Mexican-American Female Leaders in Public Education: A Regional Study of the Effect of Parenting Behaviors on Motivation and Leadership Style

Yvette Silva Ramos
Concordia University - Portland

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations

Part of the Education Commons

CU Commons Citation
https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations/81
Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ AND APPROVE THE DISSERTATION OF

Yvette Silva Ramos

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Mark Jimenez, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

David E. Herrington, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Catherine Beck, Ed.D., Content Reader

ACCEPTED BY

Joe Mannion, Ed.D.
Provost, Concordia University–Portland

Sheryl Reinisch, Ed.D.
Dean, College of Education, Concordia University–Portland

Marty A. Bullis, Ph.D.
Director of Doctoral Studies, Concordia University–Portland
Mexican-American Female Leaders in Public Education: A Regional Study of the Effect of Parenting Behaviors on Motivation and Leadership Style

Yvette Silva Ramos
Concordia University–Portland
College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Transformational Leadership

Mark Jimenez, Ed.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee
David E. Herrington, Ph.D., Content Specialist
Catherine Beck, Ed.D., Content Reader

Concordia University–Portland
2017
Abstract

Women in positions of leadership in education are still underrepresented. Although the majority of classroom teachers continue to be women, in leadership, that is not the case. Specifically, the number of Mexican-American women in educational leadership positions lags behind the number of male counterparts. A qualitative case study was carried out to find how parenting style affected Mexican-American women’s leadership style, how Mexican-American heritage affected Mexican-American women’s self-perceived leadership style, and how parental influence affected Mexican-American women’s desire to lead. The study used a demographic data form, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, and one-on-one interviews with Mexican-American women in middle and high school principal and assistant principal positions in two West Texas school districts. The results of the study showed parenting style, especially authoritarian parenting, affected participants’ leadership style; participants’ self-perceived leadership style was influenced by their being Mexican-American and by parental influence; participants’ parents influenced their desire to lead; and Mexican-American women in educational leadership positions in middle and high schools in two West Texas districts espouse Transformational Leadership facets and practice a Transformational Leadership style.

*Keywords: educational leadership; Hispanic women; Mexican-American women; principals; assistant principals; leadership styles; transformational leadership; parental influence; parenting style.*
Dedication

I whole-heartedly dedicate this work to my family. I am who I am because of my family- a strong, dedicated, tenacious Mexican-American educator and leader. Bernie and Maddie- I could not have gotten through the last four years without your support and love. Even on those rough Saturday nights when I did not think I could write another word, you helped me persevere and push myself. Your unconditional love and support, along with your countless hugs and kisses salved all my trials and wounds. I love you both to Pluto and back a googolplexian times!

Mami y Papi, su apoyo, su amor, y su cariño me han dado la fortaleza para seguir mis sueños; soy la mujer que soy porque ustedes me enseñaron a luchar y a trabajar sin limite y sin darme por venzida. Los quiero con todo mi corazón.

I am supremely blessed to have the two best sisters anyone could have the privilege of having. To my sissy Esther, your encouragement and tireless patience throughout my whole dissertation process has been amazing! You challenge me to be the best me that I can be and for that and your enduring love I thank you- I love you! I am blessed to have you as my sissy!

To my sissy Nina, you helped me get through some of the hardest times I have faced. You are a strong woman and an example of unconditional support. For your love and for lending me your strength when my faltered, I am forever in your debt. I love you!

To my brother Gus, your zeal for life and contagious brand of zany humor has helped lighten up some of my most stressful moments. Thank you for always being willing to listen to me and for cracking me up when I needed it. I love you!

Lastly, I dedicate this work to all of the Mexican-American women out there who do not think they can attain a leadership position- I am here to tell you that you CAN! Break through the barriers and fight for that leadership position you want- the struggle and hard work is so
totally worth it in the end! Rise to the challenge and reach your leadership potential, do it for yourself as well as the youth that so desperately need you to serve as a role model.
Acknowledgements

First of all, I need to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for giving me the strength to complete my doctoral program. It is by His grace that I was able to complete my doctoral program while working and raising a family.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee; Dr. Mark Jimenez, thank you for your patience and always constructive feedback; Dr. Catherine Beck, thank you so much for believing in me and for always reminding me that the research I was doing was meaningful and relevant; Dr. David Harrington, thank you for your support and contributions to my work. I know it was not always easy to talk me down from a ledge, but you all provided me with support and belief and for that I am exceptionally grateful.

To my partner in crime and my champion Mark-guero, what would I have done without you to push me and talk me down from my rants and tirades? I am so thankful to have had you to cheer me on and make me laugh always at the right time, always when I needed it most! You are the brightest spot and the biggest blessing that has come out of my doctoral journey. Thank you for everything, you are like a brother to me and have become part of my family!

To my doctoral cohort, thank you all for sharing so openly and trusting me to share in your journey, pray with you during tough times, and celebrate your joys and milestones. This journey is certainly one I will remember always- thank you all for being a part of it!

And a very special and heartfelt thank you to my husband, Bernie and my baby girl, Maddie. You two are the light and love of my life–I am so incredibly grateful to have been blessed with the two of you- thank you for all of your patience and your forgiveness during those times I was not able to participate fully in family time and events.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................................................... ii  
Dedication .............................................................................................................................................................. iii  
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................................... v  
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................................... vi  
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................................................ x  

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1  
  Introduction to the Study .......................................................................................................................... 1  
  Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem ........................................... 2  
  Statement of the Problem ......................................................................................................................... 3  
  Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................................................. 4  
  Research Questions ....................................................................................................................................... 5  
  Rationale, Relevance, and Significance ..................................................................................................... 5  
  Definition of Terms ...................................................................................................................................... 7  
    Mexican-American ..................................................................................................................................... 7  
    Self-perceived .......................................................................................................................................... 7  
    Ethnicity .................................................................................................................................................... 7  
    Leadership position ............................................................................................................................. 7  
    Leadership style ....................................................................................................................................... 7  
    Underrepresentation ........................................................................................................................... 7  
  Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations ......................................................................................... 7  
  Summary ...................................................................................................................................................... 9  

Chapter 2: Literature Review .......................................................................................................................... 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Topic</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Literature Review</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (attributes)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influences (behavior)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Consideration</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in Educational Leadership and their Underrepresentation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traits of Female Leaders</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining Epstein’s model</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American Parental Influences on Leadership Style</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American Ethnicity and Influences on Leadership Style</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of Previous Research</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Methodology</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Design of the Study</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Population and Sampling Method</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Procedures</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Findings</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Issues of the Study</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of Interest Assessment</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Position</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Issues and Concerns in the Study</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Data Analysis</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the Sample</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology and Analysis</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Findings</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Data and Results</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #1</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #2</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #3</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary .......................................................................................................................................... 68
Chapter 5: Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 70
Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 70
Summary of the Results ....................................................................................................................... 71
Discussion of the Results .................................................................................................................... 76
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature ...................................................................... 81
Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory .............................................................. 86
Recommendations for Further Research ............................................................................................. 88
Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................... 90
References ........................................................................................................................................... 94
Appendix A: Statement of Original Work ............................................................................................ 107
Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter ....................................................................................................... 108
Appendix C: Consent Form .................................................................................................................. 110
Appendix D: Survey Use Permission .................................................................................................. 112
Appendix E: Interview Questions ....................................................................................................... 113
List of Tables

Table 1.  *Length of Participants Tenure in Education* ......................................................... 47

Table 2.  *Results of Responses to Transformational Leadership Factors on the MLQ* ............. 64
Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Study

A good education is the foundation upon which our future leaders will build. These leaders of tomorrow need to have a solid foundation on which to build and excellent role models to teach them how to lead. The face of educational leadership has changed in the last two decades; many more women are now a part of the administrative teams in elementary, middle and high schools. However, even with the growth in numbers of women in educational leadership, they are still grossly underrepresented; specifically, women of Mexican-American descent are one of the smallest represented groups in public education administration (Jackson, 2013).

The Hispanic population in the United States is 55 million strong and has grown 1.5 million between July 2013 and July 2014; 64% of these Hispanics are of Mexican descent (American Fact Finder, n.d.). Mexican-American women in educational leadership, even in a population like that of El Paso, where an estimated 82% of the population is of Mexican descent, are still severely underrepresented (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Amongst two of the largest school districts in the West Texas region, the average percent of Mexican-American women in principal or assistant principal positions is 20% (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

If the students of today are to become the leaders of tomorrow, they must have role models they can relate to, who understand them and the challenges they face every day. It follows, then, that increasing the number of Mexican-American women in leadership positions in education in places like El Paso, where the majority of the student body is of Mexican descent, and girls outnumber boys in the classroom, will go a long way to help motivate students to become leaders (Our Schools, n.d.). With the increase in Mexican-American women in positions
such as middle and high school principals and assistant principals, the students will have role
models they can relate to, and will then be exposed to the possibility of their becoming
educational leaders as well.

**Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem**

For the purposes of this study, leadership positions in education included middle and high
school principals and assistant principals. Due to the low percentage of women (and Mexican-
American women in particular) in educational leadership, it has not been possible to study much
about what influences these women to seek out and obtain leadership opportunities (Gupton,
2005). There has been some research on Latinas or Hispanic women as a whole, but there is
little to no literature on Mexican-American women in particular.

Women in general are underrepresented in educational administration, but even in largely
Mexican-American communities, these women are outnumbered by their male counterparts by a
three to one margin (Our Schools, n.d.). Questions regarding why the women who are in
leadership positions have sought them, what factors motivated or influenced them to seek these
positions, and whether or not there were societal and/or cultural barriers to them seeking
leadership positions in education have not been answered before. Even more interesting yet, was
the question of what type of leadership these Mexican-American women employed, whether
consciously or subconsciously. Studying Mexican-American women in educational leadership
and whether they employ Transformational Leadership traits was of great interest to the
researcher.

Transformational Leadership, as described by Bass and Riggio (2006) is meant to focus
on followers, motivating them to perform and achieve at their best and at the same time develop
the followers’ own leadership skills. There are four components to Transformational Leadership,
including Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The four components help develop followers through the leader focusing on the needs and performance of the followers, identifying their strengths and building on them, and being an exceptional role model for the followers. Evidence shows that groups led by transformational leaders perform at a higher level and have much higher satisfaction than other groups (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This evidence is perhaps the result of transformational leaders who hold high achievement standards for their group because they believe their followers can achieve them. These leaders inspire, motivate, empower, and stimulate their followers to perform at their highest potential, and can do so because they care about the needs and the potential of their followers.

Knowing the potential of transformational leadership and the things achievable by leaders who use it, the question begged whether or not these women in leadership positions in two school districts, in West Texas, used the principles of Transformational Leadership in part or in whole and whether they did so intentionally or if it was innate. Although Bass and Avolio (1994) believe leaders use a blend of different leadership traits and styles, the researcher believed successful educational administrators tend to use more of Transformational Leadership traits and skills to help their teams, and thus their schools, achieve and perform to their best potential.

Statement of the Problem

Although the demographics in the United States are changing and as of 2013 include 64% of the Hispanic population of Mexican descent, there remains an underrepresentation of Mexican-American women in the field of educational leadership (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Even in border communities such as El Paso, Texas, where almost 90% of the population is of Mexican descent, school districts such as two of the largest school districts in the Southwest
Texas area, still employ three male principals and assistant principals to each one of their female counterparts (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). These districts include 64 schools, including an average of 11 middle schools and seven high schools; one of these districts is the first urban school district anywhere in the state of Texas to have received a “Recognized District” honor. This regional school district educates over 43,000 students, 93% of whom are of Mexican-American descent (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

The districts employ an average of five high school assistant principals in each of its seven high schools and an average of two middle school assistant principals per campus for each of its 11 middle schools. Of the principals and assistant principals in these West Texas regional school districts, an average of 10 principals are female, five of them of Mexican-American descent, and 20 of the 52 assistant principals are female, 17 of Mexican-American descent (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). Women of Mexican-American heritage comprise only approximately 25% of the leadership in these public school districts, including principals, assistant principals, curriculum specialists and department heads.

**Purpose of the Study**

The study was designed as a qualitative investigation in the form of a case study in order to identify the reasons why Mexican-American women chose to lead in public education and what type of leadership style they perceived themselves using in their leadership roles. In this study, educational leadership referred to positions including middle and high school principal and/or assistant principal. The case study also answered the question of whether or not parental ethnicity affected the type of leadership adopted by Mexican-American women in public education in two regional school districts in West Texas. Additional detail regarding case study methodology is provided in Chapter 3.
Participants included women of Mexican-American heritage in leadership positions in middle and high schools in two regional school districts in West Texas. They were asked to complete a demographic information form, a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004), and had one-on-one interviews with the researcher lasting approximately 20 minutes, to inform the researcher on what factors motivated them to achieve and seek a leadership position, as well as what perceived leadership style they identified using.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are listed below. The research questions were identified to help find influences on Mexican-American female leaders in public education's motivation and leadership styles and the self-perceived leadership styles of these women.

RQ1: How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style?

RQ2: How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style?

RQ3: How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American women’s desire to lead?

**Rationale, Relevance, and Significance**

There is voluminous research that establishes how parenting behavior influences the development of leadership style (Gergen, 2009; Hardy, 1995; McCullogh, 1994); however, the face of leadership in education has changed dramatically. More school leadership is female in the public education sector today, including elementary schools, high schools, as well as colleges and universities. In the tri-state (Texas, New Mexico, and Chihuahua, Mexico), bi-national
region in which El Paso, Texas is located, the number of Mexican-American women taking leadership positions in public education has grown and continues to do so.

For the researcher, new questions surfaced with the growth of the number of women in leadership positions in public education. These questions included why women choose to lead, why women choose to lead in public education, what affects women’s decision to lead and whether or not women’s development of their leadership style is affected by their recalled parents’ behaviors. To that end, how parenting style and parenting behaviors influence the motivation and leadership styles of these Mexican-American females in leadership positions in public education became a question worthy of investigation.

This research provided insights into the leadership experiences of Mexican-American women, a subgroup that has not been large enough in the past to learn about how their perceived leadership style came to be. Specifically, the intent of this research was to focus on Transformational Leadership and whether parenting behavior influenced the development of Mexican-American women’s Transformational Leadership behaviors. This research helped understand the factors that influence Mexican-American women and their leadership skills and styles.

A large amount of research has been conducted on leadership; however, the body of literature is not as extensive in the area of linking parenting beliefs and ethnicity to leadership style. The data gathered from this study will enhance and strengthen the existing body of research concerning the leadership behaviors of Mexican-American female leaders and how these leadership styles are affected by parenting behaviors.
Definition of Terms

Terms and attributes which supported its understanding, have been identified in this study. The study was conducted in a region of the Southwestern portion of the country that shares a border with Mexico; for that reason, meanings of attributes that were pertinent to the study needed to be identified. Mexican-American, self-perceived, ethnicity, leadership style, and underrepresentation are attributes used in this study. These attributes had the following meanings for the purpose of this study:

**Mexican-American.** Having at least one parent of Mexican descent (US Legal, n.d.).

**Self-perceived.** The way a person sees or feels a situation or attribute; what a person believes is accurate about themselves (Gergen, 2009).

**Ethnicity.** The social background a person identifies with; the nation or culture of a person’s parentage (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

**Leadership position.** In this study, the leadership positions identified referred to assistant principal or principal at a public middle or high school.

**Leadership style.** The qualities or behaviors one practices and exhibits in a position of authority, when relating to others (Legacee, n.d.).

**Underrepresentation.** A disparate number of women as compared to the number of men in a category, for example, in this study, educational leadership (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

The delimitations of the study included the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the limited amount of time the researcher had with each one of the participants, and the questions asked during the interview. The MLQ was chosen purposely because it can actually tell more accurately what attributes of each leadership style the
participants used or possessed. The total time each participant spent in the completion of the three study components was to be less than one hour.

There were two main limitations inherent in this study: the small number of potential participants, and the inability to generalize the study findings because of the limited number of participants. The chosen school districts employ only about 22 women of Mexican-American descent in the capacity of middle and high school principal and assistant principal. This small pool of potential participants became even smaller into the group of participants, thus the expectation was approximately eight participants.

As a result of the small pool of potential participants and therefore a small group of participants, the results of the study may not be generalizable. It would be difficult to make a generalization such as “all Mexican-American women in leadership positions believe…,” as it may be only applicable to the region where the study was being conducted.

Several assumptions existed in this study, including:

1. Participants knew there were different types of leadership styles.
2. Participants could differentiate among the different leadership styles.
3. Participants knew the attributes of each type of leadership style.

These assumptions helped inform the questionnaire and the interview. As such, there may have existed as need to explain what was meant by leadership styles and their attributes. Although the assumptions were valid, some of the principals and assistant principals who took their administrative positions without having previous leadership training may have needed some help with the terminology and with examples of such.
Summary

The students of today will need a strong foundation and good role models to become the successful leaders of tomorrow. In the school setting, especially, the students need to be able to identify with and look up to the educational leaders and administrators. The vast majority of students in the area of El Paso, Texas, are of Mexican descent. With this in mind, school leadership must reflect the student body and be equally male and female.

Although there are now more women administrators at the middle and high school level in West Texas, the regional school districts employ only 25% Mexican-American women principals and assistant principals. Identifying the influences on these women’s decision to lead and what their motivation for success was, can be of great help in developing outreach programs and training that will promote Mexican-American women in leadership positions and help prepare them for such.

The evidence points to the fact that transformational leaders motivate, inspire, and help build their followers leadership potential (Bass & Riggio, 2006). It follows, then, that successful educational leaders will do the same for their teams and thus run a successful school. Because among the school districts to be studied is an urban school district that earned the “Recognized District” distinction, the researcher’s belief was that these Mexican-American women in leadership positions in the middle and high schools used Transformational Leadership skills and possessed these traits.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Developing leaders is a very important feat for the continued success of this nation. Empowering youth to achieve their leadership potential is crucially important to society, as they grow up to be the teachers, doctors, lawyers, and leaders. Scholars believe that leadership can be fostered and developed in adolescents and that many factors influence how and whether their leadership behaviors will actually be enhanced (Fertman & Long, 1990). Factors such as ethnicity, self-image, academic achievement, and socialization have been determined to be influenced by parental involvement and interaction with other adults (McCullogh, 1994).

Because these important developmental years play a role in developing leadership skills and leadership styles that follow into adulthood, and because Mexican-American female leaders in education are still not a large group, it is paramount to facilitate the development of leadership skills among them (Whitehead, 2009). Therefore, these are important concepts to consider as we encourage leadership development, specifically in Mexican-American women in leadership positions in education, since the Hispanic population has grown considerably in the United States.

Study Topic

As a Mexican-American woman, the researcher was very aware of the lack of role models, especially in education as the researcher was growing up. There is ample research that establishes how parenting behavior influences the development of leadership style (Gergen, 2009; Hardy, 1995; McCullogh, 1994); however, the face of leadership in education has changed dramatically in the last two decades that the researcher has been in the field of education. More school leadership is female in the public education sector, including elementary schools, high
schools, as well as colleges and universities, than it was in the 70s and 80s.

Specifically, in the tristate, bi-national region of Texas, New Mexico, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico in which the researcher lives, many more Mexican-American women are taking leadership positions in public education. With the influx of women into leadership in public education, new questions surface, including why women choose to lead, why women choose to lead in public education, what affects women’s decision to lead and whether or not women’s development of their leadership style is affected by their recalled parents’ behaviors. The researcher wanted to find out how parenting style and parenting behaviors influenced the motivation and leadership styles of these Mexican-American women in leadership positions in public education.

Much research has been conducted on leadership, and the majority of that research has focused on adults and adult leadership styles (Edwards, 1994). Some research has been conducted on parenting style and other factors that help develop and influence their children’s leadership behaviors. However, the body of literature is not as extensive in the area of linking parenting behaviors and beliefs to leadership style. This study will add to the body of literature that relates parenting style to leadership style. Leadership styles vary, whether in adults or in adolescents, and with the variance, come the need for knowledge to explain the development of leadership skills and leadership theory.

This research focused on Mexican-American women, a subgroup that has not been large enough in the past to learn about how they develop their leadership skills, how their environment affects their leadership style, and whether or not the way they were parented affects this leadership style. Specifically, the intent of this research was to focus on Transformational Leadership and whether parenting behavior influenced the development of Mexican-American
women’s Transformational Leadership behaviors. This research will help understand the factors that influence Mexican-American women and their leadership skills and styles. The data gathered from this study, therefore, will enhance and strengthen the existing body of research concerning the leadership behaviors of Mexican-American female leaders and how they are affected by parenting behaviors.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing number of Mexican-American female leaders in public education, little is known on what influenced their leadership style and how these female leaders perceive their own leadership style. Although the demands of female gender role and leader roles can be contradictory, they can also foster differing behaviors and leadership styles among men and women (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). Moreover, women face prejudices when they assume leadership roles that can affect their efficacy and the adoption of their leadership style (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). There are many different influences on leadership styles, including parenting style, ethnicity, and socialization (McCullogh, 1994); however, these have not been studied in Mexican-American women in educational leadership roles on the Mexican-American border.

The goal of this research, then, became to identify whether parenting style and ethnicity influenced the leadership styles of Mexican-American women in public school leadership roles, and what leadership styles these women then identified within themselves. Parenting practices being influential in successful adolescent development, and understanding the relationships among these practices and adolescents who demonstrate leadership behaviors, it was helpful to understand whether there was a direct association between parenting styles and leadership behaviors in Mexican-American women and their choice to lead.
More and more women are entering leadership roles in society (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). In spite of the increasing number of women in leadership roles, because they have historically been infrequent occupants of these roles, their behavior is scrutinized (Miller, Taylor, & Buck, 1991). The possibility that men and women’s leadership styles differ, then, becomes of great interest. It is important to know whether and how men and women differ in their leadership behavior because these differences can affect leaders’ effectiveness and chances for advancement (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003).

Ospina and Foldy (2009) found that there still exists today in the United States a fundamental “fault line” when it comes to race. Furthermore, their research suggests that even though there has been an increase in black leaders and other leaders of color, these leaders still struggle in their leadership positions because they face profound obstacles and barriers to their leadership. Ospina and Foldy (2009) further explain that there seems to be an underlying assumption that leaders of color are disadvantaged because they are not perceived as legitimate. This is but one of the obstacles that leaders of color face that white leaders do not. Although much of the literature reviewed leadership between African-American and white leaders, the race-ethnicity divide permeated as a fundamental aspect of leadership.

Ethnicity and race is central to how individuals define themselves, and thus affects society, and by extension, how the individual is seen and treated (Yanow, 2003). To understand leadership and the race-ethnicity role in leadership, there remains a need for further research in order to examine how gender affects the already-existing differences (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). There is a need for research that specifically looks at women in the race-ethnicity role of leadership in order to better understand why women choose to lead and what leadership traits they adopt once they do choose to lead.
Leadership is, according to Daft (2005), an art and a science. It takes hands-on experience, practice and much personal reflection, exploration and nurturing to develop leadership (Daft, 2005). Leadership is influenced by many different factors, one of which is parenting style. Parenting style plays a significant role in the development of many important aspects of adolescent successes such as academic achievement, self-image, and socialization (McCullogh, 1994; Ferguson et al, 2006; Darling and Steinberg, 1993).

**Organization of the Literature Review**

The literature review lists and describes the research questions, outlines the conceptual framework that forms the platform for the investigation, discusses the relevant literature, synthesizes the research findings, and critiques the previous literature in order to design the setting for the investigation, its relevance, and its importance.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are listed below and were identified to help find influences on Mexican-American female leaders in public education’s motivation and leadership styles and the self-perceived leadership styles of these women.

- **RQ1:** How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style?
- **RQ2:** How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style?
- **RQ3:** How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead?

**Conceptual Framework**

Humans have basic needs. Maslow described among these basic needs such as food,
water, shelter, safety, psychological needs that include friends, relationships, and belonging, and self-fulfillment needs such as achieving one’s potential (Maslow, 1943). In trying to fit in, stay safe, and reach one’s potential, leadership traits emerge and the need to exercise these develops.

Influenced by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs, James McGregor Burns (1978) conceived the idea of Transformational Leadership, which he presented in his book *Leadership*. His theory, which he described as more of a process, centered on the leader and his or her ability to transform not only the organization in which he worked, but the people that worked within the organization. According to Burns (1978), the process of transformational leadership included the traits that a transformational leader should possess and put into action, and also the purpose of transformational leadership, which was to empower their employees, set high standards and goals for the group and the organization, and develop the employees’ talents and strengths in order to fulfill their intrinsic need to achieve at their highest potential. By using the process and helping to develop his or her employees, both could then hold each other to higher achievement standards thereby, to higher moral and motivational levels (Burns, 1978).

In essence, Burns (1978) believed that Transformational Leadership created change, motivated people to achieve their best; his theory was different because it included the dimension of morality, which had not been discussed in any leadership theory prior to his work. He was one of the first scholars to explain that true leadership changed, or transformed, both the leader and the follower, and were both ennobled as a result. Burns believed that the values, meaning and purpose of transformational leadership was

Essentially the leader’s task is consciousness-raising on a wide plane….The leader’s fundamental act is to induce people to be aware or conscious of what they feel - to feel
their true needs so strongly, to define their values so meaningfully, that they can be moved to purposeful action. (Burns, J., 1978, Leadership, p. 43-44)

Building on Burns’ (1978) work, Bernard Bass (1985), further developed and discussed the attributes of Transformational Leadership; however, Bass did not believe the moral part of Burns’ theory to be true, and thus left it out of his work. Incorporating parts of the types of behaviors exhibited by charismatic leaders of House’s (1977) theory of charismatic leadership such as leaders being role models, appearing competent to followers, articulating ideological goals, communicating high expectations and exhibiting the confidence in their followers’ abilities to meet the expectations, and stimulating task-relevant motives in their followers, Bass further developed the theory of Transformational Leadership. Bass’ approach gave more attention to the followers’ needs rather than leaders’ needs in order to transform negative outcomes (Northouse, 2013).

Bass (1985) advocated the fact that transformational leaders motivate followers in order to help them do more than what was expected by

(a) raising followers’ levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) moving followers to address higher-level needs. (p. 20)

The theory also includes four Transformational Leadership factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). These four factors help develop successful transformational leaders. Idealized influence is charisma; it describes leaders who behave as strong and positive role models for followers that helps followers identify with the leader and creates a want to emulate them. Inspirational
motivation describes leaders who are able to communicate high expectations to their followers and inspire and motivate them to commit to a shared vision. Through intellectual stimulation, leaders help followers tap into their creative and innovative sides, while supporting the followers in trying new approaches and innovation. Individualized consideration depicts leaders who provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which their followers can thrive and feel safe until such time as they feel they have become fully actualized (Bass, 1985).

Bass and Bruce Avolio (1990) defined their theory of Transformational Leadership as being more concerned with benefiting followers by helping them develop their fullest potential in order to not only address their intrinsic needs, thereby also help meet the organization’s needs. The theory of Full Range Leadership Model has been recognized as the most researched and validated of the leadership theories, according to Essays (2013), Avolio and Bass described a spectrum of leadership effectiveness, with laissez-faire leadership being the least effective, and transformational leadership the most effective.

Taking their Full Range Leadership Model and putting it into practice, Avolio and Bass (1995) designed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ and MLQ Report were developed to expand the dimensions of leadership measured by previous leadership surveys and to provide a concise computerized feedback form that can be used for individual, team, and organizational development as well as individual counseling (Avolio & Bass, 1995). It measures self-perceived skills (on the individual form) in the different types of leadership and helps to determine the beliefs and skills adopted and used most often by the survey participant. The traits, according to Bass (1985, 1999), Avolio (1999) and Bass and Avolio (2004) are as follows:
**Transformational leadership** involves a leader-follower exchange relationship in which the followers feel trust, loyalty, and respect toward the leader, and are motivated to do more than originally expected (Bass, 1985).

*Idealized influence (attributes)* is a facet of transformational leadership, which describes leaders who are exemplary role models for associates. Leaders are admired and respected, and followers want to emulate their actions as leaders (Bass, 1999).

*Idealized influence (behaviors)* is a facet of transformational leadership, which describes leaders who can be counted on to do the right thing through high ethical and moral standards (Bass, 1999).

*Inspirational motivation* is a behavior facet of transformational leadership, which describes leaders who motivate and inspire followers to commit to the vision of the organization. Leaders with inspirational motivation behave in ways that encourage team spirit, and provide meaning and challenge to their follower’s work (Avolio, 1999).

*Intellectual stimulation* is a behavior facet of transformational leadership, which describes leaders who encourage innovation and creativity through challenging the normal beliefs or views of their followers. Leaders with intellectual stimulation promote critical thinking and problem solving to make the organization better (Avolio, 1999).

*Individual consideration* is a behavior facet of transformational leadership, which describes leaders who act as coaches, facilitators, teachers, and mentors to their followers. Leaders with individual consideration encourage followers, provide continuous feedback, and link the follower’s current needs to the organization’s mission (Avolio, 1999).
Recognition and development of these skills can help an individual further grow as a leader and become more successful at motivating his or her followers in order to achieve the followers’ self-actualization while furthering the organization’s goals.

Baumrind identified three types of parenting styles based on the different levels of control and nurturance: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (1966, 1968, 1971, 1991b). Authoritarian parents tend to be high in control and low in nurturance, while permissive parents exercise low control and high nurturance. Authoritative parents are more considerate of their children’s individuality and their autonomy and have high expectations for their child; they enforce age-appropriate rules and structure but maintain a healthy balance of love, support, and structure (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990).

Hardy (1995) found that parents with more positive parenting skills and traits tended to report a higher level of parenting satisfaction as well. In a related study, Gergen (2009) found that Hispanic adolescent females performed best in school when their parents adopted authoritative parenting styles, specifically from the support and nurturing from their mothers. Measuring the use of the self-perceived transformational leadership skills and investigating the effects of parenting styles on Mexican-American women in positions of educational leadership will be beneficial to developing programs or professional development workshops that encourage others to choose to lead in public education.

**Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature**

**Women in educational leadership and their underrepresentation.** Although historically women have outnumbered men in the classroom, the impact has not been felt in school leadership and administration with the same magnitude (Sanchez, Thorton, & Usinger, 2009). Research has shown that women in public education leadership positions in the United
States are underrepresented (Dowell & Larwin, 2013, Gupton, 2005, Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). Even with 57% of all undergraduate degrees and the majority of doctoral degrees being earned by women, the majority of educational leadership positions are filled by men (Gupton, 2009). Arlton and Davis (1993, 1995) wrote that it was clearly evident that the number of women administrators in education leadership decreased as the level of responsibility increased. What is more disparate is the fact that although women are sacrificing and persevering to receive their doctoral degrees, they are not using them to pursue the positions for which they are well-qualified (Gupton & Slick, 1996).

At present day, women are still lagging behind in representation in administrative leadership in education at all levels, including higher education and PK-12 (Gupton, 2009). Furthermore, while women make up most of the teaching force, they are sorely underrepresented in top level leadership positions where the best salaries and the most authority are housed. Research shows that only 14% of secondary school principals and 38% of elementary school principals are female (Pounder, 1988).

Mexican-American women have been classically underrepresented in educational leadership roles until the last two decades or so, especially in public education, where even today, school districts in the El Paso area employ an average of three male principals and assistant principals to each female counterpart (Our Schools, n.d.). Although extremely limited research exists on the subject, Mexican-American women are still severely underrepresented in educational leadership in El Paso, Texas. Only 33% of middle and high school leadership and administration is comprised of Mexican-American women (Our Schools, n.d.). There are over 45 high schools in the El Paso area alone, and although nationally, women make up the majority of the teacher workforce, the opposite is true of educational leaders (Gupton, 2005).
Teachers are entering the profession, but they are not staying long (Lazzaro, 2009). However, female principals are more likely to lead campuses that have an enrollment size of less than 1,000, but are also more likely to take steps in their careers that involve positions that are more instructionally, and curriculum based (Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Logan, 2000). In 1999, Bogler concluded that teacher satisfaction increases when principals are perceived as transformational, and that teacher retention could be increased because of it; if the teachers felt an intrinsic need to teach and make a difference through their job, teacher retention rate is likewise increased. Moreover, a study by Lucas and Valentine (2002) revealed a strong predictive relationship between a principal’s effectiveness in shaping school culture and principal transformational leadership.

Motivation for teachers to stay exists; among the motivators are good principals, with strong leadership traits and skills, practicing leadership styles that are nurturing and transformational, who have empathy, who truly want to empower teachers and want to make a difference in the teachers’ lives and not just run the school (Lazarro, 2009; Dumay & Galand, 2012). When such motivators exist, teachers’ organizational commitment to their schools increases; teachers’ commitment to school is affected by the strength of the school’s culture as is teacher collective efficacy (Dumay & Galand, 2012).

**Traits of female leaders.** In an age where transformational leaders are embraced, women possess desirable traits such as collaboration, empathy, and emotional intelligence; women out-succeed men in areas such education and social services (Bailey, 2014). Women also tend to be more emotionally intelligent than men and have the advantage of being more aware of ethical issues and more likely to adopt business ethical codes (Riggio, 2013; Goleman, 2011). Women are more apt to have more successful leadership tenures, based on biological and
inherent traits such as the need to be effective leaders and more dedicated workers (Coughlin et al., 2005).

It is due to these traits, whether intrinsic or learned, that in general, public school teachers prefer female principals because they feel they are more effective leaders than male principals (Zheng, 1996). In essence, women who seek to lead in education are well-qualified and possess leadership traits that are more coveted than those of their male counterparts.

The leadership traits appreciated by teachers and that make women in educational leadership successful are linked to culture and ethnicity. Mexican-American women are more likely to espouse the traits from their mothers due to the proximity and time spent with their mothers throughout their childhood and adolescence (Gergen, 2009). Because the women grow up with the cultural role model and their moms being more nurturing, warm, coddling, and affectionate these traits for successful leadership (specifically Transformational Leadership) are ingrained in them as they grow up and thus the women adopt these traits and leadership styles and are perfect for the leadership positions (Gergen, 2009).

Transformational leadership style may be a good fit for women because of its communal components, leading to better handling of problems of lesser authority and legitimacy that their male counterparts do not face (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009). In fact, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2009) found that certain aspects of transformational leadership may be crucial to the efficacy of female leaders, specifically the traits of focusing on mentoring followers and attending to their needs as well as emphasizing the mission of the larger organization instead of their own personal goals. Thus, transformational leadership, because of its reward behaviors and the building of supportive work relationships, provides a strong framework for women to exhibit competent leadership (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009).
**Mexican-american parental influence on leadership style.** Lewin (1948), Dreikurs (1995), Baumrind (2009), and Bandura (1977) have all posed theories of leadership styles; these theories have been examined by researchers and have been studied as they relate to the effect of parenting styles on leadership styles. Although the body of research in this area is not extensive, Lewin and colleagues have described three types of groups according to their leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Lewin, Lippitt & White, 1939). The literature has informed research on leadership in adults and adult groups but not specifically in either Latinas or females of Mexican-American descent (Peterson, 1997). Dreikurs (1995) concentrated on leadership and the way it affected group patterns of interaction for all age groups; he described families as social groups, each with its own social climate, and parents as leaders and educators in the family in different cultures. Dreikurs (1995) considered Lewin’s (1948) leadership styles of utmost importance in understanding parenting because these parents affected leadership in the whole family, specifically as the children developed personality. Liebert and Spiegler (1994) substantiated these findings when they asserted that personality traits are dispositional and have a largely learned component.

According to Ferguson, Hagaman, Grice and Peng (2006), studies by numerous researchers put emphasis on how parents’ and teachers’ leadership styles influence children and youths’ personality development and their patterns of interpersonal interactions (Ferguson, Hagaman, Grice & Peng, 2006, p.43). Using this approach, college students can rate their perceived parental values during the formative years of childhood in order to reveal family decision-making and leadership dynamics, and therefore inform of the effects that parenting styles have on leadership styles.
A related study found that in adults, based on the assumption that personality traits can be associated with managerial style and that these traits are learned, managers reported their parents’ style of parenting significantly influenced their own leadership styles (Lyon, 2006). Thus, leadership styles can be said to have influences from both observational and intrinsic factors.

In the Ferguson et al., (2006) study, students at a medium-sized Midwestern public university went through two phases: the first phase the parental values measurement was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis, and 279 introductory psychology students participated; the second phase included the same scale items as the first phase, but also asked the study participants to make global judgements about their parents’ values as they were reflected in their parenting style, where a total of 644 participants providing the data. The goals of the study were to determine whether parental values could be measured reliably according to the three leadership styles- autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire; and to identify to what extent the three leadership styles characterized young adults’ family backgrounds (Ferguson et al., 2006).

The results as reported by the college students, partially supported the predictions about autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire parenting styles demonstrated by their parents’ values during their formative childhood years (Ferguson et al., 2006). Also discovered in the study was the fact that there were three factors predicted to emerge, but two of the findings were not in line; specifically, the democratic items merged with the laissez-faire items and led to one combined factor, and the third factor did not fit the leadership styles predicted by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) and Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1999). Dominguez and Carton (1997) further validate the finding that parenting style influences children’s by verifying that authoritative
parenting, which includes positive reinforcement and verbal give and take better facilitated self-actualization in college students than authoritarian parenting styles.

The merging of the democratic and laissez-faire was explained as the fact that the modern leader, in this case the parents, try to avoid autocratic rule and instead lean toward a democratic process. The modern leader rejects and avoids the authoritarian style, but in not being clear as to what the democratic style is, modern leaders often confuse democratic with laissez-faire processes (Ferguson, 1996). The data in the Ferguson et al. (2006) study also suggests that the autocratic factor may have a clear and strong identity, but the laissez-faire and democratic items blend together so that the one factor combines freedom with and without order.

Individualism in the family values of the Midwestern American students was also found to be a result in the study, but was not a surprising find, as some of the literature (Chao, 2000; Chao & Tseng, 2002) has revealed that American values and practices are potently individualistic. Furthermore, the data for family background demonstrated democratic values do not positively relate with individualism (Ferguson et al., 2006), and that laissez-faire parenting styles differ from individualistic ones.

In the present investigation with Midwestern U.S. participants, when global judgments were used as the independent variable and item factor scores were used as the dependent variable, our results show that individualism is antithetical to democratic family values and consonant with autocratic family values. (p. 53)

Overall, the students gave global judgments that their parents were far more autocratic or democratic in leadership style than laissez-faire; those reporting autocratic global judgements of their parents’ style had higher individualism factor scores; and those who reported democratic global judgments had significantly lower individualism factor scores (Ferguson, et al., 2006).
Ferguson et al.’s (2006) results support Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper’s (1999) model, in which democratic processes show concern and respect for group welfare, while autocratic processes do not demonstrate or involve concern for group welfare.

In a similar study in 2006, Supple and Small conducted a study of adolescents in order to determine if a relationship existed between adolescent perceptions of parental support and knowledge and their effect on the adolescents’ success. The results of this community-wide survey showed parental support and knowledge were related to lower risky health behaviors, higher self-esteem and higher grade point average (Supple & Small, 2006).

Research on the development of adolescents also leads to the belief that characteristics such as academic achievement, gender, ethnicity, and group membership (affiliation) have an effect on leadership behaviors (McCullogh, 1994; Ferguson et al, 2006). Social cognitive theorists such as Bandura (1977) believed that children’s personality traits can develop by observation and modeling of their parents’ behavior. If rewarded rather than punished when a model’s behavior is successful, then, a child is more likely to espouse the particular behavior as a way to enable themselves to maneuver the social world. However, factors such as naturally emerging leadership in children’s social groups and leadership development in female adolescents are sorely missed in the available research (Edwards, 1994).

**Mexican-american ethnicity and influence on leadership style.** Mexican culture is very paternalistic, and at times, can be construed as very macho (Global Security). Due to this male-dominated culture and the fact that the patriarch is head of the household and must provide for the family as is the researcher’s opinion, the children are most often in the presence of their mother; therefore, children’s behaviors and attitudes are largely influenced by the mother. Gergen (2009) found this to be true in adolescent girls of Mexican-American descent; they felt a
distinct influence from their parents, specifically from their mothers. Most often, the possession or lack of leadership skills exhibited by Mexican-American mothers influenced the adolescents’ leadership style and the adoption of their own leadership skills and leadership styles (Gergen, 2009).

Although the male is the superior in the Mexican household, his leadership style is not adopted in large part by his children (Balcorta, 1999). In a study done by the Child and Adolescent Wellness Center of Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, Inc., adolescent program participants were asked which parental figure most influenced their achievement. The majority of both male and female adolescent interviewees stated their mother most influenced their emotional health and self-esteem, but their fathers were instrumental in the need to achieve [in school] (Balcorta, 1999). Traditionally, mothers influence their children’s well-being and sense of safety as well as their self-esteem, while children adopt behaviors and personality traits most frequently from their fathers (Gergen, 2009).

**Critique of previous research.** There is a plethora of research in the area of women and leadership; however, no literature was found regarding Mexican-American women’s leadership styles, motivation, or influences. Specifically, literature is scant in the area of Mexican-American women in educational administration and educational leadership positions.

Although some literature exists regarding Latinas and leadership, it does not separate out the different cultural heritages and backgrounds of the women. This study will go a long way to adding depth to the currently available literature, in addition to pioneering research in an area in which little to nothing is known about why Mexican-American women choose to lead in public education.
Summary

The numbers do not lie; the majority of leadership positions in both higher education and Pre-k to 12 belong to men (Gupton, 2005). Although women have made great strides in positions of educational leadership in the last 20 years, they are still sorely underrepresented. Minorities have not fared any better than women; when combined, the numbers are abysmal.

Teacher retention may help solve part of the problem of women in education administration, but addressing attrition rates and the underlying reasons, such as sub-par leadership and low levels of job satisfaction, will pose a challenge.

Mexican-American women are especially underrepresented in educational administration. Although the literature is limited, it is known that women who grew up in traditional Mexican homes adopted leadership strengths from their mothers. These acquired traits include a largely nurturing style that is predicted to help them be strong transformational leaders.

Avolio and Bass (1994) developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire in order to help individuals as well as organizations to evaluate their leadership traits and styles. Using the results from the survey, individuals can improve their transformational leadership traits and thereby become stronger, more charismatic leaders that can motivate their followers to achieve self-fulfillment while benefitting the organization in which they lead.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Education is the key to the country’s future. According to the website Ranking America (Ranking America, 2015), the United States ranks 14th in the world in education. If the country is to improve this ranking and compete globally in the future, education and educators will undoubtedly play a large role. With this need for improved education comes the need for strong leaders in the education arena. Traditionally, educational administration has been a male-dominated field. However, in the last two decades, more women have taken administrative leadership positions in schools, especially in the border area where El Paso, Texas is located (Grogan et al., 2010). In the area surrounding El Paso, Texas, a larger number of these women are of Mexican-American descent. El Paso is the largest border city in the United States (Simcox, 1993). The population of El Paso has grown from 591,610 in 1990 to 679,622 in 2000, a dramatic 14.9% increase (City-Data.com, n.d.). This metropolitan area of now 800,647 (as reported in the U.S. Census data in 2010) is approximately 82.2% Hispanic, the majority of which is of Mexican or Mexican-American descent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

In this largely Hispanic community, the number of Mexican-American teachers and leaders in public education has seen a dramatic increase. From the 1970s, where none of the school administration and less than 2% of the teacher workforce was female and Mexican-American, to the almost 23% female Mexican-American (females who have at least one parent of Mexican or Mexican-American descent) teachers and administrators, the trend continues to include more Mexican-Americans, thus slowly, but steadily, closing the gap and improving diversity (Texas Policy Research Report, 1994). With this trend toward more Mexican-American women in leadership positions, the need to identify the influences on their leadership
style and their perceived leadership style becomes important in order to foster an environment where more Mexican-American women can take leadership roles.

In spite of the growing number of Mexican-American female leaders in public education, little is known on what influenced their leadership style and how these female leaders perceive their own leadership style. The goal of this research was to identify whether parenting style and ethnicity influenced the leadership styles of Mexican-American women in public school leadership roles, and what leadership styles these women then identified within themselves.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are listed below and were identified to help find influences on Mexican-American female leaders in public education’s motivation and leadership styles and the self-perceived leadership styles of these women.

**RQ1**: How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style?

**RQ2**: How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style?

**RQ3**: How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead?
Purpose and Design of the Study

The research was carried out as a qualitative investigation in the form of a case study in order to identify the reasons why Mexican-American women chose to lead in public education and what type of leadership style they perceived themselves using in their leadership roles. The study participants included Mexican-American female leaders in middle and high school assistant principal and principal positions in two public school districts in the West Texas region. The case study also answered the question of whether or not parenting style affected the type of leadership adopted by Mexican-American women in public education in two public school districts in West Texas.

Using a qualitative methodology is a good way to gather non-numerical data that can identify relationships among variables, usually in some sort of verbal account or descriptive manner (Adams & Lawrence, 2015). Case studies help gather information that address things such as perceptions and interactions, where numerical data may not achieve the same results (Bordens & Abbott, 2008). Case studies also help address questions in much greater detail by using one, all, or a mix of surveys, observations, and interviews (Yin, 2009).

There is much research that establishes how parenting behavior influences the development of leadership style (Gergen, 2009; Hardy, 1995; McCullogh, 1994); however, the face of leadership in education has changed dramatically in the last two decades. More school leadership is female in the public education sector, including elementary schools, high schools, as well as colleges and universities, than it was in the 70s and 80s. Specifically, in the tristate (Texas, New Mexico and Chihuahua, Mexico), bi-national region in which El Paso, Texas is located, many more Mexican-American females are taking leadership positions in public education. With the growth of the number of women in leadership positions in public education,
new questions surface, including why women choose to lead, why women choose to lead in public education, what affects women’s decision to lead and whether or not women’s development of their leadership style is affected by their recalled parents’ behaviors. To that end, how parenting style and parenting behaviors influenced the motivation and leadership styles of these Mexican-American females in leadership positions in public education was a question worthy of investigation.

Research has been conducted on leadership; however, the body of literature is not as extensive in the area of linking parenting style to leadership style. This study will add to the body of literature that relates parenting style to leadership style; it focused on Mexican-American women, a subgroup that has not been large enough in the past to learn about how their perceived leadership style comes to be. Specifically, the intent of this research was to focus on Transformational Leadership and whether parenting behavior influenced the development of Mexican-American women’s Transformational Leadership behaviors. This research will help understand the factors that influence Latinas and their leadership skills and styles. The data gathered from this study will enhance and strengthen the existing body of research concerning the leadership behaviors of Mexican-American female leaders and how these leadership styles are affected by parenting behaviors.

**Research Population and Sampling Method**

The population for this investigation included the Mexican-American women in assistant principal and principal positions in regional middle and high schools in two school districts in the West Texas region. The districts are two of the largest districts in the area, with 64 schools on their rosters, including an average of 11 middle schools and seven high schools (Ranking
America, 2015). The districts serve over 43,000 students, 93% of whom are Hispanic (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

The West Texas school districts employ an average of five high school assistant principals in each of their seven high schools and an average of two middle school assistant principals per campus for each of their 11 middle schools. Of the principals and assistant principals in these districts, an average of 10 principals are female, five of them of Mexican-American descent, and an average of 20 of the 52 assistant principals are female, 17 of Mexican-American descent.

Four attempts were made to interview all 22 of the Mexican-American female principals and assistant principals in the districts. The expectation was that approximately 30% of potential participants would respond. The participants were made aware of the investigation, given informed consent, asked to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, or MLQ, by Avolio and Bass (2004), and were then interviewed.

**Instrumentation**

Many different instruments have been designed to measure leadership skills and determine leadership types and styles. The most commonly used instrument, and the one identified as most appropriate for this dissertation, however, was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Avolio and Bass (2004). The MLQ is based on Burns’ (1978) Theory of Transformational-Transactional Leadership, which was further developed by Bass and Avolio (2000); it evaluates three leadership styles: Transformational, Transactional, and Passive-Avoidant.

The MLQ allows individuals to measure how they perceive themselves with regard to specific leadership behaviors. Permission was granted for the use of the MLQ by Mind Garden,
Inc., the company which holds the rights to MLQ reproduction and use. The letter permitting use of the MLQ can be located in Appendix D, on page 112. Participants were asked to respond to 32 items in the MLQ 5x-Short (the current, classic version) using a 5-point behavioral scale (“Not at all” to “Frequently if not always”). Approximately 15 minutes was required for completion. Through the use of the MLQ, valuable information was collected in order to evaluate the self-perceived leadership style of the participants.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is a well-established instrument in the measure of Transformational Leadership as well as being extensively researched and validated. Avolio and Bass’s (1990) MLQ manual shows strong evidence for validity. In addition, a study conducted by Antonakis (2003), supported the nine-factor leadership model and its stability in homogeneous situations. The MLQ has been used in thousands of research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master’s theses, along with several constructive outcomes for transformational leadership (Statistics Solutions, n.d.). Construct validity is also thoroughly explained with factor analyses which resulted in a six-factor model for the MLQ. Reliability scores for the MLQ subscales ranged from moderate to good.

In addition to the MLQ, participants were asked to participate in a one-on-one, approximately 20-minute interview with the researcher. The interview questions were produced by the researcher in order to address the specific points, hypotheses, and research questions of this dissertation. From these interviews, the researcher collected qualitative data regarding the participants’ beliefs about leadership and whether or not leadership was important to their parents in the upbringing of the participants. Additionally, the interviews informed the researcher about the participants’ perceived parents’ leadership styles influencing their motivation to lead,
whether they perceive themselves using any Transformational Leadership behaviors, and their perceived leadership styles.

**Data Collection**

Data collection procedures were meticulously followed in order to avoid any identification of participants, discrepancies with data, and keep all data secure. No identifiers were used on the MLQ, the demographic data form, or the interviews; only coded forms and interviews were used in order to avoid any participant identification or breach of privacy, thereby maximizing confidentiality (Kiesler & Sproull, 2001). The coding was done using Creswell’s (1998) Spiral of Analysis. The data collection procedures are outlined below.

1. The school districts were petitioned in order to receive permission to interview the principals and assistant principals.

2. A letter was mailed to each middle school and high school principal to advise them of the study’s purpose and process.

3. Each of the 22 Mexican-American female principals and assistant middle and high school principals also received the letter and were advised they would be contacted by the researcher.

4. An attempt was made to contact each of the 22 potential participants and schedule an appointment to conduct the MLQ, demographic data collection, and the face-to-face interview.

5. If the potential participant did not respond within three days, the researcher attempted to contact them by phone and left a message to please return the phone call.
6. If within the following three business days the researcher still had not heard from the potential participant, the researcher sent an email requesting a meeting; the original letter outlining the study’s purpose and process was attached to the email.

7. The fourth attempt to contact the potential participant was a visit to the school where she worked. The schools were close enough in proximity to the researcher and did not pose a problem for the researcher to reach out personally.

8. If all four attempts to contact the potential participant failed, the researcher then disqualified the potential participant from the study.

9. MLQ and demographic data forms were coded using a four-number code in order to minimize any participant identifiers.

10. After the MLQ, demographic data forms and face-to-face interviews took place, the data was secured for safe keeping and assurance of participant privacy; the face-to-face interviews were recorded on a mini-tape recorder or digital voice recorder. All MLQ, demographic data forms and interviews were placed under lock and key in order to protect participant privacy and ensure the items’ security; they will be kept by the researcher for three years.

11. The face-to-face interviews were transcribed by the researcher; the recordings and transcriptions will be kept under lock and key, in a secure location, for three years.

12. Data analysis was conducted on all data collected.

13. The data analyses were used to write the discussion and findings portions of the study.
Data Analysis Procedures

Avolio and Bass (2004) compiled normative data from the many times their MLQ has been used; the researcher took the data from the MLQ and conducted tests of central tendency to compare against the normative data. The normative data was useful in measuring the MLQ results of this study, since the population and sample size were not very large. The data results were then analyzed to describe the types of leadership behaviors practiced by the participants, specifically whether or not the participants perceived they practice Transformational Leadership or any of the Transformational Leadership traits.

The data collected from the demographic forms were grouped by field and summarized as such. A separate sub-file was created for each of the demographic factors, in order to accurately summarize and report the findings. Demographic trends were compiled and reported in the results section of the study.

The interviews were transcribed, after which time the cassettes were put away under lock and key in a secure location in order to protect participant privacy and maintain their anonymity. After transcription, each interview was read through carefully numerous times and the researcher wrote notes in the margins and highlighted the responses when any trend was detected. A separate sub-file was created for each trend identified, using a different color highlighter, in order to accurately summarize and report the findings. Trends found in the interviews were compiled and reported in the results section of the study.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

The researcher identified two possible limitations in this study. The first limitation was the limited number of Mexican-American female assistant principals and principals in the area, specifically in the participating school districts. Unfortunately, only approximately 25% of all
principals and assistant principals in the middle and high schools were female, and an even smaller percentage were Mexican-American women (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

As the proposed population belonged to school districts in which the number of female leaders was limited, the second limitation was the inability to generalize the findings of the research. Although the information collected in the study was extremely valuable in understanding why Mexican-American women chose to lead and what factors influenced this choice, the results will not necessarily apply to any school district, thereby limiting the generalizations made from the data collected.

In order to minimize sample bias, purposeful sampling, measurements (such as in the MLQ), and procedures were implemented in the methodology utilized (Kennedy, 2014). The research design was further strengthened, as recognized by Yin (2009), using the data from the MLQ, the one-to-one interviews, and the literature review. Using various data sources gave stronger validity to the data collected and also gave the most accurate depiction of why Mexican-American women chose to lead in a public education setting (Merriam, 2009).

Validation

Credibility. Ensuring the validity and truth in this study were of crucial importance. The credibility of this study was maintained by implementing measures to ensure the data collected was true and trustworthy. All participant responses were properly cited, as was any data or wording provided by the study participants. Committee review and consultation also served to provide credibility to the study. Ensuring the accurate interpretation of a participant’s account was a large part of credibility. Utilizing various crediting strategies, using peer reviewing, and data triangulation helped in this process (Creswell, 2009). Data triangulation was utilized in this study to authenticate the significance of the results from interviews and data collected.
Participants were asked to authenticate or make amendments to their transcripts, and upon request, study participants may be provided a copy of the study or the parts that pertain to them specifically in order that they may review it.

**Dependability.** Just as important as the credibility of the study is its reliability. The dependability of the study was provided in large part by the triangulation of the study in using literature, surveys, and one-to-one interviews. Using more than one source or method of data collection supported the dependability of the study and ensured the strength of the study in order for it to be considered a reliable source of information. If the research is to be dependable, conducting it in a manner that was transparent and as if someone is constantly looking at the research eliminated any doubtful results (Yin, 2009). An auditor should be able to take the research being conducted and follow it and the process seamlessly if any questions were to be presented.

**Expected Findings**

The researcher expected to find results that identified the reasons why Mexican-American women chose to lead in public education. As limited literature and data exists on the reasons and influences on Mexican-American women’s leadership positions in public education, this study was expected to find that parental leadership style, parental values, and Mexican-American ethnicity influenced the women’s choice to lead.

This study also expected to identify the self-perceived leadership styles of Mexican-American women in leadership positions in public education, as seen in the results of the MLQ. These results helped understand the different types of leadership practiced by the participants and the reasons why they believed they have chosen the particular leadership style, and whether any of the participants practiced Transformational Leadership.
The results and analysis of the data collected in this study will also add to a very limited pool of research and literature in the areas of Mexican-American women’s leadership styles as well as the influences on these women in their choice to lead in a public education setting.

**Ethical Issues of the Study**

**Conflict of interest assessment.** Potential participants were briefed on the nature and procedures of the study prior to their consent to participate. If the participants felt they could not participate in the study, whether for personal reasons or for any self-perceived conflict of interest, the participant was excused from the study. The researcher was the primary interviewer and engaged in a conversation regarding only the themes and questions outlined in the instrumentation. There was no conflict of interest on the researcher’s part, as there existed no relation to any of the districts’ Board of Trustees, the researcher was not an employee of the district, and neither the researcher nor the participants gained financially nor personally from this study.

**Researcher’s position.** Because the topic of this study was women in educational leadership, it was difficult not to exhibit some bias. However, this study strove to keep the integrity and validity of the data collected and analyzed by coding the instrumentation and by attempting to include all possible participants. The researcher has worked in one if the school districts being studied in the past, so personal interactions with study potential participants may have occurred. The researcher, however, attempted to minimize bias by engaging in conversation only touching on the themes and predetermined questions that were assessed by peer and committee review for partiality, prior to the interviews taking place. The possible participants were not subordinates of the researcher, so no undue influence existed there. There are only two possible participants with whom the researcher has worked before, and both were
already in supervisory positions above the researcher at the time the researcher worked with the district.

**Ethical issues and concerns in the study.** Every attempt was made to avoid any ethical concerns in this study. These concerns may have included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and security of all data. To reduce any ethical breach, all participants were given information regarding the purpose of the study and were made aware that their participation was completely voluntary, that the data collected was coded in order to maintain anonymity, that any data collected was maintained confidential and will not be provided to any other party, and that all data will remain secure for the duration of the study, as well as for three years after the data is analyzed and results published. All data will be protected and stored according to a standard code of ethics.

**Summary**

The number of Mexican-American women in positions of leadership in public education, although larger than that of the 1970s, is dramatically low in the region of El Paso, Texas. This study was conducted in an ethical manner and all attempts were made to ensure its credibility, dependability and validity. Data which helped identify why Mexican-American women in West Texas chose to lead in public education, and what leadership styles these women perceived as those they practiced or have adopted as theirs, the study was collected and kept secure and confidential.

The study expected to find that parental values, parental leadership and ethnicity played a role in why Mexican-American women in the district chose to lead. It was also expected that the study would find that Mexican-American women in the district practiced Transformational Leadership in some way. There is something unique and inherent in the Latina experience
growing up on the Mexican border that has influenced leadership in the Mexican-American administrators, the study expected to find. Mexican heritage brings with it family stories and “dichos,” or sayings, that guide the thought process and decision making in women; the researcher believed due to her own experiences. This study will also help inform the very limited body of existing research on the topic of Mexican-American women in leadership positions.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Introduction

Today’s educators shape the leaders of tomorrow. Even though the classroom has classically been a female domain, educational leadership has been comprised largely of men (Sanchez, Thorton & Usinger, 2009). These numbers are especially true of the West Texas region that includes El Paso County, according to the Texas Education Agency’s website (n.d.). Although an excess of 80% of the student population in these districts is of Hispanic descent, the faces of these schools’ leadership do not reflect the same statistic (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). Because these educators spend a large portion of each day with our students, they have great influence on the children.

In spite of the growing number of Mexican-American female leaders in public education, little is known on what influenced their leadership style and how these female leaders perceive their own leadership style. The goal of this research was to identify whether parenting style and ethnicity influence the leadership styles of Mexican-American women in public school leadership roles, and what leadership styles these women then identify within themselves.

This study was designed as a qualitative investigation in the form of a case study in order to identify the reasons why Mexican-American women choose to lead in public education and what type of leadership style they perceive themselves using in their leadership roles. It was designed to investigate whether parenting style affected the participants’ motivation to lead and to identify what the perceived leadership style was of the participants. In the far west region of Texas, two of the largest school districts were selected and the potential participants contacted.
The research questions for the study are listed below. These were designed to help determine parental influence on motivation and self-perceived leadership style of the participants.

**Research Questions:**

RQ1: How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style?

RQ2: How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style?

RQ3: How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead?

This chapter includes the description of the study sample, the research methodology and analysis, the summary of the findings, and the data analysis performed on the data collected, from its coding to clustering of themes identified, to descriptive statistics including the distribution of participant responses to demographic data as well as the results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, or MLQ, the tool by which the leadership style of each of the participants was identified.

The primary researcher was responsible for securing the informed consent, the demographic data form, the completion of the MLQ, and conducting the one-on-one interview with the participants. This chapter is organized to address the findings informed by the research; it includes the description of the sample, the research methodology and analysis, a summary of the research findings, the presentation of data and results, and the chapter summary.
Description of the Sample

Using purposeful sampling, potential participants were identified as those who were middle or high school principals or assistant principals in the participating school districts, and were Mexican-American females. The two participating school districts are two of the largest school districts in the Southwest Texas area. A total of 22 potential participants were identified from the purposeful sampling process and all potential participants were contacted an attempted four times during the allocated time. If a potential participant did not respond after the fourth attempt, they were disqualified from the study and removed from the list of potential participants. All of the potential participants were invited to take part in the study, which included answering a set of demographic questions that included their age, their birthplace, whether they grew up in the El Paso area, which parent(s) they grew up with and whether they had received a Master’s level degree; completing a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ); and sitting down with the principal investigator for a one-on-one interview that consisted of seven questions. The interview itself took approximately 20 minutes; the demographic questions and MLQ took an additional 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

Of the potential participants, seven responded; the respondents were then asked when the best time was to meet with the principal investigator. All seven respondents completed the interview, questionnaire, and data collection process. Of the seven participants, three worked for one of the school districts and the other four worked for the second West Texas school district. The participant response rate was thus approximately 25%. The seven participants were all in assistant principal positions- two principals responded initially, but did not complete the process, as one canceled her appointment to complete the interview and the second principal did not respond to the follow-up request for an appointment time. The lack of participation by any
principals may have skewed the conclusions somewhat, as the assistant principals may still be in
the process of furthering their careers. However, the data gleaned from the responses are still
valid, as assistant principals are considered part of the leadership in schools for the purpose of
this study, and they were all recruited for the study using the same methods as those used to
reach out to the principals. All seven of the respondents completed the demographic data form,
the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, and the interview portions of the study.

From the interviews and the survey responses, the following demographic data was
obtained. The women who participated had an average age of 45 years, with a range of 26 years
among them; the youngest participant was 35, and the oldest participant was 61. The majority of
the participants were born in El Paso, with three participants born outside of El Paso.
Participant birthplaces included El Paso, Santa Clara, New York, NY, and U.S. Army base in
Stuttgart, Germany. Of the women, all grew up in El Paso, and stated they had been raised in El
Paso and had lived there all their lives.

The participants were asked about their parents’ occupations. The responses were varied,
and included a number of parents who were educators. Other occupations included waiter, car
salesman, bank vice president, hotel housekeeper, Mexican border patrol agent, retired military,
and real estate salesman, as well as chef and nursing assistant.

Career trajectories reported by participants included all but one started their careers as
teachers; the one participant who did not want to start her career as a teacher initially wanted to
be a physical therapist. The participant who wanted to be a physical therapist had to leave the
program because it closed; she began her career as a part-time coach at a private school, moved
up to assistant principal, and then went to work for the public schools. The average tenure
among the participants was 16 years total as a teacher and an administrator. None said they had aspirations of being an administrator when they began teaching.

Table 1

*Length of Participant Tenure in Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of time as educator</th>
<th>% of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years educator experience</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years educator experience</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years educator experience</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years educator experience</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+ years educator experience</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the participants, all but one had earned Master’s degrees. The participant that had not obtained her Master’s degree was not in the process of obtaining it and responded that “although Master’s degrees are preferred by the district for all administrators, my years in leadership positions has helped me earn my current position as assistant principal.” Of the participants who had obtained Master’s degrees, the degrees were all in either educational leadership or curriculum and instruction. One of the participants had a doctorate in education administration and another was currently a doctoral candidate.

All participants identified as Hispanic; in their responses, one participant expanded and explained she was Hispanic and Anglo, as “I have a Hispanic father, but my mother is Anglo,” another participant further explained she was Hispanic and African American, although born to
black mother and had a black biological father, she identifies as Hispanic, and another participant explained they identify as Hispanic and have Native American heritage as well.

Responding to the question of what parent or parents the participants grew up with, all but one of participants grew up with both parents. One participant grew up with only one parent, her mother, and explained her mother was alone with her until about the age of seven, when her “mother re-married and my step-father joined our household and was a father-figure for me.”

**Research Methodology and Analysis**

According to Adams and Lawrence (2015), using a qualitative methodology is a good way to gather non-numerical data that can identify relationships among variables, usually in some sort of verbal account or descriptive manner. Qualitative research helps a researcher develop holistic understandings of rich, contextual, and generally unstructured data (Mason, 2002) by the process of engaging in conversations with the research participants in a more comfortable ad natural setting (Creswell, 2009). It asks participants general, broad questions, and allows the participant to answer those questions in more depth, allowing the researcher to develop detailed views of the participants. Qualitative research analyzes and codes the data collected during the interviews, surveys, etc., thereby allowing the researcher to interpret the meaning of the data collected while drawing on their own reflections and past research (Creswell, 2009).

Case studies help gather information that addresses things such as perceptions and interactions, where numerical data may not achieve the same results, as stated by Bordens and Abbott (2008). Case studies also help address questions in much greater detail by using one, all, or a mix of surveys, observations, and interviews (Yin, 2009). The defining feature of case study
research is its focus on ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (Myers, 2009) and is therefore appropriate for
descriptive and exploratory studies (Mouton, 2001).

The use of case studies in research has numerous strengths. One of the strengths of
employing case study methodology in research is the fact that it is both flexible and adaptive,
while allowing either single or multiple methods of data collection (Cavaye, 1996, Davies,
2007). These varied methods of data collection can include direct observation, participant
observation, interviews, focus groups, document sources, archives, and other physical artifacts
(Mouton, 2001, Myers, 2009). In order triangulate data, it is preferable to use multiple sources of
data and multiple participants, whenever possible (Yin, 2009). These also allow for meaningful
insights to be identified (Myers, 1997). Other advantages of using a case study approach are the
ability to build a rapport with the participants (Mouton, 2001), to obtain rich, transferable
descriptions that can help draw inferences to similar situations (Merriam, 2009) and an in-depth
insight into the participants’ responses, such as through the use of interviews as opposed to
surveys, where follow-up questions and clarification are not possible.

Although there are usually no hypotheses developed in a case study, the insights gained
from case-based research may be applicable for use in proposing further or future research. In
this study, no formal hypotheses were identified; however, there were a number of expected
findings in the study. Case study research can contribute to a field’s body of knowledge, thereby
playing an important role in providing insight into and advancing the field (Merriam, 2009).
Expanding the small pool of literature and research available regarding Mexican-American
women in educational leadership and their motivations and leadership style, this study was
expected to contribute to the insight on why they chose to lead and what leadership style they
most identified with.
Once IRB approval was granted for the research, the school districts were petitioned in order to receive permission to interview the principals and assistant principals. A letter was sent to all middle and high school principals in both districts to advise them of the study’s purpose and process, and of the district’s approval of the study. An email was also sent to the 22 potential participant Mexican-American female principals and assistant principals at the middle and high schools for two of the largest school districts in the West Texas region. The email advised them of the study’s purpose and process and advised them that the researcher would be in contact with them in order to schedule an interview time.

Four attempts were made to contact each of the 22 potential participants to schedule an appointment to conduct the MLQ, demographic data collection, and the one-on-one interview. If the potential participant did not respond to the original email within three days after receiving it, they were contacted by phone and a message left to please return the phone call. Following three business days, if there still had not been a response from the potential participant, another email was sent requesting a meeting. If all attempts to contact the potential participant failed, then they were disqualified from the study as a potential participant.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires (MLQ) and demographic data forms were coded in order to minimize any participant identifiers. Each of the sets of data, including the MLQ, demographic data form, and notes from the interview, was assigned a three-digit numerical value. The participants’ sets of data were in no way identifiable, as only the numerical values were assigned. Furthermore, no identifiable data was collected on any of the forms; all of the participants were assistant principals, and no names or places of work were in any way assigned or attached to the data forms and questionnaire. The MLQ, demographic data forms and face-to-face interviews took place at the schools where each respondent worked at the time.
and the data was secured for safe keeping and assurance of participant privacy; the face-to-face interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder; two of the participants were unable to complete face-to-face interviews, but did agree to a phone interview, and their responses then transcribed. All MLQ, demographic data forms and voice files have been placed under lock and key in order to protect participant privacy and ensure the items’ security; they will be kept for three years. Once the participants answered the demographic questions, completed the MLQ that determined which leadership style they most often utilized, and one-on-one interviews were completed, the data collection phase was complete.

The data analysis was conducted using Creswell’s (1998) strategies for qualitative studies. According to Creswell (2009), when analyzing data, the qualitative researcher attempts to make sense of the meaning of the participants’ responses and interprets the events, or stories shared, in terms of the meaning the participants place on them (Creswell, 2009). A variety of qualitative data analysis methods can be used to interpret and represent the results of the data; for this study, cross-case analysis and naturalistic generalization were employed, and will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

The data collected in this case study was analyzed using two different methods; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) evaluation for distribution of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results, and Creswell’s (1998) interpretive recommendations to summarize narrative findings. Due to the use of the MLQ, SPSS data evaluation made sense, as Bass and Avolio (2009) suggest this method for smaller samples. The MLQ manual provided normative statistics for their large volume samples for the years their questionnaire has been in use; these normative statistics were used to compare to the study’s descriptive statistics, as the sample consisted of only seven participants. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire data and
the data coded on the demographic responses and interviews were entered into SPSS and the data analyzed so that data triangulation could be achieved, and interpretations of the interview response validated. The data analyses were used to write the discussion and findings portions of the study.

Creswell (1998) presented the data analysis and representation process in three sections, or phases, that were then broken down further into steps to be followed. The three sections were: preparing and organizing the data; reducing the data into a manageable set of themes, and representing and visualizing the data. These steps were also used in the data analysis and interpretation portions of this study.

During the preparation and organization of data, the researcher transcribed the interviews and printed copies of each, separated the MLQ forms and prepared them to be quantified per the MLQ manual, and organized the demographic data forms; each of the three components were put into separate files. The researcher then read the transcribed interviews and demographic data forms several times in order to become extremely familiar and intimate with the information contained in the documents. In doing the multiple readings, the researcher was able to identify commonalities among the data collected in the participants’ responses on the demographic data forms and the interviews.

In the second phase of data analysis, reducing the data to manageable set of themes or categories was accomplished through the use of coding and condensing. The data was reviewed once more; while reading through the transcripts and the demographic data forms again, notes were made in the margins, quotes identified for possible use were highlighted, and memos were written alongside the notes and throughout the paragraphs and passages. When the transcripts and data forms had been through the notes and memoing, common categories were identified and
coded with different colors, through the use of categorical aggregation, thus reducing the multitude of pages into a manageable set of categories. Categorical aggregation allowed the researcher to identify issue-relevant meanings in the categories collected in the interviews and the demographic data forms once notes and memos were written, and so the data was coded, and commonalities identified.

When the coding was completed, the data was ready for developing findings that would inform the description of the categories. This third phase of the data analysis, the representation and visualization of the data, included developing descriptions for the data, classifications of the data into themes, and interpretation of the data. Themes were identified through the use of cross-case analysis, from which the responses from each participant (or case) were compared, and naturalistic generalizations, in which the notes were interpreted for commonalities. Five themes emerged from the data analysis process, each of which will be described in further detail in Chapter 5 of this study.

**Summary of the Findings**

Using three research questions as a guide, this study was designed to gather reasons to help develop understanding into the reasons Mexican-American women choose to lead in education, what influences their choice to lead, and whether or not their parents’ parenting style affects their own leadership style. The study took place in two of the largest independent school districts in the West Texas area, and included questions regarding demographic information; questions regarding parental influences and parenting styles; questions regarding the participants’ self-perceived leadership styles; questions regarding barriers to leadership; and finally, questions on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The data gathered and analyzed in the study helped gain an understanding of why Mexican-American women in West Texas
chose leadership positions in public middle and high schools and what their motivations were in choosing these positions.

Furthermore, the study validated parts of the information presented in the literature review presented in Chapter 2 of this study, specifically in the influence that Mexican-American parents exert on their daughters’ choice of careers and how the participants’ parents parenting style affected their leadership styles. Although there were no hypotheses in this study, there were expectations of what the findings would inform. Expectations identified in Chapter 3 of this study, such as parental leadership style, parental values, and Mexican-American ethnicity influence the women’s choice to lead, as well as the self-perceived leadership styles of Mexican-American women in leadership positions in public education, as seen in the results of the MLQ were answered through this study. These results helped inform the understanding of the different types of leadership practiced by the participants and the reasons why they believe they have chosen the particular leadership style, and whether any of the participants practice transformational leadership. Additionally, the results and analysis of the data collected in this study will also add to a very limited pool of research and literature in the areas of Mexican-American women’s leadership styles as well as the influences on these women in their choice to lead in a public education setting.

At the beginning of the study, data was acquired from a number of West Texas’ largest school district websites in order to obtain information regarding their teaching staff and the number of students the district served. From the Texas Education Agency’s website (n.d.), data was gleaned regarding the population demographics of the two districts identified as the most populous, and the two largest districts’ percentage of Hispanic students was obtained. Two of the largest independent school districts in West Texas were identified to take part in the study.
The participants were first asked to complete a short demographic information form. Once the demographic data was provided, the participants answered the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, in which they are asked to circle numbers on a zero to four scale, rating how often, from 0 being “Never” to 4 being “Frequently,” they participated in a list of 32 different leadership behaviors. The last portion was a one-on-one interview in which the participants were asked seven questions regarding their parents’ leadership style, their influences to lead, their self-perceived leadership style, and any barriers to leadership for them.

The data collected from all three portions of the participants’ surveys and interviews produced information that fit into the three guiding research questions: (a) How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style? (b) How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style? (c) How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead?

When the data were read thoroughly, coded, categorized, and summarized, five themes emerged. These themes include: parental influence on participant career choice, self-perceived leadership style and actual leadership style (as evaluated from MLQ data), barriers to participant leadership, influences on participant desire to lead, and parenting style’s influence on participant leadership style. Parental influence on the participant’s career choice included the participants’ responses from “absolutely, mom and dad were educators, so they wanted me to become one too,” from one participant, to a simple “yes, indirectly- my mom was a teacher and I wanted to be like her,” from another. Three total participants responded their parents had an influence on their career choice, while the other four answered “No” to the question of whether or not their parents played a role in their career choice.
The recalled leadership style of the participants’ parents did indeed influence the leadership style of the participants. The respondents identified their parents as mostly authoritarian; the second most common response was that parents were permissive. A higher percentage of mothers than fathers were considered authoritarian, with participants elaborating that their “mother was much more strict than my dad—she definitely influenced my leadership style.” One participant further explained that she and her siblings spent much more time with their mother, and she thought that was “why we were afraid of mom and turned out to be more like her.” Another participant said she believed her mother was more authoritarian because “she had to keep us in line by herself while dad got home.” One participant stated her father was very strict and an authoritarian parent “to the max,” so she chose to lead opposite of how her father practiced parenting; she further elaborated that she was “more of a kind leader and a compassionate woman” because she did not want to be as hard on her staff as “my dad was on me and on my sisters.”

The self-perceived leadership styles of the participants included two participants who said they practiced Servant Leadership, one of whom believed “all interactions should be in support of the teacher,” and one participant who identified with Servant Leadership as well as with Democratic Leadership and Transformational Leadership and stated their “staff should be involved in the decision-making process when appropriate, thus the democratic style of leadership.” Two of the respondents identified with an authoritative and very “hands-on” approach to leadership; one of them stating “I do not expect anything from my staff that I would not do myself. It is important to me for my staff to see me in the trenches with them.” Another participant answered she had a very hard time delegating responsibility and tasks, and thus identified herself as being very authoritarian. She explained further that she “was raised to do
things for myself if they were to be done correctly,” and she thereby felt she had a very controlling style of leadership. The last participant identified with a “fluid type of leadership,” stating she decided “what leadership style to use” depending on “what the situation is and who it is that I am dealing with.” She further explained she often found that adopting only one style of leadership limited the way she “led and interact[ed] with people.”

Perceived leadership styles were varied, as discussed above; however, regardless of how strongly the participants felt about their adopted leadership style, the results of the MLQ responses did not necessarily reflect their perceptions. Only one of the participants identified with Transformational Leadership, and even then, only in part. Yet the MLQ results showed that participant responses corresponded with each of the five facets of Transformational Leadership. All five of the attributes of which the Transformational Leadership is composed scored higher than the normative data of the MLQ, suggesting that all participants practice Transformational Leadership in their leadership roles. Thus, the Mexican-American women assistant principals in the two West Texas districts participating in the study all share one common thing- their adoption and practice of Transformational Leadership.

Influences to lead for the participants included a Chicano grass roots organization, a desire to affect change, a teacher or principal, and a natural ability to lead. One participant stated she was influenced to leadership by an organization in college called Chicanos Unidos. That organization was dedicated to “empowering Chicanos,” and helped her find that she wanted to lead; the same participant explained that her second grade teacher was also influential because she “believed in me and did not let me give up.” Two other participants also replied that a teacher influenced them to lead- one was an elementary school teacher and the other was “a high school teacher who made me realize I had potential.” Another participant responded their high
school principal helped her realize she could lead and encouraged her leadership in many school activities. “A natural ability to lead” was the response of another participant, who credits “observing my parents [who were in the military] helped me to naturally develop my ability to lead.” Three of the participants also responded that they chose to lead because they “wanted to make a change.” Of the three, one further explained that she “saw a need for change in the classroom, so I decided to get my certification and apply for an assistant principal job.” Regardless of the person or idea that influenced them, all of the participants agreed they had inspiration that spurred them on to a leadership position.

The last question posed to the participants asked about whether or not barriers to leadership existed. The theme that emerged listed varied barriers, but the most common response was that the main barrier to leadership was biases and discrimination. The participants felt that “discrimination against women in general, but especially against Mexican-American women” was a large barrier to lead. The other large barrier included a bias about “sexual orientation and personal choices.” Two of the participants felt that sexual orientation played a role in their not getting a leadership position. One of these participants explained that she “had issues when first trying to get an assistant principal job—especially at the beginning of my career, about 18 years ago.” In addition to the gender and sexual orientation biases, other responses about barriers to lead included lack of support from principals and administrators at the district level, inadequate training for teachers, and “politically motivated promotions.” Several participants felt that favoritism and partiality played a large role in promotions, including one participant who felt that “principals choose who they want to mentor and promote…especially if they are younger and fit into whatever clique the principal is a part of.” These barriers pose
challenges that will need to be addressed, if Mexican-American women are to form a larger part of those in educational leadership.

**Presentation of Data and Results**

**Research question #1.** As presented in the previous section, there were five themes that emerged from the survey and interview data that answered the three research questions. The three following sections are intended to present the research findings identified through the demographic data collection, interview, and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire process.

This narrative portion addresses the first guiding research question: How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style? Participants were asked about what their parents’ predominant parenting style was and also about whether or not their parents’ parenting style influenced their own leadership styles, and if so, how. Authoritarian parents were predominant amongst the parental influence question, with 71% of mothers identified as authoritarian and 57% of fathers identified as authoritarian. The remaining parents were identified as permissive mothers, 29%, and permissive fathers, 43%. All participants responded that their parents’ style of parenting influenced them, one participant responding that her parents “definitely had much to do with how I grew up and saw myself, especially because my mom was so strict.” Moreover, the consensus among the participants’ responses included the fact that many of them spent “more time with my mom- she was always home with us.” The majority of participants also explained that their father was home much less often due to work schedules and responsibilities. When responding to the question of how their parents’ parenting style influenced their own leadership style, the responses included their fathers were much more permissive than their mothers, with one respondent stating “I am a stronger person because of the time I spent with my mother. I am very strict and authoritarian
with my two daughters because I want them to be strong and self-sufficient, just like my mother was.” One participant stated, “it seems like my parents’ roles and parenting styles changed as I got older because my father became more permissive as I grew up and my mother seemed to become more authoritarian.” This respondent elaborated further that she believed it had to do with her mother worrying about her getting into trouble, or getting pregnant because it was such a huge stigma to be a pregnant teen in the “barrio” where she lived.

Additionally, participants responded that “absolutely, my parents’ style influenced mine…I am completely opposite as a leader as my father’s parenting style- he was authoritarian to an extreme, so I chose to be strong but fair and not micromanage my staff.” She further elaborated that she did not want her staff to feel like she felt when her father was home- “I was always afraid to make a mistake. I knew if I messed up, my dad would be severely disappointed, so I did exactly and only what he said to do!”

Once the study participants had answered questions about their parents’ parenting style and whether it influenced how they lead, they were then asked about whether or not their parents influenced their choice of careers. Parental influence on career choice was another crucial piece to successfully answering the research question. Parents can be a huge influence on children’s ideas of careers and which ones have merit, so it was relevant to answering the question of whether or not they influenced their daughters in their career choice. The majority of participants (71%) responded their parents did not have any influence on their choice in career, while 29% of the participants said their parents did have an influence on the career they chose. When the participants were asked to expand on their responses, two of them explained one or both of their parents were teachers, and so, they did directly and indirectly had an influence on their career choice; other participants expanded their parents just wanted the best for them; one
participant further explained that “my parents wanted what was best for me, and they wanted me to do well in school and they would be happy,” while another response was that her “parents expected me to go to college but did not influence my choice in careers as long as I studied and was happy.” Yet other responses included participants’ parents expected the participants to go to college but did not influence their career emphasis or career choice. In addition, two of the participants, when providing more expanded responses, stated their parents had actually tried to dissuade them from being educators, as they wanted a career for their daughters such as physician, attorney, or politician.

Research question number one was presented to the participants and their answers documented. The study produced data that both agreed with the literature review and expanded the limited amount of data currently available. The participants responded on what their parents’ leadership styles were, which were largely authoritative and to a lesser degree permissive; and they also responded on whether or not their parents’ parenting styles influenced their own personal leadership style. The results of the second part of question one were that the participants’ parents largely influenced their choice in careers and also their own leadership styles.

**Research question #2.** The second guiding question, research question 2, read: How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style? The participants were asked questions including what leadership style they identified with according to the leadership traits they employed most often. In addition, they were asked to expand their answers by telling why they identified with their perceived leadership style and whether or not they exhibited any traits they were not happy to possess but employed anyway.
The responses for the question regarding the style of leadership each participant identified with were extremely varied. Two of the participants stated they identified with Servant Leadership because they felt “serving” their staff was the most important part of their job as leaders and as administrators. One of the two further explained that she felt her job was to make sure she supported her teachers and went on to add that she was “a supporter of teachers…my duty is to my teachers, to provide them support. I feel many administrators do not provide this support and take the easy way out to appease parents.”

Moreover, another one of the participants stated she identified with a combination of Servant, Transformational, and Democratic Leadership. She explained that as a leader, she has been working for a long time to “take the best parts of several leadership styles” in order to create a leadership style that would “bring out” her best self as a leader and administrator. She went on to explain about her three styles of leadership:

I have a natural desire to want to lead through serving others…even if it means getting my hands dirty. I love to be out there with my team working on a goal that needs to be done. At the same time, I like to include my team members’ perspectives, ideas, and contributions while making decisions. I also expect the best from everyone and led by example. I like to encourage and motivate my team with goals and a clear vision. I also lead with humility, have good conflict-resolution skills, and help others become a better part of the time by focusing on their strengths.

Two participants, or 29%, identified as having an authoritative, hands-on type of leadership, with one participant stating, “I make sure I support my staff, but they know that I am in charge and also that I will not make them do anything I am not prepared to do myself.” Another participant admitted to having a hard time delegating duties and tasks, and being very
much a micromanager type of leader, identifying herself as authoritarian. That same respondent stated:

I know it is not the trait of a good leader, but I find it very difficult to delegate; I feel that if I want something done right I must do it myself. I am very much my father’s daughter— I need control and feel that I cannot get things done correctly if I do not oversee them myself.

The last of the participants stated her leadership style was “fluid, or changing, depending on each different situation and person with whom I deal or interact,” also adding that she would like to possess the leadership skills to be a good transformational leader. She went on to add that “I like dealing with my staff and helping out whenever I can- I like to be in the trenches with them so they feel supported.”

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, or MLQ, is a tool used to determine individual leadership styles through the use of 32 statements the participant rate from zero to four, with zero being Never to four being Frequently or Almost Always. The MLQ was used in this study to see whether the participants’ responses to the questions regarding their self-perceived leadership styles actually matched the results of the MLQ each of them completed. Furthermore, the results of the MLQ would glean results that identified whether or not the participants practiced transformational leadership. The traits that the MLQ used to assess Transformational Leadership style are listed in the table below, alongside the mean and normative mean (from Bass & Avolio, 2009) for each of the traits as analyzed from the participants’ responses to the corresponding items on the questionnaire. The lowest number for each response was zero and the highest was four. The higher the mean for each trait, the more the participants’ practiced that Transformational Leadership trait. The normative mean is listed
in Table 2, alongside the study mean, for each trait. The results in the table show that all participants had a strong use of Transformational Leadership skills and that they rarely espoused passive leadership styles. All but one of MLQ measures were higher when they were compared to the normative means established by Bass and Avolio (1994); however, the differences were small (an overall difference of .33), and the tendencies agreed with the normative measures that the participants employed Transformational Leadership skills most often, Transactional Leadership skills less often, and only used Passive Leadership skills a very small amount of the time.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Normative Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (attributed)</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (behaviors)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Consideration</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership Factors</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question #3.** The third and last guiding question read: How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead? For research question number three, the participants were asked if their desire to lead was influenced by their parents, if yes, how, and whether or not there were other influences on their desire or choice to lead. The participants were also asked whether they believed there exist barriers to their
leadership, and if so, they were asked to identify what they were. The responses were varied and just like all other participant responses, helped answer the guiding question they were meant to address.

Four different categories emerged when looking at the participants’ influences on their desire to lead. The four were a Chicano organization in college and a teacher; a teacher; a desire to impact change; and a natural ability and affinity towards leadership. The influence of a student Chicano organization named Chicanos Unidos and a teacher was the response of one of the participants; she stated that a grass-roots organization on the university campus was “very influential” in her choosing to lead. She added the organization’s mission was “to empower all Chicanos,” and she was fortunate enough to have been on campus the day the organization had an event. Through her continued alliance with the organization, the participant was able to discover her voice and her wanting to lead. Three of the participants responded that a teacher was influential in their choosing to lead; one stated the teacher was an elementary school teacher, another stated it was a high school teacher that was instrumental in her choosing to lead, and yet another stated it was a teacher who had become a principal that was influential in her choice to lead. That participant elaborated further

As I began to get older I had a great principal who was my role model and really helped develop me into being a good leader. I held various leadership positions throughout school from band president to captain of different sports teams. So, in those cases it was teachers and coaches.

Additionally, one of the participants responded that leadership came naturally to her and that people had always been drawn to her as a leader, and so she led. Another four participants were influenced to lead by a desire to affect change; “change in the way teachers were treated,
trained, and ineffectively led;” a desire to change the classroom environment and “empower the teachers while providing them support in order for the teachers to more effectively do their jobs” while they were treated with respect and true leadership.

The final question asked of the participants during the one-on-one interviews was whether they believed barriers to their leadership, and leadership for women like them in general, exist. Some participants identified more than one barrier. Responses included one answer in which the participant believed there were no barriers to leadership, only hurdles such as lack of parent involvement, poor student attitudes, and uncooperative teachers. Even though she had to overcome the hurdles, she stated “I have to say that those set-backs are mainly due to doubts and disappointments as I work with young people. However, the reward is greater, and those doubts and disappointments fade away in the grand scheme of things.”

The other six participants (86%) believe there exist barriers to leadership, primarily biases. The biases were many and included participants identifying gender biases and discrimination toward Hispanic women in particular, as a barrier. Two of participants identified politics in school and the training given to teachers in the school system as a barrier. Fourteen percent of the participants identified a lack of a bachelor’s degree in an education major as a barrier towards leadership, and yet another participant stated that sexual orientation was a barrier. That participant that stated sexual orientation was a barrier detailed that,

After being an ‘out’ member of the LGBT community, seeking administrative positions at some elementary schools was very difficult, depending on who was part of the interview committee. Although no one outright voiced this type of discrimination during interviews, I often was told after the fact that ‘some people of the community might not be happy’ [if she were hired knowing she was gay].
Lastly, two participants responded that lack of support for mid-management (assistant principals) was a barrier to leading; one respondent stated that age, specifically being “too” young, was a barrier.

When asked to expand on their responses, one participant stated that public school educators “are not taught to be very professional and can at times be unprofessional in their behavior and appearance.” Another participant responded that teachers are coddled too much and treated with kid gloves when they are hired, which makes it difficult to try and correct them at a later time if need be, “especially due to the fact that the assistant principals do not receive the support they need.” At other times, the participants responded, teachers are not qualified to be in the classroom teaching the material they are teaching, but the politics in the school system make it hard to move them or to let them go and they are met with resistance from both teachers and principals.

Other responses when asked to further describe the barriers identified included a lack of expectations, modeling and micromanaging by principals and superintendents, and excessive paperwork in the job. “End of Course test scores should not be the basis for administrators’ ranking and evaluation, and administrators should be ‘supporters of teachers’ and most are not” were other explanations of barriers to leadership. One participant stated she guides her work by that principle, to be a supporter of teachers, and measures her leadership by how often she accomplishes supporting a teacher. Other participants explained that education law is also a barrier to lead, and that pedagogy is not always being followed, while the lack of administrator knowledge regarding student population plays a role in the frustration with leadership that leaves the participants wanting for better role models in their higher-ups. The lack of opportunities to grow as a leader, preferential treatment and “grooming” of who the principals and
superintendents preferred to train was also listed as a barrier that leaves participants wondering whether or not they are actually making the difference they thought they would when they chose to lead.

Although one participant responded there was a lack of barriers, most believed they had to overcome at least one barrier in order to lead. The questions asked of the participants during the one-on-one interview were met with varied responses and insightful and detailed responses to those questions. All three research questions were addressed and answered; these responses shed light on the impact parents have on their daughters’ leadership style and desire to lead as well as why these women choose to lead regardless of those barriers.

Summary

Mexican-American women in leadership positions in education, including middle and high school principals and assistant principals were interviewed about their perceived leadership styles, their parents’ parenting styles, and a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was administered. The parents were described as either authoritarian or permissive from a list of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive, by all participants; 71% of mothers were considered authoritarian and 29% permissive, while 57% of fathers were identified as authoritarian and 43% permissive. A total of 71% of the participants reported their parents did not have an influence on their career choice, and a number of the parents actually dissuaded the participants from being a teacher. The participants’ leadership styles varied from Servant Leadership, to democratic leadership, and also included Transformational Leadership, “fluid” leadership, and a micromanaging style.

Demographically, the 57% of the participants were born in El Paso and all grew up in El Paso. The participants were raised by both parents for the most part, with 14% reporting living
with only mother until the age of about 7. Participants had an average age of 45 and had been teachers and administrators for an average of 16 years.

Influences to lead included a Chicano organization, a natural ability to lead and a desire to create and impact change in the school system. Of the participants, 57% admitted to feeling a sense of powerlessness while in the classroom and observing a need for policy and procedural changes. These participants stated their love of education pushed them into leadership because they found it would be the only way they could affect change and improve working conditions and support for teachers.

Results of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire showed all participants had a strong use of Transformational Leadership skills and had a very low penchant towards occupying passive leadership styles. As shown in Table 2 results, although a number of the MLQ measures were higher when compared to the normative means established by Bass and Avolio (1994), the differences were small, and the tendencies agreed with the normative measures that the participants espoused Transformational Leadership skills most often, followed by Transactional Leadership skills, and lastly, only employed Passive Leadership skills a very small amount of the time.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The number of Hispanics in the United States is steadily on the rise, including the number of Hispanic students in the public school systems (U.S. Census, 2010). However, the leadership in the schools these students attend has not demonstrated the same increase in numbers, especially when it comes to female leadership. In fact, the number of women in leadership positions in public education lags behind a much higher number of male leaders (Gupton, 2005). Students need to be able to identify with the leadership in the schools they attend; they are in a critical phase of their lives in which they are trying to figure out who they are and whether or not they develop leadership skills is a part of that phase. Factors such as ethnicity, self-image, academic achievement and socialization have been determined to be influenced by parental involvement and interaction with other adults such as educators, mentors and coaches (McCullogh, 1994).

To that end, there is a need for research that specifically looks at women in the race-ethnicity role of leadership in order to better understand why women choose to lead and what leadership traits they adopt once they do choose to lead. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to identify the reasons why Mexican-American women choose to lead in public education and what type of leadership style they perceive themselves using in their leadership roles. In this study, educational leadership referred to positions including middle and high school principal and/or assistant principal. The study also answered the question of whether or not parental ethnicity affected the type of leadership adopted by Mexican-American women in public education in two regional school districts in West Texas.

In this chapter, the results of the study will be presented, along with the meaning and
conclusions drawn from the results and how these inform the current body of literature as well as how they impact education and educational leadership. The chapter is organized into the Summary of Results, the Discussion of the Results, the Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature, the Study Limitations, the Recommendations for Future Research, the Implications of the Results on Practice, Policy and Theory, and the Conclusion. This chapter is the culmination of the case study, as it presents and evaluates the results of the research while adding the researcher’s insight and interpretation and the connections to educational leadership, specifically amongst Mexican-American female leaders. Finally, the chapter will discuss recommendations for further research and how this study adds new knowledge to the current body of literature.

**Summary of the Results**

The study set out to answer the following research questions and add to the current body of literature, which was found lacking much information about Mexican-American women in educational leadership. The questions were:

RQ1: How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style?

RQ2: How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style?

RQ3: How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead?

Current available literature discusses the continuing dominance of male leaders in education and their outnumbering female leaders (Gupton, 2009). However, the same literature lacks information regarding Mexican-American women in educational leadership. Although the
number of women in educational leadership has seen some growth, very little is known about why women choose to lead, why women choose to lead in public education, what affects women’s decision to lead and whether or not women’s development of their leadership style is affected by their recalled parents’ behaviors.

This research focused on Mexican-American women, a subgroup that has not been large enough in the past to learn about how they develop their leadership skills, how their environment affects their leadership style, and whether or not the way they were parented affects this leadership style. Specifically, the intent of this research is to focus on Transformational Leadership and whether parenting behavior influenced the development of Mexican-American women’s Transformational Leadership behaviors. This research will help understand the factors that influence Mexican-American women and their leadership skills and styles. The data gathered from this study, therefore, will enhance and strengthen the existing body of research concerning the leadership behaviors of Mexican-American female leaders and how they are affected by parenting behaviors.

Women in the workforce have always had challenges, specifically when it comes to roles in which their counterparts have been male. The field of education has been no different - men have classically been more numerous, especially in leadership positions. Recognizing the demands of female gender role and leader roles can be contradictory, it is important to note that they can also foster differing behaviors and leadership styles among men and women (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). Moreover, women face prejudices when they assume leadership roles that can affect their efficacy and the adoption of their leadership style (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). There are many different influences on leadership styles, including parenting style, ethnicity, and socialization (McCullogh, 1994); however, these have not been
studied in Mexican-American women in educational leadership roles on the Mexican-American border. Transformational leadership and parenting style, then, became central in investigating whether Mexican-American women in educational leadership roles utilized Transformational Leadership styles, and whether their parents’ parenting style influenced their desire to lead and their leadership style.

Bass and Avolio (1990) described their theory of Transformational Leadership as being more concerned with benefiting followers by helping them develop their fullest potential in order to not only address their intrinsic needs, thereby also help meet the organization’s needs. The theory of Full Range Leadership has been recognized as the most researched and validated of the leadership theories (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Avolio and Bass described a spectrum of leadership effectiveness, with laissez-faire leadership being the least effective, and transformational leadership the most effective.

Taking their Full Range Leadership Model and putting it into practice, Avolio and Bass (1995) designed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ measures 32 different responses to statements about the type of leadership used by an individual most often. Baumrind identified three types of parenting styles based on the different levels of control and nurturance: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (1966). Together, the MLQ and Baumrind’s three parenting styles, informed much of this study.

Using these findings in the available literature, the study recruited Mexican-American women in principal and assistant principal positions in middle and high schools in two West Texas school districts. Of the 22 possible participants, seven agreed to participate in the study. These Mexican-American women were all in assistant principal positions in either middle school or high school in the two participating school districts. The participants completed a
demographic data form that included things such as age, level of education, place of birth, and parents’ occupations. After completing the demographic data, they were asked to complete a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The third component of the study included a one-on-one interview with the principal researcher, in which the participants were asked seven questions, including the participants’ recalled parental parenting style, whether their parents were an influence on their career choice and their leadership style, their career trajectory, their perceived leadership style and whether or not they believed barriers to leadership existed for them and for other female educational leaders.

After data collection was completed, Creswell’s (2009) best practices were used to organize, evaluate and analyze the data collected. The mean age of the participants was 45 years of age, 57% of the women were born in El Paso, all of the participants were raised in El Paso, only 14% of the women lived with one parent, the rest grew up with both their mother and their father. All but one participant had their Master’s degree in either education or education administration.

From the interviews, five themes emerged; they included: parenting style, parental influence on career and other influences on the participants’ desire to lead, perceived leadership style of the participants, barriers to lead and participants’ actual leadership style as identified from the MLQ results. The participants identified their mothers and fathers as mostly authoritarian, with the minority being permissive. Parental influence on career choice, as identified by the participants, was 71% “No,” the participants’ parents were not influential in career choice; however, the participants believed that their parents’ parenting style did in fact affect and influence their own leadership style, especially as it related to their mothers. The participants stated their mothers and the time spent with their mothers was “a large part” of who
they were and how they led. As for influences on their desire to lead, the participants identified four influences. These four were a Chicano organization in college and a teacher; a teacher; a desire to impact change; and a natural ability and affinity towards leadership. Throughout the responses about influence on desire to lead, the common thread was the impact that a teacher or other educator had on the participants’ desire to lead. The participant who responded she had an affinity towards leadership was influenced by both a teacher (who later became a principal) and her mother, from whom her affinity towards leadership developed.

When asked about their perceived leadership style, the participants shared they believed their leadership style was Servant Leadership (two participants), a combination of Servant, Transformational and Democratic Leadership (one participant), Authoritative Leadership (two participants), Authoritarian Leadership (one participant) and a fluid type of leadership style, depending on the person she was dealing with and on what topic was being addressed (one participant). Although only one participant identified as having a penchant for Transformational Leadership style and employing Transformational Leadership skills during the one-on-one interviews, when the results of the MLQ were analyzed, all of the participants responded to the 32 facets of the MLQ with answers emphasizing they all employed Transformational Leadership skills and styles the majority of the time.

The last question the participants were asked during the interview was about whether or not they believed barriers to leadership existed. When responding to the question regarding barriers to leadership, six of the participants responded with a number of barriers. One participant, however, explained she believed there were no barriers to leadership, only hurdles such as lack of parent involvement, poor student attitudes, and uncooperative teachers. The barriers identified by the rest of the participants included biases, primarily. The biases were
many and included participants identifying gender biases and discrimination toward Hispanic women in particular, as a barrier. Two of participants identified politics in school and the training given to teachers in the school system as a barrier. Fourteen percent of the participants identified a lack of a bachelor’s degree in an education major as a barrier towards leadership, and yet another participant stated that sexual orientation was a barrier. That participant that stated sexual orientation was a barrier detailed that she had experienced discrimination due to her being an “out” member of the gay and lesbian community.

The study yielded many insights about why Mexican-American women lead and what motivates them to do so. The results were varied and interesting and will add to the body of literature that exists currently. Because of the limited amount of literature currently available on the subject of Mexican-American women in educational leadership, the results of the study will hopefully begin a conversation on how to further the amount of research done on the topic and how important is the information that can be gleaned from it.

**Discussion of the Results**

Taking on a study that had such important social meaning was both a challenge and an adventure. As an educator and a former administrator, the answers provided by the participants in this study not only helped add to the existing literature, they provided insight and understanding. The problem of so few women in educational leadership, specifically Mexican-American women, is important, especially because the number of Hispanic students continues to rise. More women are in leadership positions now than there were in years past, but the number still pales in comparison to their male counterparts.

With the slow growth of the number of women in leadership positions in public education, new questions surface, including why women choose to lead, why women choose to
lead in public education, what affects women’s decision to lead and whether or not women’s development of their leadership style is affected by their recalled parents’ behaviors. To that end, how parenting style and parenting behaviors influence the motivation and leadership styles of these Mexican-American females in leadership positions in public education was a question that needed to be answered, it was worthy of investigation.

The results of this study are significant for multiple reasons. Primarily, this research provided insights into the leadership experiences of Mexican-American women, a subgroup that has not been large enough in the past to learn about how their perceived leadership style comes to be. Additionally, the intent of this research was to focus on transformational leadership and whether parenting behavior influenced the development of Mexican-American women’s Transformational Leadership behaviors. These results help to understand the factors that influence Mexican-American women and their leadership skills and styles.

The response rate for the study was approximately 25%. The expected response rate was 33%, so a slightly lower than anticipated number of potential participants responded to the invitation to participate. Among the respondents, there were no principals who completed the entire process; one principal responded to the request for participation, but did not complete the interview and so was disqualified from the study. Assistant principals were the only ones who responded to the invitation to participate, thus possibly affecting the results of the study. Possible reasons for the non-participation of the principals include a lack of time, a perceived unimportance of the study, an unread email, or a fear of upsetting someone by their participation and putting their job in jeopardy.

Participants responses to the demographic data form, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), and the one-on-one interview both supported some the expected findings
and did not support others of them. The expected results were to identify the reasons why Mexican-American women choose to lead in public education; that parental leadership style, parental values, and Mexican-American ethnicity influence the women’s choice to lead; and whether or not the participants practiced Transformational Leadership. Five major findings resulted from the study.

The first finding included the influences on why the participants lead. These influences included a need to affect change, influential teachers, an influential principal, and a natural ability to lead. Classroom experience made three participants choose leadership, while teachers and a principal influenced three other participants. Although the responses were varied, they do correlate with McCullogh’s (1994) assertions that adults and parents have a large amount of influence on adolescents and teenagers. Parental involvement and interaction with other adults, such as teachers, principals, and coaches, play a significant role on adolescents’ development of a healthy self-image, academic achievement and socialization. This influence was apparent amongst the respondents.

Leadership style is part of the second and third findings- how parenting style influences leadership style and whether or not the participants self-identified and practiced Transformational Leadership. There is a large volume of literature that establishes how parenting behavior influences the development of leadership style (Gergen, 2009; Hardy, 1995; McCullogh, 1994). Study participants responded with a resounding “Yes,” their parents were a very large influence on their leadership style. The responses included things like participants’ mothers’ parenting style was a large part of how the participants lead; participants wanting to be as little as their authoritarian father as possible; and one participant who stated she lived with strict parents who helped her carve out the best pieces of each of their parenting and leadership
styles and create her own. All of the responses demonstrate how parenting style influenced the development of the participants’ own leadership style, as predicted by Lyon (2006).

Transformational Leadership may be chosen by women as the predominant style of leadership due to the nurturing nature with which it must be practiced (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009). Of the participants, however, only one identified as possessing and using Transformational Leadership facets and style. However, when the responses of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were analyzed, nothing was further from the truth. The results of the MLQ indicated that all of the participants possessed facets of Transformational Leadership. The mean of each of the five facets of Transformational Leadership measured by the MLQ informed the fact that even though the participants’ self-perceived leadership style was not that of Transformational Leadership, all of them identified with and used these facets and skills. Whether because of the nurturing nature of Transformational Leadership or not, the study found that Mexican-American women in leadership positions do in fact practice and employ the facets of that style of leadership, just as the existing literature of Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt (2009), and Peterson (1997) predicted.

The most surprising result of the study was the fact that the majority of the respondents indicated that their parents did not have an influence on their chosen career. The expected result was that in fact, parents did influence the choice of career for their children. However, only three of the participants responded that their parents had influenced their choice of career. The three participants who responded yes to the question of whether their parents influenced their career choice also explained that their parents were or had been educators, thus directly and indirectly, the parents influenced their daughters to teach. This result was surprising, as the literature indicated that parents are very influential in their children’s choice of careers (Ferguson
et al, 2006, Gergen, 2009). Although not quite 50% of the participants responded their parents influenced their choice of careers, it is necessary to point out that the percent of participants whose parents did influence them to lead was only eight percent short of being the majority and thereby reflecting the results found in current literature, such as that of Hardy (1995), Gergen (2009) and Ferguson et al. (2006).

Finally, barriers to leadership were an extremely useful and interesting finding. Mertz (2002) described a slew of barriers to women in leadership; however, barriers for Mexican-American women in educational leadership, although anticipated, had never been researched. This study found many barriers for Mexican-American women in leadership, including discrimination, lack of training, partiality, and politics. The discrimination cited by participants included gender and ethnicity discrimination. Similarly, Ospina & Foldy (2009) found that there seemed to be an underlying assumption that leaders of color are disadvantaged because they are not perceived as legitimate. Participants felt that even though they live in largely Hispanic communities, in education there is still a very wide disconnect and they are not taken seriously and are discriminated against both for being female and for being Mexican-American.

Lack of training, partiality and politics were all identified as barriers at the campus level. The participants believed that they did not receive enough support from principals; training and empowerment were specifically mentioned in the participants’ responses. Moreover, respondents felt that principals are partial to whom they “take under their wing,” and that principals align themselves with specific people both on and off campus and play “the politics of school leadership,” including taking part in specific social interactions with specific groups, or cliques. Bogler (1999) wrote about teacher’s desire to lead and make a difference and how supportive, empathetic principals were crucial to the school environment, and that principals who
led with those characteristics had teachers who were inspired to lead and stay in teaching longer. Additionally, Lazarro (2009) stated that good principals, with strong leadership traits and skills, practicing leadership styles that are nurturing and transformational, who have empathy, who truly want to empower teachers and want to make a difference in the teachers’ lives and not just run the school, will have teachers who feel the desire to lead. The finding of barriers that exist for Mexican-American women in positions of educational leadership, then, is supported by other existing research and fits right alongside of the current literature. It is important to note that although the participants responded with many types of barriers to leadership, none had anything to do with lack of support or with time away from family or home, as some of the current research cited.

The five major findings in this study were, for the most part, in line with the research and literature that already exists. Parental and other adult influences exist when it comes to the shaping of future leaders, specifically in regard to the desire to lead and leadership style. Barriers are real and still exist for Mexican-American women in positions of leadership in education. If the number of Mexican-American women is to increase in educational leadership, barriers need to be addressed and eradicated, principals need to foster a more nurturing and empowering environment, and the type and amount of adolescent interaction with role models (including parents, teachers, and coaches) must be positive in order that adolescents feel empowered and adopt leadership roles early on.

**Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

A student once told me “Mis papás lo son todo para mi- ellos quieren lo mejor para mi. Mi mamá quiere que yo sea una mujer fuerte y exituosa.” Translated, she said “My parents are my everything- they want the best for me. My mother wants me to become a strong and
successful woman.” While women comprise approximately 73% of the teachers in the United States, in leadership positions in education, they are still underrepresented (Gupton, 2011). Additionally, Mexican-American women in educational leadership are very evidently missing.

The number of Hispanic students continues to rise, as per the 2010 Census; however, these students are not able to see their culture and identity reflected back from their school leadership. Studies have shown that adolescents are highly influenced by their parents and the other adults around them, especially when developing their identity and sense of self (McCullogh, 1994). When it comes to leadership style and desire to lead, mothers are more influential than fathers among Mexican-American adolescents, especially for girls (Gergen, 2009). Dominguez and Carton (1997) further validated the fact that parenting style influences children’s by verifying that authoritative parenting, which includes positive reinforcement and verbal give and take better facilitated self-actualization in college students than authoritarian parenting styles. This results of this study showed that Mexican-American women in leadership positions in middle and high schools in two West Texas school districts were influenced by their parents’ parenting style. Specifically, their leadership styles were directly impacted by the parenting styles adopted by their parents. The findings in the literature review (Gergen, 2009; Hardy, 1995; McCullogh, 1994; Lyon, 2006; Ferguson et al, 2006) are supported and further expanded by this study’s results.

According to participant responses, Mexican-American women in educational leadership positions practice transformational leadership. Although their self-perceived leadership was more on the self-deprecating side, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results told the true story—these successful leaders are Transformational leaders. Based on these results, the literature review was a good predictor of the participants’ responses and the MLQ results.
Current literature has found that women are more likely to have more successful leadership tenures, based on biological and inherent traits such as the need to be effective leaders and more dedicated workers (Coughlin et al., 2005). Furthermore, in general, public school teachers prefer to have female principals, especially those who practice transformational leadership, because they feel the principals are more effective leaders than male principals (Zheng, 1996; Bogler, 1999). Women in leadership positions in education, such as principals, increase their effectiveness and improve school culture when they employ a Transformational Leadership style of leadership (Lucas & Valentino, 2002). The finding that the participants espouse a Transformational Leadership style is thus aligned with the literature review (Coughlin et al, 2005; Zheng, 1996; Lucan & Valentino, 2002; Bogler, 1999).

Ospina and Foldy (2009) found that there exists a fundamental “fault line” when it comes to race and leaders in education, and even when women and minority administrators do lead, they face profound obstacles. For example, obstacles such as the gender gap exist due to internal and/or external barriers (Bierly & Shy, 2013). The results of the participants’ survey and interview responses established that barriers for them to lead exist. Participants identified barriers such as discrimination, lack of training, lack of support from their principals, and partiality and school politics as some of the barriers to leadership. Research has shown that when principals practice empathy and nurturing rather than just running the school, teachers and other administrators are happier in their jobs, thus supporting the participants’ identification of barriers that exist when principals are not supportive (Lazarro, 2004; Bogler, 1999; Dumay & Galand, 2012). The study results agree with the literature review, and thus, although barriers to leadership exist, transformational leadership is one way in which these barriers can be addressed.

The results of this study, along with the barriers identified in previous research, pose the
question about whether or not more women, including Mexican-American women, will be able to keep seeking out positions of leadership in education. In order to increase the number of women in educational leadership and give minority students role models and leaders they can identify with and look up to, barriers must be addressed. Things such as leadership training, support from administrators at the principal and district levels, empathy, along with support and encouragement to lead, will go a long way to addressing these barriers. Gender and ethnic discrimination also needs to be addressed both at the school level and at the district level, where hiring practices must change.

Based on the study results from the participants, the literature review and participant beliefs relating to parenting style influence on desire to lead and their own leadership style are aligned. Mexican-American women in educational leadership practice Transformational Leadership, this style was influenced by their parents’ recalled parenting style, and barriers to leadership exist, according to the results of this study. No notable discrepancies appear to be present between the literature review and the study results.

Limitations

As with any research, there are limitations inherent in this study. The limitations include the small number of potential participants (small sample size), the inability to generalize the study findings because of the limited number of participants and because of the design of the study as qualitative, the location in which the study took place, the low response rate from the pool of potential participants, and the lack of response from principals in the study. The chosen school districts employed only about 22 women of Mexican-American descent in the capacity of middle and high school principal and assistant principal. This small pool of potential
participants became even smaller into the group of participants, thus only seven participants comprised the study sample.

As a result of the small pool of potential participants and therefore a small group of participants, the results of the study may not be generalizable. It would be difficult to make a generalization such as “all Mexican-American women in leadership positions believe…,” as it may be only applicable to the region where the study is being conducted. Moreover, the case study was designed and carried out as a qualitative study, not a quantitative one. Because the study was a qualitative one, it lacks the statistics and analysis usually inherent in a quantitative study, also contributing to the study not being generalizable.

Additionally, the area in which the study took place is a limitation. In the West Texas area where the two school districts are located, there is a large population of Mexican-Americans. That area includes a sizable border region with Mexico, which may contribute to the large number of Mexican-Americans in the region and may also contribute to differences in culture, assimilation and family values and beliefs. The same may not be said of many other communities, school districts, or geographic areas, thereby limiting the results of the study and also contributing to the study results not being generalizable.

The response rate of the study was lower than anticipated, at approximately 25%. The researcher had estimated a participation rate of 33%; however, many reasons may have affected the response rate. School administrators are very busy, their days filled with administrative as well as hands-on duties such as helping with disciplinary issues, handling curriculum and instruction design, faculty oversight and evaluation, and testing schedules, to name a few. The lack of participation may be attributed to lack of time on the principals’ and assistant principals’ part. However, there are other factors that may have contributed to the lack of participation,
such as apathy, or potentially a fear of the current political climate in the United States. With the current U.S. administration cutting programs like DACA, limiting the number of immigrants from different parts of the world and enforcing deportation, the principals and assistant principals may have opted to not being interviewed or not sharing their stories for fear of these practices affecting them. Whatever the case, the low response rate may have impacted the study results, thereby creating a limitation on the study.

Lastly, the lack of participation of principals may have limited the study. The researcher invited all Mexican-American women in principal and assistant principal positions to participate in the study; however, only one principal responded initially and then failed to complete the interview portion of the study, thereby eliminating herself from the study. All participants that completed the study were in assistant principal positions, which could have contributed to the limitation of the study results, and affected the outcomes of the study. The limitations of the study may have affected its results; yet, the data and insights gained in the study are of great value to the education community.

**Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

The study gleaned numerous insights into the reasons why women choose to lead in public education and what were their motivations to lead. Identifying the influences on the women’s decision to lead and what their motivation for success is will be of great help in developing outreach programs and training that will promote Mexican-American women in leadership positions and help prepare them for such. These insights will, in turn, help recruit more Mexican-American female educators to leadership positions, so that the growing number of Hispanic students in the United States will have role models in the leadership that reflect to the students’ own culture and background, and someone with whom they can identify. The students
will then be able to look to the leadership for guidance and will also have the opportunity to look up to these leaders as an example of one of the many things they are able to do or aspire to in their lives.

If the number of Mexican-American women in educational leadership positions is to grow, the education system needs to remove the barriers to leadership for these women. Barriers, as identified by the participants, that include discrimination based on their ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender, lack of support from their superiors, lack of training and recognition, and politics within the school systems, need to be addressed and eliminated in order for these educators to feel they can be a leader in education. Although changing paradigms and cultures in schools and school systems is not an easy task, taking steps to begin these conversations and slowly shifting paradigms and improving the culture of the school systems while eliminating political atmospheres will go a long way to enable fairness in hiring and promotion practices.

Empowering educators to lead is also important in promoting more Mexican-American women to lead. Through the use of leadership training and the offer of on-the-job skills development, more educators will feel better prepared to take on the challenge of a leadership role. The second aspect to the empowerment of these female educators is a strong support system. The study participants identified lack of support as one of the barriers to lead. They felt that principals and other administrators did not take the time, nor did they have the inclination, to help support them and develop their leadership skills in order for them to advance to higher leadership positions. School systems need to make leadership training and skills the norm, and not the exception in order to develop and have female leaders.

As the study uncovered and the existing literature supported, parents are an influential
part of students’ lives. Parents and their behaviors help to mold a student’s perception of themselves and plays a large part in the student’s value and self-worth. Developing strong-minded, confident, and positive leadership skills in our students at an early age and then fostering these throughout their academic careers will help empower leaders amongst them. Students should be exposed to developing leadership skills early on in their academic career, while their parents are still an influence on them, in order for these students to adopt leadership skills as a normal, routine part of their education, and not only as an extraneous skill set when running for club officer or team captain.

Parental outreach and community buy-in are also an essential part of developing leaders early. When the parents and their communities have buy-in on any process or program, the students see that they have support for their education and the development of their leadership skills not only at school, but also at home and in their community. This sense of support and security will help further develop leadership skills and a leader mentality throughout the students’ academic career, thus instilling a strong leadership mindset that will then carry into the students’ lives. The education promoted amongst parents and the community through outreach efforts will also help students develop a strong sense of self while they are still young, and their parents are still an influence on them. Leadership in education is not extraneous, nor should it be treated as such, whether amongst educators or students— it is a skill set that should be embedded in education and expected for everyone and from everyone involved.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Although much insight was gained regarding Mexican-American women in educational leadership positions and their influences on their desire to lead, there is much still to be learned. In order to obtain an even greater understanding of why these women choose to lead and what
factors influence their decision to lead, further research is necessary. The following are some recommendations for further research in the area of Mexican-American women in educational leadership positions.

Useful insights can be gathered by replicating the study in other regions that are not on the United States-Mexico border. The results of that research can be compared to the results of this study in order to decipher whether or not values and parenting styles influence Mexican-American women’s choice of careers, their reasons for choosing to lead, and their own leadership style. Because the regions would be different, the studies can be used to glean information about whether the results, when compared, are different amongst the women based on the region in which they were raised. In using more independent school districts to perform the study, the results can be compared and the differences, if any, in beliefs, values, practices and parenting styles can be gleaned by area.

Just as research in regions that are not on the border can be insightful, so can research done using more independent school districts along other areas of the U.S. - Mexico border. Those studies can collect data that would be useful in validating the results of this study; furthermore, the results would be useful in helping with generalization of the results of this study, should the results be similar. Due to the fact that the districts used would also be along the border, comparisons can be made regarding themes and similarities in participants’ beliefs, influences on leadership, parenting styles, and perceived leadership styles. This data would be helpful, again, in establishing patterns for the questions asked of the participants.

The information and insights provided by this study could benefit from the input of women in the principal and superintendent positions. Originally, this study was designed to include principals; however, only one principal responded to the request for participants. When
the time came for the one-on-one interview, that principal did not respond to the request for a
time to do the interview and did not complete the interview portion, thus she was disqualified
from the study. The research including principals and superintendents would be invaluable and
would add further insight into the reasons why Mexican-American women choose to lead and
how their parents’ influence affected their career choice as well as their leadership style. It
would be interesting to see the difference between the answers provided by assistant principals
and those potentially provided by principals and superintendents.

A final recommendation for future research is the replication of the study at higher
education level, namely colleges and universities. The environment, culture, and expectations
are all very different at the college and university level than at the middle and high school level.
For that reason, it would be interesting to see the results of why Mexican-American women in
leadership positions at the college and university level choose to lead, whether or not their
parents and their parenting style influenced the women’s desire to lead and their style of
leadership. Although the results would be similar, theoretically, some concrete information and
comparison between this study’s results and those of the study of women in educational
leadership at the college and university level would help provide further detail and insight for the
research questions.

Conclusion

Although the number of women in educational leadership has increased in the last 20
years, the numbers still lag when compared to the number of men in the same positions. Of the
women in educational leadership positions such as middle and high school principals and
assistant principals, the number of Mexican-American women comprises a very small percentage
(Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The number of Hispanics, especially Mexican-Americans, in
the United States, and thereby the number of Hispanic students, continues to increase steadily (U.S. Census, 2010). These students, specifically the female students, need to have role models and leaders at school that they can identify with and look up to. Therefore, the number of Mexican-American women in leadership positions in education must increase.

This qualitative case study was designed to identify the influences on Mexican-American women in educational leadership in middle and high schools in two districts in West Texas and their desire to lead. The research questions that guided the study were: How does Mexican-American parenting style influence Mexican-American females’ leadership style?; How does Mexican-American ethnicity of female leaders affect their self-perceived leadership style?; and How does parental influence play a role on the development of Mexican-American females’ desire to lead? In the study, participants were asked to complete a demographic data form, a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and a one-on-one interview with the principal researcher.

Using Creswell’s (2009) best practices, the data was analyzed, and five themes identified. The five themes included parenting style, parental influence on career and other influences on the participants’ desire to lead, perceived leadership style of the participants, barriers to lead and participants’ actual leadership style as identified from the MLQ results. These themes provided insights into why Mexican-American women in education choose to lead, which included results such as “to make a difference,” to change “the status quo,” to help shape a different education system, and “because it was expected” of them. The majority of participants responded their parents did not have an influence in their choice of careers, the only different response coming from three participants whose parents were educators or former educators.
The participants identified their parents’ parenting styles as mostly authoritarian, with permissive parents (mostly fathers) as the second most common response. Mothers were identified as more authoritarian and were credited with being a bigger influence on the participants’ leadership style. When asked to identify their perceived leadership style, the participants identified most with Servant Leadership; other responses included a “fluid leadership style” that depended on the situation and the persons involved, a Democratic Leadership Style, an Authoritarian Leadership style, but only one response of Transformational Leadership. As compared to the results of the MLQ, however, all participants exhibited strong adoption and use of all five Transformational Leadership facets.

Barriers to leadership were numerous and included such things as racial and sexual orientation discrimination, politics in the school administration, lack of support for assistant principals, favoritism, lack of a degree in the field of education and lack of training. All but one participant felt barriers existed, and all but one participant identified at least two barriers to leadership. It is evident that barriers must be addressed and overcome in order for the number of Mexican-American women in educational leadership to increase.

It was evident from the research that parents play a significant role in the development of desire to lead, leadership style, and the self-perception of Mexican-American women. Authoritarian mothers tend to influence their daughters’ leadership style more than authoritarian fathers, mostly due to the fact that participants “spent more time with [my] mother.” However, the participants developed a Transformational Leadership style, not an Authoritarian Leadership style, regardless of the fact that their mothers were identified as mostly authoritarian.

In order to help increase the number of Mexican-American women in the field of educational leadership, barriers will need to be addressed; leadership skills will need to be
fostered; a more supportive environment will need to be developed; and an outreach and awareness campaign for Mexican-American parents will be helpful in fostering leadership skills in young girls. With the face of America changing so rapidly and Hispanics quickly becoming the majority, Mexican-American girls and young women will need strong Mexican-American female role models with whom they can identify and whom they can look up to in order to foster and develop the girls and young women’s leadership potential. Only then will the number of Mexican-American women in educational leadership improve.
References


doi:http://dx.doi.org.cupdx.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/0033-2909.113.3.487


doi:http://dx.doi.org.cupdx.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/1089-2699.10.1.43


Appendix A: Statement of Original Work

Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*

Yvette Ramos  

Name (Typed)  

November 6, 2017  

Date
Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
-PORTLAND, OREGON-

DATE: October 26, 2016
TO: Yvette Ramos, EDD
FROM: Concordia University - Portland IRB (CU IRB)
PROJECT TITLE: [949327-1] Mexican-American female leaders in public education: A regional study of the effect of parenting behaviors on motivation and leadership style
REFERENCE #: EDD-20160914-Jimenez-Ramos
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: October 26, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: October 26, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Concordia University - Portland IRB (CU IRB) has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulations.

You are responsible for contacting and following the procedures and policies of Concordia University and any other institution where you conduct research.

Attached is a stamped copy of the approved consent form. You must use this stamped consent form. Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. The form needed to request a revision is called a Modification Request Form, which is available at www.cu-portland.edu/IRB/Forms.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please email the CU IRB Director directly, at obranch@cu-portland.edu, if you have an unanticipated problem or other such urgent question or report.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.
This project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of October 26, 2017.

You must submit a close-out report at the expiration of your project or upon completion of your project. The Close-out Report Form is available at www.cu-portland.edu/IRB/Forms.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. OraLee Branch at 503-493-6390 or irb@cu-portland.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Concordia University - Portland IRB (CU IRB)'s records. October 26, 2016
Appendix C: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Research Study Title: Mexican-American female leaders in public education:
A regional study of the effect of parenting behaviors on
motivation and leadership style

Principal Investigator: Yvette Ramos
Research Institution: Concordia University-Portland
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mark Jimenez, EdD

Purpose and what you will be doing:
The purpose of this survey is to determine what factors motivated Mexican-American
women to pursue leadership positions in education and to identify what leadership
styles these women use. We expect approximately 8 volunteers. No one will be paid to
be in the study. We will begin enrollment on October, 2016, and end enrollment on
December, 2016. To be in the study, you will:

1) Complete a demographic information form; and
2) Participate in a 15-20 minute face-to-face interview with the principal
investigator, Yvette Ramos.

Doing these things should take less than 1 hour of your time.

Risks:
There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your story.
However, we will protect your information. Any personal information you provide will be
coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be
kept securely via electronic encryption or locked inside a file cabinet in the care of the
principal investigator. When we or any of our investigators look at the data, none of the
data will have your name or identifying information. We will only use a secret code to
analyze the data. We will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information
will be kept private at all times and then all study documents will be destroyed 3 years
after we conclude this study.

Benefits:
Information you provide will help identify what factors influenced you to choose a
leadership position in public education and what style of leadership you most identify
with. You could benefit this by completing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and
sharing your story with the principal investigator.

Confidentiality:
This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is if you tell us abuse or neglect that makes us seriously concerned for your immediate health and safety.

**Right to Withdraw:**
Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from answering the questions, we will stop asking you questions. If at any time you would like to withdraw any of the responses you have already provided, you can contact the principal investigator at the email provided on this form.

**Contact Information:**
You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator, Yvette Ramos, at email yramos[redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

**Your Statement of Consent:**
I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I volunteer my consent for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investigator: Yvette Ramos; email: yramos[redacted]
c/o: Professor Mark Jimenez, EdD
Concordia University – Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97221
Appendix D: Survey Use Permission

For use by Yvette Ramos only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc.

www.mindgarden.com

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material for his/her research:

Instrument: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Authors: Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass

Copyright: 1995 by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.

The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any published material.

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

© 1995 Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass. All rights reserved in all media. Published by Mind Garden, Inc., www.mindgarden.com
Appendix E: Interview Questions

## Demographic Information Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace:</th>
<th>Did you grow up in your birthplace? If no, where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Age:        |                                                  |
|-------------|                                                  |

| Ethnicity with which you identify: |                                                  |
|------------------------------------|                                                  |

| Parents ethnicity: |                                                  |
|---------------------|                                                  |

| With whom did you grow up? (both parents, mother only, father only, etc.) |                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                                  |

| Schooling (college and beyond) |                                                  |
|-------------------------------|                                                  |

## Interview Questions

1. Please describe your childhood. Specifically, what was your parents’ parenting style? (was it authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive?) Authoritarian parents tend to be high in control and low in nurturance, while permissive parents exercise low control and high nurturance. Authoritative parents are more considerate of their children’s individuality and their autonomy and have high expectations for their child; they enforce age-appropriate rules and structure but maintain a healthy balance of love, support, and structure (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990).

2. What were your parents’ occupations?

3. Were your parents an influence on your career choice?

4. What influenced you to lead?

5. With what leadership style do you most identify? Why?

6. Please tell me about your career trajectory.

7. Do you feel there were any barriers to you leading? If so, what are these barriers?