admired, helped her to overcome the challenges of being a Latina in college.

Yeah, absolutely … I have [my mentor] talking to me being a woman, being a Latina. My professors, there were a handful of them, and for example [name of professor], she was a tough woman that taught me how, okay, you must be the best version of yourself when you are in the Spanish classes because you are the native speaker. You have a double responsibility. So, even that made me realize, okay, I have to become proficient even in my own language. This was a non-native … person [professor] telling me that. That was an eye-opener, but it was my admiration towards a woman because she was a

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walking encyclopedia. It was like, oh, dear Lord, she's right, I can't drop the ball that

way.

By having admiration for her professor, Graciela identified with the EI domains of relational

management involving having and receiving influence, coaching, and mentoring, and utilizing

teamwork by collaborating closely with her professor. Although they encountered language

barriers, the participants related that access to mentoring in college was beneficial to their

ultimate success in college. Most participants discussed having professors as mentors and they

stated those mentors were fundamental to their success in college. By utilizing EI aspects of

adaptability, self-awareness, and maintaining a positive outlook, these women were assured of

having a productive and valuable college experience.

Nicole used the EI factor of seeking coaching and mentoring as well as having influence

by being the sole Latina in her college program. Nicole said:

I think, at that time, I got a lot of support from my professors. Because I think at that

time I was going to [name of school], so they didn't see a lot of Latinas going through

their programs. So, I think they really wanted me to succeed. So yeah, I really had good

mentors in college.

Access to mentoring in college to overcome English language barriers was mainly related to the

ability of the participants' professors to take the extra time to aid in the success of the Latinas.

For Nicole, it was evident that her college administrators were heavily invested in her success.

Throughout their college studies, all participants expressed varying degrees of aspects of

emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness. Life experiences tend to foster self-awareness in

many individuals. This quality of self-awareness is about being mindful of one's inward self,

triggering abilities to self-regulate and self-develop (Richmer, 2015).

Self-regulation is connected to the factor of self-management. Participants who utilized

self-management during their college years were able to oversee their feelings. Despite times of

emotional pain, participants using self-management were able to think about events from several

different perspectives. Such a person is skilled at regulating their emotions to make well-

balanced decisions. For example, Graciela stated: "I'm not a native speaker of English, so I

wanted to prove to them that just because I speak with [an] accent that didn't mean, that doesn't

mean that I think with [an] accent. That I was brighter." In thinking the way she did, Graciela

was following the model of EI. She kept her emotions in check as she persisted in being

motivated to be successful in college. Her social awareness required not only empathy but also

organizational awareness. In being challenged within their college experiences, these

participants expressed their emotional development in a variety of ways. Indeed, the factor of

English language proficiency has been attributed to the college achievement gap for Latinas

(Flores, 2007; Villalba, Akos, Keeter, & Ames, 2007).

Within this study, however, most of the participants considered language challenges to be

within their control as they actively sought mentoring and support from college staff as well as

dedicated more time for their studies in order to achieve success. In other words, as long as they

studied harder and put in extra effort, these women were able to overcome the language

challenge in college by use of EI factors of self-management and self-regulation (Kanno &

Vargese, 2010).

Theme Two

Latina immigrants are able to adapt to both family expectations or discouragement related to a college education. For half of the participants, graduating from college was a parental expectation. However, for the other half, graduating from college was either discouraged or simply not important. Sonia and Nicole indicated that completing a college education was a parental expectation, as Sonia stated: "We didn't question. When you finished high school, you were going to college." That decision to go to college was already made for her. Nicole further asserted:

So, for my parents it was just very important for me to go to school and graduate … it was kind of an expectation that I needed to go to college and graduate from college. So, like I said, it was just an expectation. It wasn't something that I needed to think about.

Graciela and Becky indicated that going to college was not an expectation of their parents and that their parents were not invested in their education. Graciela stated: "I was not taught, I didn't have the parents sitting with me and doing homework and reading bedtime stories. So, school was not important." Becky stated:

My mother would believe that women were made for home and education wasn't that important so if you were not that ugly you will find a husband. That was my father and he would ask me, when I was in college, he would ask me, "Why do you go to school? I mean, you're going to find a husband, you're not that ugly."

Thus, the parental expectations differed substantially for the participants in this study. For Sonia and Nicole, the expectation was that they would attend and graduate from college, no questions asked. On the other hand, Graciela and Becky were actually discouraged from furthering their

education. However, Graciela and Becky persisted and were successful in spite of parental discouragement.

Within theme two, the participants conveyed the significance of family influence in their education. Sonia declared:

> My mom was like, "I can't help you with fractions, but you go ahead and try it again. I believe you can do it. You can do it." I couldn't explain it. And my dad couldn't understand it. He knows it, he just doesn't know how to explain it to you. So, to us it was more like moral support than actual physical help. But it was just the idea that, "hey, yes, you can do it."

Graciela stated, "So from the ages of 12 through college years, I always saw my mom doing homework and studying, and so I realized how important an education was. So, that's why it is important to me." For Graciela, as she grew older (age 12 and up), her mother's attitude had changed toward valuing education for both herself and her daughter, influencing Graciela to advance her education.

Nicole noted that when she started her career, she was very influenced by her mother's wishes and not her own interests.

> But also, when I lived in Mexico, I always wanted to be a teacher. But in Mexico, being a teacher is not something very … I don't know, it was better to do something else than being a teacher. I have aunts are teachers, I have cousins are teachers, but they're not, "Oh, this is a great career." Right? So, my mom was like, "Well, maybe you need to do something different. Not really be a teacher." So, I did, I went into business. And so

that was kind of the reason I did business, but in the back of my mind I always wanted to

be a teacher, but I just was like, "Well, no. I'm not going to do it."

Becky was influenced by her older siblings who were professionals in the field of education.

My brothers and sisters were older than me. They were already professionals when I was

a little child, some of them were already teachers. Somehow, they influenced education

in my family. Three of my older siblings were educators and others were principals and

so that was a way for me to see how successful they were and how they come out of a

struggling community to be better people serving students and families.

It was clear that Sonia was also influenced by her older siblings who attended college in

the United States and gave her advice on how to succeed in college. That advice included:

become immersed into the English language to be able to learn it, attend a small community

college to be able to receive extra support outside the classroom from professors, and work

harder than the American students. Sonia reflected on her siblings' advice in this way:

Don't go directly to the big university. You go to a small community college, get

involved in that campus life and that situation first and then go to the big college. So,

going to a community college, they thought if I went to the university, there'll be all these

Latinos and all these people who spoke Spanish so I wouldn't really get into the English

… I was having to study so much. Now what helped was … professors at the

community college had more time … I had twice as much information to learn from

them, so I felt that I made it, but boy, I'm glad I was at community college and not the big

university. Like my brother said, they just felt lost … My brothers were always saying

that you need to really try to stay with people who speak English and not get all together

with a Latin group because then you end up not practicing your English and learning it well.

Within the literature reviewed for this study, Espinoza (2015) spoke to the traditional role of Latinas being characterized as "home bodies," taking care of the household and family and, therefore, not in need of education. This can particularly be seen in Graciela's case. In contrast, some studies have shown Latinos have a long history of valuing education (Quiñones & Marquez-Kiyama, 2014). Certain parents of Latinos believe the role of schools in their children's lives is significant and they value meaningful education for their children (Martinez, Cortez, & Saenz, 2013). Sonia's, Nicole's, and to some extent, Becky's experiences reflect this value.

This theme of Latina immigrants being influenced by both family support and aspirations included an encouragement to persevere, role modeling, and reaching to higher success. In addition, most of the participants were inspired either by their parents or siblings. As they moved into college, many Latinas took on a responsibility that would help their younger siblings by modeling their pursuit of higher education success (Sy & Romero, 2008). The Latinas of this study, having support from their families, developed a positive outlook, a significant factor of EI. This family support worked in favor for these young women in their ability to pursue their college education and assisted in enabling the Latina immigrants to succeed in college.

Theme Three

Religious faith provides Latina immigrants with the strength to persist in their professional journeys. This theme of the impact of religious faith was observed as significant and meaningful to all participants. Graciela stated, "I know that there is a God. I know that

there is a force out there that is in charge, is in control that is constantly supervising you. It's keeping an eye on you." Becky said, "I would say, believe in a higher power. Believe in God, yeah. Because things don't happen by themselves, and so definitely."

When asked "How do Latina leaders in K-12 education achieve success and what role does emotional intelligence (EI) play in their success?," Sonia aligned her religious faith with the EI domains of empathy, emotional self-awareness, and adaptability.

> I think faith has given me … stamina and understanding and empathy for my students
> and what they [are going] through, but I found out that no matter what faith or what
> beliefs the students have or the parents have it's more about the value and education …
> But I don't make it as part of my classroom.

Likewise, Becky answered the interview question in a positive way. When asked directly: "Does faith has something to do with your success?" Becky spoke about her religious faith in this way: "It [faith] centers me, and definitely being centered helps me do this [K-12 administration] successfully." By using the language of being "centered," based on her religious faith, Becky identified with the EI domain of self-management incorporating her emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, and having a positive outlook. It has been noted that religious individuals are able to demonstrate high emotional skills (Łowicki & Zajenkowski, 2017).

Nicole was asked the question: "Does faith have something to do with your success?" Nicole replied, "Completely, I think. Yeah, I think so. I mean I feel like that's a big part of me, and one of my values too from my family." In response to the same question, Sonia replied:

Personally, it does. It does help me get through the day. It has helped me when I've had

a horrific classroom set of students. When I haven't felt like I didn't really have the

energy to keep going. It has helped me to figure out that at least I can go and give my

kids love. If I felt like, okay, I'm not getting to them at all. I'm not getting them to learn

anything. I'm not getting them to follow in the directions, I just go and just give them

love and see what I can … At least I try to reach them through loving them.

Thus, the participants felt their faith in God had a correlation to their success in their careers in

K-12 systems.

The participants partially attributed their ability to succeed and persevere in their careers

through their practice of religious beliefs. Certain Latina families are influenced by strong

religious faith (Avila, 2018). Such religious spirituality is formed from a variety of origins,

including, family, community, gender, and culture. Furthermore, literature has noted that women

are more inclined to a greater religious involvement than men (Feltey & Poloma, 1991). This

may also result in a meaningful relationship for the participants of this study between EI and

religion. It has been noted that religious individuals show higher emotional skills such as

emotional self-awareness (Łowicki & Zajenkowski, 2017). All these factors affected the

participants of this study as they attributed their religious faith to their ability to succeed.

Theme Four

Latina immigrants are challenged during their professional experiences, including dealing

with racism, but also are able to obtain inspirational mentoring from K-12 school leadership.

The participants conveyed that the challenges related to culture within leadership were

noteworthy and included such discussions regarding language barriers and cultural equity. The

participants also indicated that they were discouraged from working in a mainstream school, feeling they were being steered toward language immersion, bilingual schools, or schools with higher Hispanic populations. Despite this, these women were able to discover and use various means and approaches toward their eventual successes.

Challenges. On the topic of the challenges Latina immigrants face, the participants mentioned a variety of topics. Sonia stated, "Well, I think that people who are Latinas, they have more barriers with language and more expectations that people expect them to have very good English." Becky stressed the importance of having knowledge of cultural equalities and disparities that exist within the United States in order to become a successful school leader. She added, "Train yourself on equity, because as a Mexican, I never was trained in equity … I become aware of racism and anti-racism when I came here, and for that, we have to be aware and well trained …" Nicole declared:

> My barriers [are] maybe, as a Latina, they just see me as somebody can work in one kind of program and not everywhere, right? So, I think my principal, the principal that I have right now, he's been very supportive and just advocating and telling the superintendent, "She's ready, she's ready to be an assistant principal." And I think before, like I said, they were just kind of like, "Okay, she's going to be an assistant principal on a bilingual program or an immersion program." And I think finally they got it, well, it doesn't have to be that. And so, I will be starting as an assistant principal in a couple of weeks and it is going to be in a school that is not a bilingual program or an immersion program. So, I think that was pretty successful, the way that the principal has been advocating for me.

Graciela felt there was bias in her prior job application in a school in which she was not

hired:

> I had really negative experiences with [school district], in particular with [school district]
>
> because I remember applying for the job twice there and I have not been given an email
>
> saying, "Thank you for applying. We filled the position." So, maybe that is the practice,
>
> the common practice, but I feel like I have not given the opportunity to advance with
>
> them.

Furthermore, Becky believed that bias within higher leadership is stalling her career

advancement in the district where she has been assistant principal for many years.

> My name had been thrown twice into these two schools that needed a principal, and
>
> because of the higher power belief, I didn't get it. Didn't have an even chance to have my
>
> say. So yeah … in my current position, I feel like I can't advance because of other
>
> people's biases.

Thus, Becky has not actually reached the success she desired and is still struggling to overcome

barriers and challenges.

> Another participant, Nicole, responded to the interview question: Did you experience any

bias in your leadership position based on gender, ethnicity, or some other factor which has

affected your career advancement or success?

> I think, I mean, yeah. I will say yes. I can't really prove that, but have I felt that. Yes.
>
> But I don't … I'm just making assumptions is maybe that's what happens, right? But I
>
> don't know for sure. But yes, I think that will be the case.

Within this theme, Latina immigrants were challenged during their professional careers but also had the ability to obtain mentoring from K-12 school leadership.

Most participants experienced challenges related to their Latina culture including racism and thoughtless expectations from others based on their race (Hernandez & Murakami, 2016). A majority of the Latina immigrants faced bias from the K-12 organization in which they were working. These organizations lacked the EI factor of social awareness, including deficiency of empathy and organizational awareness, negatively impacting the career progressions of these women. The Latina immigrants have experienced bias in their daily leadership practices within the K-12 educational setting. Racism and bias prevented most of the participants from progressing within their leadership roles. Latina immigrants have faced challenges to leadership success including discrimination, pre-judgment, and narrow-mindedness. Although leadership bias was evident in the process toward advancement to leadership roles within the K-12 school systems, these participants were able to persist and overcome such discrimination.

If this appears as a contradiction, the participants and I have become more persistent rather than becoming discouraged. There is an inner strength which the participants draw on when they are faced with unreasonable and discriminatory attitudes from others. Graciela stated, "I wanted to prove to them that just because I speak with accent that didn't mean, that doesn't mean that I think with accent." Knowing who I am, I know I am able to succeed and persist; this holds true for the participants of this study as well.

Successes. There were factors that emerged for these participants which aided in their leadership success. One of those aspects was their successes being related to culture. All participants conveyed this factor of their cultural background as having a positive effect on their

eventual success. For example, Sonia stated that just being a Latina gave her "perspective on different things … I think it's also translating my [cultural] expectations to my students." Likewise, Graciela stated:

> I do believe as a Latino we have … at the core of our culture … is family [which is] is everything, and I always wanted to create, and I think I was achieving that with my home base. I had what is called a home base, one group of 23 kids, and I was their advisor. I always had 100% attendance during parent-teacher conferences because I made sure that I emphasized to them the importance of parents to be involved in their kids' education.

This participant was able to align her cultural background with her approach toward her students and their families leading to greater success.

Becky was able to express her positive outlook and the effect of her empathy toward others, as she stated: "It's just an amazing way that we have come to understand each other and each other's needs … and ways to communicate …" as she overcame cultural barriers in order to be successful. Nicole's experience was expressed by her specific cultural background which allowed her to be an inspirational leader.

> I feel like, in my school, I'm a role model for our Latino students. And they look up to me for a lot of different things. They feel comfortable talking to me. They feel really comfortable with just coming to my office and talk about what's happening with their problems. I think it's just different than somebody else that they don't feel that connection. So yeah, I think just looking at me as a role model or somebody that, "I can do it too. Right?" I'm an immigrant and we can do it.

As she progressed through her career, Nicole reflected on her early experiences with mentoring and guidance which helped her to become an empathetic and inspirational leader.

Another positive component within leadership was that of mentoring as vital for the Latina immigrants' successes. All participants indicated that having mentors was a key factor to their success, notably during the early years of their careers. Sonia stated, "the first three years were hard. It was a lot of learning experience, and I'm glad I had those mentors that would come in and help me." Graciela shared that in her current school leadership role, she is receiving effective and beneficial support from her mentor and the school leadership. Graciela stated, "My mentor right now she's working, facilitating a lot of things. We're having communications back and forth. My boss also seems to be very supportive." Becky conveyed the significance of having mentors in her early career as an assistant principal:

> Well, it was our supervisor [who] was our mentor. She was very experienced … I already talked about this, that … So, she's an associate superintendent, and she was a teacher, a principal, and then became associate superintendent. So, she knew all about the struggles that we were going through. So, she really was more like a mentor. Yeah. And she definitely helped us to overcome challenges. So yeah, I would say that's the best thing. And that was in the early five years ago.

Nicole viewed the valuable encouragement and inspirational support as a form of mentoring which she received from the principal of the school where she worked. This participant noted that her principal had confidence that she could and should advance her career.

So, I feel like, for example, this mentor that helped me out a lot. My principal, at that

time when I was a teacher assistant, just kind of seeing in me somebody who they can be

more than just a teacher assistant was very heartful.

Therefore, factors of differences in culture causing bias did not impede the participants' ability to

succeed.

Having access to mentoring was conveyed as being crucial to the Latina immigrants'

success, both in their early careers and at the present time. Teachers and administrators who

participated in this study felt inspired and encouraged by their access to both coaching and

mentoring. Within the framework of EI, the factor of relational management includes coaching

and mentoring (Goleman, 1998). The participants expressed early support and guidance began

within their families and later from their peers, all who acted as coaches in aiding the

participants' successes. Mentoring and coaching were significant factors for the Latina

immigrants in this study (Bonilla-Rodriguez, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2018).

Interpretation of the Findings

Within this study, I used a conceptual framework emotional intelligence (EI), a

characteristic held by certain individuals who have a capacity to recognize not only their own

emotional state, but also those of others (Debusk & Austin, 2011). Keskin et al. (2016) informed

that EI provides individuals, including the Latina immigrants of this study, with multiple abilities

to act in response to emotional, social, and environmental situations. Northouse (2019)

explained EI quite clearly as an individual's ability to perceive and express emotion, to use

emotions to aid in critical thinking, to understand and influence with emotions, and to effectively

manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others. To address the purpose of this

study, I utilized the concept of EI to explore the descriptions of the Latina participants as they faced challenges and eventual successes in their academic and professional careers.

Theme one stated that Latina immigrants are challenged in their college experiences but are able to obtain empathy and support in order to succeed. Research participants sought out and used mentoring in college to aid in overcoming their lack of English language proficiency. During their college years, all participants conveyed a variety of EI skills which were used by both themselves and their professors. Their professors were willing to spend extra time needed to aid these women in being successful, using their own EI factors of social awareness and relationship management. The participants were able to use social awareness and organizational awareness as well. In being challenged within their college experiences, these participants expressed their emotional development in a variety of ways. Most of the participants considered themselves able to manage their English language challenges. However, they did feel they needed extra time to complete assignments, as becoming adept in the English language was a significant barrier. Language challenges in college were considerable.

Theme two identified that Latina immigrants are influenced by both family support and aspirations. The participants expressed the value of family support toward their ambitions to attend college, aligning with Ryan et al.'s 2010 study. Within the literature reviewed for this study, a variety of researchers posited Latinas coming from families with traditional woman roles wherein mothers teach their daughters to take care of the family, and nothing more. In contrast, the literature has also shown Latinos appreciating and respecting education (Quiñones & Marquez-Kiyama, 2014). Certain parents of Latinos believe the role of education for their children is vital (Martinez et al., 2013). This theme of some Latina immigrants being

encouraged to aspire to education as well as others being discouraged from such aspirations by their families is a certain contradiction. However, the participants of this study were able to persevere, seek out role models, and reach higher success as all of them were motivated either by their parents or siblings.

Moreover, using facets of EI, such as self-management, aided these women in their ability to succeed in college. This theme of Latina immigrants being influenced by both family support and aspirations included an encouragement to persevere, role modeling, and reaching to higher success. Using aspects of EI, such as having a positive outlook, worked in favor for these young women in their ability to pursue their education. In addition, the majority of the participants were inspired either by their parents or siblings. These factors assisted in enabling the Latina immigrants to succeed in college.

Theme three asserted that religious faith provides Latina immigrants with the strength to persist in their professional journeys. Latina participants expressed the impact of religious faith as important to their success. They recognized that their ability to do well in their careers came about based on their religious faith. It has been posited that a significant factor within certain Latina immigrants' families is the influence of a strong religious faith (Campesino & Schwartz, 2006). In addition, the participants' attribution of religious faith and success aligns with a study positing that women are more motivated than men to partake in religious activity (Feltey & Poloma, 1991). Moreover, researchers Łowicki and Zajenkowski (2017) stated their study to be the first empirical confirmation of a significant and positive relationship between EI and religious faith.

Theme four stated that Latina immigrants are challenged during their professional experiences, including racism, but also are able to obtain inspirational mentoring from leadership. Most participants noted challenges related to cultural differences as well as outright bias toward them. The research participants articulated discussion regarding language barriers and cultural equity within the K-12 administrators' realm. This current study aligns with another study within the literature wherein some participants experienced traditional cultural values as strengths while others viewed them as challenges (Palacio, 2013).

In addition, leadership bias was expressed by most of the participants. These professional women faced bias and narrow-mindedness in their daily jobs as academic leaders. Moreover, this factor of leadership bias was articulated most often during discussion of barriers to advancement to leadership roles within the K-12 school systems. However, all research participants also noted the cultural advantages and experienced successes related to their unique culture within K-12 leadership. Their cultural background was often observed as having a positive effect on their ultimate success, including their ability to act as role models within a school with a vast diversity of ethnicities.

The research participants discussed the constructive factor of leadership mentoring, similar to what they experienced while in college. All participants indicated having mentors was a key factor to their success, notably during the early years of their careers. Mentors provided the research participants the chance to experience the factor of EI relationship management from mentors who influenced and guided their success. Teachers and administrators who participated in this study felt inspired and encouraged by their access to both coaching and mentoring.

Chapter Four Summary

Data analysis for this qualitative case study revealed patterns and themes derived from open-ended semi-structured questions asked of all participants in the study (Percy et al., 2015). Those patterns and themes are broadly linked to the concept of emotional intelligence (EI). The following are brief synopses of each theme discovered via this study.

The first theme, Latina immigrants are challenged in their college experiences but are able to obtain empathy and support in order to succeed, is comprised of two clustered patterns, language challenges in college and mentoring in college. Both patterns emerged as prevalent and supportive descriptions of the participants' experiences as non-native English speakers navigating the realms of college and K-12 careers.

The second theme, Latina immigrants are able to adapt to both family expectations or discouragement related to college education, emerged from two clustered patterns, parental expectations and family influence in education, both of which surfaced as prevailing concepts within the narratives of the participants. These patterns supported theme two's somewhat conflicting experiences of the participants related to family input into their education and careers.

The third theme, religious faith provides Latina immigrants with the strength to persist in their professional journeys, was derived from one pattern, the impact of religious faith. This, once again, was a predominant factor for the participants' experiences of success and eventual attainment of their educational and professional goals.

Finally, the fourth theme, Latina immigrants are challenged during their professional experiences, including experiencing racism, but also can obtain inspirational mentoring from K-12 school leadership, was upheld by four clustered patterns including, challenges related to

culture within leadership, leadership bias, successes related to culture within leadership, and leadership mentoring. These clustered patterns emerged as prevalent descriptions of the participants.

Emotional intelligence was used as the framework with which this research study obtained answers to the research questions and addressed the purpose of the study. Emotional intelligence includes the characteristics of empathy, organizational awareness, and relational management skills, which involve possessing influence, coaching, and mentoring abilities, conflict management skills, team-building, and inspirational leadership (Goleman, 1988; Gribble et al., 2017). This study explored four Latina immigrants' perceptions of their personal use of emotional intelligence (EI) in concert with their understanding of the impact such beliefs had on their approaches to successfully achieving a college degree and reaching K-12 leadership positions. Within this study, I used EI as a framework for exploring the participants' experiences of overcoming barriers and challenges both in college and in the workplace, for developing effective leadership skills, and for becoming effective leaders.

The personal accounts of the four Latina immigrants, as they described their challenges and successes attending college and initiating their careers in K-12 school systems, used a variety of EI factors. By highlighting the voices of this group of Latina immigrants, a better understanding arose regarding the perceptions and the actions they took as they navigated college and careers as non-native English speakers. Coming up in Chapter Five, I examine and interpret the results, and the limitations of the study will be discussed together with the study's implications.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter was a discussion of the results of this research regarding the collection and analysis of data and the findings of the study. Chapter Five examines and interprets those findings. The focus of this chapter is to analyze the results in relation to the research questions and purpose of the study. Furthermore, Chapter Five presents a summary and discussion of the findings, the need for the study, and the significance of the study. Additionally, Chapter Five connects the findings of this study with the literature reviewed and the methodology used. An examination of this study's findings and any conclusions based on the results is also included. Finally, I include reflections of the study's limitations, implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Need and Significance of the Study

Latina immigrants have not realized sufficient representation in K-12 leadership positions in many school districts across the United States (Lindsay et al., 2017). K-12 schools in areas of diverse populations are falling short in adding a much-needed perspective of Latino leadership in addressing critical educational gaps. The Latino population is rising, and enrollment of Latino students is increasing as a result; however, the numbers of Hispanic leaders in education is not reflective of this change in the U.S. demographics (Vespa et al., 2018). The Education Secretary, John B. King, Jr., speaking at Howard University in March 2016 stated:

> Without question, when the majority of students in public schools are students of color and only 18 percent of our teachers are teachers of color, we have an urgent need to act. We've got to understand that all students benefit from teacher diversity. We have strong evidence that students of color benefit from having teachers and leaders who look like

them as role models and also benefit from the classroom dynamics that diversity creates. But it is also important for our white students to see teachers of color in leadership roles in their classrooms and communities. The question for the nation is how do we address this quickly and thoughtfully?

This study contributes to existing knowledge and K-12 leadership practice by exploring the challenges Latina immigrants have faced and/or overcome during their career advancements. A recent survey within several Hispanic communities in the United States revealed that 75% of the participants agreed on the need for Hispanic national leaders to advance the concerns of Hispanic societies (Lopez, 2013). Therefore, new knowledge offers Latina immigrants a better understating on how to overcome challenges to become K-12 leaders. In addition, this study may influence Latina immigrants to seek leadership positions, helping to increase Latina representation in the K-12 system to advance the concerns of the Hispanic community within the state of Minnesota.

With the increase in Latino students in the classrooms, Latino leadership perspectives can enhance knowledge in effort to solve complex educational issues related to this specific population of students, such as the achievement gap which exists between Latino students and White students. According to Cheng, Sanchez-Burks, and Lee (2008), diversity enhances creativity. Since Latinos have a distinct cultural knowledge, this creativity and unique knowledge can benefit the increasing Latino student population. Therefore, it is vital to grow and strengthen Latina immigrants' perspectives in the K-12 systems in the state of Minnesota.

Literature Reviewed

Throughout the research process, I performed frequent and continual reviews of the literature on the topic under study, providing a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. I repeated searches for reviews of the literature to potentially discover recent studies related to the purpose of this study and to gain possible new insights from authors already cited during the literature review. I accessed the same databases as in the original literature review. The primary new topics searched were *immigration, Latinas as immigrants, English as a second language, faith or religion as a support*, and *Latinas' being urged to work in Spanish immersion and/or bi-lingual schools.*

These new literature searches returned information which was not included prior to the research taking place. Torres-Capeles (2012) conducted a basic qualitative study using semi-structured interviews, similar to this current study, as they explored the experiences of seven Latina participants, who worked promoting the professional careers of Latinas. The study used Latina critical race theory and feminist perspectives to focus on a variety of influences affecting the participants' experiences in college, careers, and leadership roles, in addition to exploring the impact of gender, ethnicity, and culture affecting their experiences within dominant White cultural settings. The results of this study suggested that preconceived stereotypes and marginalization negatively impacted immigrants and first- and second-generation Latinas' abilities to experience college as an inclusive environment. Cultural identity, family values, and challenges with English language ability affected these women's pursuits of higher education, career advancement, and achievement of leadership roles, similar to the findings of this current study.

Bayona (2019) explored the factor of resilience within a study about Latinas' ability to pursue higher education. This author noted that the cultural divide between the dominant (White) society and that of the Latina communities has a considerable influence when the Latinas are ready to choose a college. Despite being the largest minority group in the United States, this study's findings indicated a small percentage of Latinas advanced their education beyond secondary-school (Bayona, 2019). Many Latinas are confronted with unexpected challenges that test their resilience, as noted in this current study. To overcome those challenges, the Latinas in Bayona's (2019) study noted that "family, disposition, and self-adequacy all represented factors that supported their motivation to persevere in higher education" (p. 58). These themes echo those of the current study.

Within this current study, one of the positive influences for Latina immigrants seeking to be successful in college and in their careers included family support for their education; Latina immigrants expressed that their family values motivated them to overcome any obstacles they encountered during their journeys through college and beyond (Bayona, 2019; Martinez, Cortez, & Saenz, 2013; Quiñones & Marquez-Kiyama, 2014). Seeking mentors was a crucial factor in the Latina immigrants' eventual successes (Bonilla-Rodriguez, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2018). Mentoring began within the Latina immigrants' families, as parents, siblings, and others acted as tutors in directing the Latina youngsters toward an understanding of the process of mentoring. This process of mentoring is a two-way experience (Knoche & Zamboanga, 2006), requiring compassion toward one another, an essential element of EI. In their progression on the way to achieving college degrees and advancing to K-12 leadership roles, Latina immigrants continued

to not only seek, but to also provide, mentoring as a means of using the emotional intelligence they had acquired on their paths to success.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of this study will demonstrate how this study contributes to the literature, specifically issues of bias toward Latina immigrants within higher education and the K-12 educational systems. The purpose of this section is to sum up the overall comprehension and knowledge gained through this current study. The results are discussed noting the gap in the literature and this study's significance in closing that gap as it addresses the research questions and the purpose of the study.

Conclusions Based on the Findings

Chapter Four demonstrated a data-driven review of the study's findings. This section shifts the emphasis to the findings and how they fit within the theoretical framework and prior and newly-researched literature. The outcomes of the study are discussed relating to how they contribute to the literature and to the broader realm of Latina immigrants in K-12 educational systems.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study allowed for the focus to be more specific and precise. Inclusion criteria stated participants needed to be current K-12 leaders, women, Latina, and working in a Minnesota school district. Exclusion criteria were men, working outside of Minnesota, being a non-Latina, and /or working in the higher-education or non-education fields. Nonetheless, the limiting criteria provided benefit to the study as it allowed for the study to be more efficient, effective, and successful.

Limitations

The findings of this study provided edifying information that contributed to answering the research questions. However, there were various limitations that may have affected the results of this research. Limitations of this study include having a small sample size. In addition, using criteria to include a more diverse age range and qualifying years of experience could add to the rigor of a study.

Another limitation was that all four participants were immigrants who faced many obstacles including their cultural identity, family values, and challenges with the English language. A broader sample may have generated more in-depth responses from non-immigrant Latinas, potentially garnering additional insights related to Latinas who are not immigrants and English is not their second language. Nonetheless, the current study acquired vital and detailed responses from the four participants via the case study's method of using open-ended interview questions. Within this study, data saturation occurred despite the small sample size, and I was reasonably assured that further data collection would not yield any unique data results (Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, & Kingstone, 2018).

Furthermore, within this study, the sample included only women. If the study included men who were working in the K-12 systems, it may have garnered distinct and unique perspectives. A mixed sample of both men and women would have potentially produced a greater contribution regarding the experiences of the Latina and Latino leaders in the K-12 systems.

This study sample included only Latina immigrants working within cities in the state of Minnesota. If the study was expanded to rural areas, or cities in other states (Chicago, for

example), the findings may have been more diverse or uncommon. In that way, the study may have been more transferable to other localities within the United States.

Although these factors are described as limitations, they were, in fact, constructive to the execution of this study. These elements permitted the focus of the study to be straightforward, giving me rich and detailed data of the group of Latina immigrants leaders in the K-12 educational systems. This study concentrated on acquiring understanding as to how this specific group achieved success in the state of Minnesota, fulfilling the purpose of the study to explore the phenomenon of Latina immigrants in K-12 leadership positions.

Implications for Practice

The patterns and themes of this study are linked to the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) and to the experiences of Latina immigrants seeking success in K-12 school systems. This study, by highlighting the voices of Latina immigrant leaders working in the K-12 Minnesota school systems, will assist all K-12 stakeholders. Through the participants' descriptions of their experiences of overcoming a variety of challenges in order to become successful, these Latina immigrants have provided awareness for existing K-12 administrators of inequities within their schools' policies and practices. The following are recommendations within the spheres of higher education, hiring, and training for K-12 faculty and staff.

Recommendations for Higher Education

This study should provide universities an awareness that will assist Latina immigrants in succeeding in their classrooms. Participants' descriptions of their college experiences will contribute to new insight for professors as they instruct all students coming from diverse backgrounds. This research should afford university professors with the pertinent information

that will assist in improved teaching and learning in overcoming academic barriers, including the students being non-native English speakers, which the participants of this study faced during their college years. Furthermore, higher education administrators will be better equipped when providing diverse cultural training for professors and university staff to be able to make policy decisions with regard to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic populations.

Hiring Recommendations

K-12 administrators may begin to re-think their policies and practices regarding the significant benefits of having a diverse staff within the K-12 environments. By using inclusive practices in hiring and promoting a diverse K-12 staff, school systems will progress toward alignment with their diverse student populations. When K-12 school administrators balance their staff's diversity with that of their students, those administrators are confronting the existence of systemic racism toward Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as other ethnic minorities. The information from this study's participants revealed institutional racism exists within higher education and the environments of K-12 faculty and staff. The data from this study furthermore provided guiding solutions that can be utilized by stakeholders within the K-12 educational field.

By using initiative and resourcefulness, the Latina immigrants within this study present K-12 human resource departments ways to reconsider what it means to be Latina, or another minority, navigating racial discrimination in K-12 educational settings. By gaining knowledge of Latina immigrants' experience, human resources within the school systems will be better equipped to advocate for change by focusing on providing opportunities for everyone to progress in their professional careers. One K-12 human resource strategy might be to include an *equity*

representative in each hiring committee to ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity for the job. Leaders must embrace inclusiveness and instill a breadth of awareness and support of diversity, equity, and understanding in the workplace.

Recommendations for Training

One recommendation for practice would be to address both minority and dominant leadership biases through providing training opportunities to familiarize all staff, students, and leaders with the concept of cultural competence. Training opportunities, such as the use of cultural competence, provides precise and proactive methods by which individuals and organizations respond with respect and effectiveness to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnicities, religions, and any other diversity factors (Dauvrin & Lorant, 2015; Hammer, 2011; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2016). Cultural competence processes and methods are performed in a manner which encourages and values the distinction of the individuals and their communities.

The Latina immigrants within this study acted as their own change agents by using and accepting positive EI and utilizing their resilience as they challenged existing discriminatory status quos during their careers. The themes of family support and religious faith emerged as overarching ones for the four participants, who used these as strategies fostering their initiative and resourcefulness within their workplaces. Through this current study, the experiences of the participants provide direction for cultural advocacy within the K-12 workplace.

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Recommendations for Future Research

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This research demonstrated the significance of the experiences of Latina immigrant leaders in K-12 systems and their knowledge as it pertains to achieving success. The data from

the four participants provided insight as to what Latina immigrants need to do to advance their careers within K-12 school systems. Future research focusing on Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, or other ethnic minorities, would extend knowledge on the experience of minorities attempting to progress professionally within K-12 educational systems in the United States. In other words, more research broadening the participant base to find Latinas born and raised in the United States would assist in gaining further knowledge around bias and discrimination for Latinas in the system.

While this study focused on participants living and working in urban areas of Minnesota, future research should examine rural areas with large Latino populations. Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, living and working in rural areas may encounter vastly different challenges and/or successes. Perhaps having less access to university-level recruitment and quality programs for professional development, rural K-12 districts may struggle to find and retain Latina role models for the growing demographic of Latino students.

It could be advantageous to explore experiences of Latina immigrants in the same manner as this study; however, to include personnel at district administration levels (for example, superintendents) and gain dual understandings providing a more holistic view of the challenges Latina immigrants, and other minorities, face. Those individuals at the district level might be women or men, might be from the dominant (White) culture or might, in fact, be Latinos themselves. Such variables would impact the experiences of the Latina professionals. Do they succeed or fail under male district-level leadership more often? Do they face more challenges when the culture of the district-level management is mainly from the dominant (White) culture? An exploration of this kind would supply deeper insights into the experiences of Latina career

advancement, as it might reveal types of mentoring support under specific district-level leadership characteristics. This type of study could also be explored from all levels within K-12 school systems, such as the teacher/assistant principal relationship, or assistant principal/principal relationship gaining insight into an all-inclusive representation of the experiences of minorities working within these school systems.

A major finding of this study, that requires further exploration, is the perceived negative relationship between Latinas, both immigrants and non-immigrants, and K-12 institution leaders, educators, and administrators as the Latina strives for success. Future research might include the use of emotional intelligence with regard to similar challenges faced in the realm of higher education and career advancement for Latinas and other minorities. Future studies can aid in the recognition of cultural diversity within higher education as well as use the constructs of emotional intelligence and cultural competence as higher education administrators adapt to potentially unfamiliar cultural contexts. Such studies could provide insight concerning diverse population concerns encouraging inclusion and opportunity with higher education hiring practices and career advancement for all individuals regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion

This exploration into the experiences of Latina immigrants working in K-12 leadership positions generated nine patterns and four relevant themes. The patterns which were the foundations for the emergent themes were: Language challenges in college, mentoring in college, parental expectations, family influence in education, impact of religious faith, challenges related to culture within leadership, successes related to culture within leadership, leadership mentoring,

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and leadership bias. The themes which emerged from the data after similar patterns were clustered were:

1. Latina immigrants are challenged in their college experiences but are able to obtain empathy and support in order to succeed.

2. Latina immigrants are able to adapt to both family expectations or discouragement related to a college education.

3. Religious faith provides Latina immigrants with the strength to persist in their professional journeys.

4. Latina immigrants are challenged during their professional experiences, including racism, but also are able to obtain inspirational mentoring from K-12 school leadership.

By analyzing the experiences and emotional intelligence of Latina K-12 leaders, this study fills a gap in the literature.

I argue that improved integration and support of immigrant and minority college students, particularly those Latinas hoping to achieve K-12 careers, will generate wide-ranging and ethnically diverse K-12 leadership. These leaders will serve as role models for minority students, their communities, and other potential Latina immigrant leaders who have yet to achieve K-12 leadership positions. This will occur only if school districts within K-12 systems implement ethnically inclusive policies to address disparities among staff and leadership.

Particularly noting the Latina immigrants' experiences from this study, we must facilitate a means to decrease challenges for ethnic minorities during their professional K-12 careers. Within existing K-12 hiring practices, ethnic minorities face challenges, such as racism, which

those individuals within the dominant culture do not encounter, creating an imbalance of leadership with K-12 systems. Eliminating such ethnic challenges will not only defeat the systemic K-12 inequities but also will afford all qualified individuals equal opportunities for success.

Ignoring the results of this study will encourage K-12 systems to uphold the status quo of under-representation for the K-12 minority students. The Hispanic population continues to grow in ever-increasing numbers within the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau has projected by the year 2060, Hispanic people will comprise almost 30% of the total U.S. population, with 119 million Hispanic individuals residing in the United States (Colby & Ortman, 2015). Thus, if the findings of this study are not taken into consideration, K-12 school curricula, policies, and leadership will continue to diminish the opportunities for the successes of the minority students.

Therefore, it is imperative that K-12 school systems develop means to integrate more Latina immigrant leaders. Together, with their unique cultural awareness and empathy, Latina leaders can create improved minority student outcomes, such as closing the achievement gap which currently exists between minority and dominant student populations (Stebbins & Comen, 2018). Since Latinos hold a type of distinct cultural knowledge, they can serve as role models for their students, using their creativity, influence, and inspirational leadership to benefit the ever-increasing Latino student population.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions Part I

Education and Family Kindergarten-Higher Ed

1. Describe your early family experiences, and how have they contributed in your academic success.

   - While growing up, what were some influential experiences?

   - Why are these significant to you?

2. As a Latina student, did you receive family support in assisting with your school experiences?

3. Tell me about your experience as a Latina college student.

   - What were some supports?

   - What were some barriers?

4. If you encountered adversity how did you manage it? Were you able to maintain a positive outlook when encountering adversity?

5. Please share any stories that continue to live within you from your college experience as a Latina student.

6. How would you describe leadership development through your educational experience? Do you notice how any of these experiences emerge in your current practice?

7. Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to comment on?

Interview Questions Part II

Professional Experience

1. Tell me about your experience as a Latina [person's job title]. What were some supports to achieving your current role? What were some barriers?

2. When you encounter adversity how do you manage it? Are you able to maintain a positive outlook when encountering adversity?

3. Leaders create culture, and as a current educational leader, how does your "Latina-ness" influence (or not) your organization's culture? Are you able to maintain a sense of organizational awareness, keeping in mind the goals and directions of your organization (such as positive student outcomes)?

4. As an educational leader, what strategies do you bring to your role?

5. Describe any influences, supports, or values you may have received from your family and how have they contributed to your success as an educational leader.

6. What advice would you give a Latina aspiring to your position? And, as a current educational leader, what is something you would like to tell your younger, student self?

7. How does your role as a Latina [job title] affect your ability to balance work/home responsibilities?

8. How do your prior student experiences as a Latina manifest in your leadership practice? If you experienced positive influences or barriers as a Latina student, have they impacted your leadership practice?

9. Did you have a mentor during your schooling, your early career, and/or your current who has aided with your career growth? If yes, did your mentor help you to overcome challenges?

10. Does faith has something to do with your success?

11. Did you reach out to people when you need help/support professionally? How comfortable you feel asking for support?

12. Did you experience any biases in your leadership position (based on gender or ethnicity or some other factor) which may have affected your career advancement or success?

13. Would you have done anything differently over the course of your career progression?

14. Is there anything I did not ask that you would like to comment on?