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Professional Development and Self-Efficacy:
Their Impact on the Advancement of Latinas in Higher Education Leadership

Olga M. Torres Inglebritson

A dissertation in practice submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of Washington Tacoma

2019

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Abstract

Professional Development and Self -Efficacy: Their Impact on the Advancement of Latinas in
Higher Education Leadership

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Purpose: Research has demonstrated that Latinas are advancing their education (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014), yet the number of Latinas in leadership positions at higher education institutions is not significantly increasing (Muñoz, 2010; Montas-Hunter, 2012). There are many ways in which individuals advance in their careers. For Latinas, their intersectional identities, particularly regarding their race, ethnicity, and gender, influence this process and their experiences. The personal career experiences of Latinas at higher education institutions has not fully been explored. Focusing on the Latina experiences in higher education is important for several reasons. First, to increase the number of Latinas in higher education leadership positions, we need to understand the structural and institutional barriers that may deter Latinas from seeking leadership positions. Second, understanding the experiences of Latinas who are currently in positions of leadership at higher education institutions, how they have confronted such barriers, and additional challenges they experience to advancing further in their careers will

contribute to and expand the research in this area. Finally, this knowledge will inform how higher education institutions can support and create positive experiences for other Latinas seeking leadership positions.

Method: Ten Latinas currently in higher education leadership positions were recruited to participate in semi-formal interviews about their educational and career experiences. Interviews were guided by the *testimonios* approach, which focuses on eliciting Latinas' stories about their lives, in their own words (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). A theoretical thematic analysis drawing on Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and Bandura's Self Efficacy Theory (1994) was then applied to their narratives to explore career experiences at institutions of higher education, as well as barriers and supports they encountered during their educational and career journeys.

Findings: The findings from this study indicated that although the participants were employed at different institutions throughout the Western United States, each experienced institutional barriers, and some experienced barrier within their own Latino communities as they sought to advance in their careers. Despite these challenges, all participants described the various ways in which they have successfully navigated their careers – and advanced in their careers. Themes identified in the analysis were: Barriers – institutional and community; Support throughout educational and career journeys; Intersectional identities and related influences on career advancement; Professional Development- traditional and nontraditional; Self-Efficacy – Affective, Motivational, and Selective Processes.

Discussion and Implications: Latinas are fully capable of taking on leadership positions at higher education institutions, yet the barriers that they have to overcome sway many from

pursuing these roles. Higher education institutions, and their students, would benefit from Latina leaders but need to support them. Learning about their cultural resources, understanding the historical oppression they have experienced, and valuing their knowledge and strengths will help retain Latinas at higher education institutions. Future research should focus on the racial climate at institutions and how it influences the career experiences of Latinas. Additionally, future resources should be invested in providing additional professional development for Latinas in higher education.

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Professional Development and Self- Efficacy: Their Impact on the Advancement of Latinas in
Higher Education

In 2015, 56% of college students were women¹ (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Between 2005 and 2016, the number of women attending college had increased by 12% (NCES, 2016). The number of Latinas² enrolled in college in the United States has increased from 52% in 1994 to 76% in 2012 (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). Despite the positive trends, Muñoz (2010) and Montas-Hunter (2012) point out that the number of Latinas in leadership positions in colleges and universities is disproportionately lower when compared to other ethnic groups. For example, African American women comprised 34% of female leaders in higher education in 2016, having increased from 24% in 2001 (a 12% increase over the 15-year period) (American College President Study, 2017).

¹ For the purpose of this paper I used the term woman as a gender inclusive term, recognizing many cited studies do not disaggregate gender and sex.

² The use of Latina was purposely chosen for this paper instead of Latinx. Valdes (2005) explains the label Hispanic is a “white-identified” term that was created through a white supremacy lens (Valdes, 2005, p. 153). Salinas Jr. & Lozano explain that Latinx was originally created by the LGBTQIA community as a way to refuse the use of gender binary (Salinas Jr. & Lozano, 2017). Gender identities are not a focus of this investigation. Rather, I examined perspectives of individuals who identify as Latina and their experiences in relation to this identity category. I, therefore, chose to use the term Latina for this investigation.

In contrast, Latinas in the United States made up 22 % of women in leadership positions in higher education across the board, and just 6% of college presidents were Latinas (American College President Study, 2017). Moreover, the number of Latinas who are presidents of post-secondary institutions has decreased over the decade to just under 3% in 2016 (American College President Study, 2017). This is concerning because research suggests that having leaders on campus who are from minoritized backgrounds has a significant and positive influence on the academic success and retention of students of color throughout the United States (Muñoz, 2010). Moreover, while Latina/o students are increasingly attending higher education institutions, they are one of the largest subgroups to drop out of college before attaining their degrees (Flores & Park, 2013; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie & Gonyea, 2008). Having more Latinas in leadership positions, who might be keyed in to some of the challenges the Latina/o students face, could increase Latina/o students' academic success.

Given this reality, it is important to investigate the factors that Latinas in higher education leadership identify as contributing to their success, as well as the barriers they encounter in advancing their careers in higher education. Muñoz (2010) determined that professional development, defined as the formal and informal development of knowledge and skills to improve an individual's career (Bacheler, 2015), is instrumental in a Latina's leadership growth. Mentorship and professional affiliations in particular were noted to be essential factors in the development of leadership for Latinas (Muñoz, 2010; Montas-Hunter, 2012). Burkinshaw & White (2017) also found that Latinas receiving this support believed it helped them advance into leadership positions. However, research is mixed regarding to the extent to which Latinas in diverse positions of leadership (e.g., Program Coordinators, Directors, Deans, etc.) have access

to professional development opportunities (Bacheler, 2015; Gonzales, 2012). Few studies have examined Latinas' voices and perspectives on the professional development opportunities they have participated in, the opportunities that have proven most helpful to them, and other opportunities they missed that might be essential for their career advancement and success.

Current Study

To address these gaps in the research, in this investigation, I explored in more depth Latinas' perspectives about supports they had received as they progressed in their careers, with a focus on their opportunities for professional development. Drawing from a Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) lens, which highlights the marginalization of Latina/os in different contexts, I also explored structural and institutional barriers Latinas describe experiencing that relate to their identities at the intersection of their race, ethnicity, and gender, and how they adapted personally and professionally to these barriers. In addition, I explore potential supports that might relate to Latinas' intersectional identities (e.g. *familismo*) (Venzant Chambers, Locke, Tagarao, 2015; Espinoza, 2010). Crenshaw (1994) explains intersectionality in the legal context as a framework for understanding how the lived experiences of Women of Color are not fully acknowledged or taken into consideration, particularly regarding experiences of violence against Women of Color. Other scholars have drawn on Crenshaw's intersectionality to understand how our multiple identities intersect with the powers systems in our society (Pierce, 2017). For the purposes of this study, I will be specifically exploring the intersectional identities of Latinas and how their identities relate to the marginalization and discrimination the participants experience within and outside of their careers, and how participants navigate these experiences.

This research was also guided by an integrated framework drawing on LatCrit (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1994), which has been used in prior research to understand the career development of People of Color (Betz & Hackett, 2006). Specifically, research suggests that minoritized³ populations' beliefs about their capabilities to excel in certain settings has a significant influence on whether they actually succeed or not. I used this model to understand how Self-Efficacy intersects with leadership development specifically for Latinas.

To conduct this research, I recruited ten Latina leaders at higher education institutions throughout the Western region of the United States to participate in interviews using the methodological approach of *testimonios* (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Stefancic, 1997; Adam, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Briefly, *Testimonios* is a method for eliciting stories from Latinas to expose complexities within their lives (Espino, Vega, Redon, Ranero & Muniz, 2012). This method specifically involves the documentation of personal narratives and aims to communicate the experiences and perspectives of, typically, a group of Latinas. The method positions Latinas themselves as insightful about a wider set of experiences of marginalization. Instead of oppressing the voice of the individual by focusing on interpretation and reinterpretation of their story— which at times means a different story is ultimately told— *testimonios* give power to the individuals and emphasizes them maintaining control of the stories they tell (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The stories captured in *testimonios* typically challenge or depart from the traditional, conventional archival and Western knowledge bases about Latinas.

³ Groups that are different in race, religious creed, nation of origin, sexuality, and gender and as a result of social constraints have less power or representation in society (Smith, 2016).

They are the stories of Latinas, told by Latinas themselves. In the analysis, as described below, individual stories were first elicited through personal interviews. To identify potential experiences in their stories that were shared, I then inductively and deductively analyzed interviews, drawing on the LatCrit perspective and Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory (1984, see below), following the theoretical thematic analysis procedure described by Boyatzis (1998) and Braunn and Clarke (2006). In subsequent sections, each of these components are described in more detail, beginning with my motivation for this study and the literature informing this study.

Motivation for the Study

I grew up in New York City and was surrounded and supported by my extended Puerto Rican family. My step-father was white and his family made sure to remind my brother and I that we were not his children. My step-father's family was very racist, so my parents spent the first few years of their marriage being harassed by them. I was never white enough for the white side of the family, and was accused by some of the Latinos I knew of trying to be white. As a young child it was very confusing and sad. I learned how to navigate those spaces at a very early age.

Eventually, I moved to a very rural area in the Pacific Northwest and had no family or cultural ties here. I went from the big city to a very rural community and felt very isolated. I would go on to make wonderful friends, and engage with other People of Color. One of the many things I learned upon moving here is that racism presents itself differently in different areas of the country, and the Pacific Northwest has its own share of racism, as I found out when I began my career in higher education.

I was a late in life student with a GED; I did not begin college until I was 35 years old. My plan was not to work in higher education, I fell into it. My prior career was as a paralegal. I

was employed at a predominantly white institution of higher education in the Pacific Northwest, with very few Latinas, and none in higher level administration. The branch site I spent most of my career was diverse, more diverse than our main campus. There were still very few Latina/os, and most were students. I was actually the first Latina working as the Student Services Coordinator, and the first Latina director of the program. After nine years in this position, I continued to advance in my career and more recently accepted a position as an Associate Director in a different division.

Although I was offered opportunities to advance throughout my time at this institution, they came at a cost. I worked long hours (I know that is the nature of the work), I encountered health issues related to the work (anxiety and depression), and I experienced repeated efforts by others to undermine my authority as director. I felt alone, in part because I did not have any Latinas in my immediate community to turn to. I have always wondered if other Latinas had similar experiences and how they navigated through it all. I also wondered if they had some good insights about how our respective institutions could better support us. These experiences and questions were the catalyst for this research.

Guiding Research Questions

The questions that guided this research were as follows:

1. What supports do Latina leaders credit with positively influencing their pathways to leadership positions, and what barriers do they encounter?
2. How do Latinas describe professional development opportunities they have had? As part of addressing this question, I will specifically explore

- a. To what extent do Latinas see professional development as helpful in overcoming barriers and achieving their career goals?
3. How do Latinas' intersectional identities appear to influence the ways in which they navigate positions of leadership in higher education?
4. How does self-efficacy influence the career development of Latinas in higher education?

Literature Review

To address these questions, I conducted narrative interviews and a theoretical thematic analysis of interviews of ten Latinas in current leadership positions at institutions of higher education throughout the Western United States (Washington, California, Texas, Colorado and Nevada). As mentioned previously, I used a *testimonios* approach throughout data collection and analysis. In the following section I review scholarship about Latinas in higher education. I then describe some of the research about professional development for leaders of color, and briefly review research in higher education that also drew on LatCrit, *Testimonios*, and Self-Efficacy theory. Following the literature review, I describe my integrative framework in more depth, which includes specific components of LatCrit, *testimonios*, and Self-Efficacy theory, before presenting the detailed Methods I used in this study.

Research about Latinas in Higher Education Leadership: What we know and Remaining Questions

Many factors influence the career growth of Latinas. Although there are not many Latinas in higher education leadership positions, Latinas who hold these positions offer a different perspective to their decision making, and often point to how their cultural values have

influenced their decision making (Menchaca, et. al., 2016; Bordas, 2013; Miville et. al., 2017). For example, *colectivismo* (collectivism) is a Latino cultural value that focuses on the group; the greater good of the group comes first (Miville et al., 2017). Some research suggests that upholding this value can conflict with trying to succeed in Western institutions, which often promote self-advocacy more so than a sense of group commitments (Miville et al., 2017). Latina leaders also frequently describe having to overcome barriers to being considered for leadership positions, including being a woman in leadership (León & Martinez, 2013; Wallace, Budden, Juban, Budden, 2014). For example, there are more males in higher education leadership and they make the bulk of the hiring decisions (Teague & Dean, 2015). Research suggests that male leaders are more likely to hire other men over women who are equally qualified (Teague & Dean, 2015, p.10). Teague and Dean (2015) also explain that the lack of opportunities for women to develop leadership skills creates a barrier for women who wish to advance in their careers (Teague & Dean, 2015). Family expectations and financial pressure are other barriers also noted by some Latinas who wish to advance in their careers but struggle to do so (Pierce, 2017). Understanding what is holding Latinas who work in higher education back from seeking and/or accessing professional development opportunities that may help them further their careers in this sector is important. Such research could be used to develop effective support structures for Latinas to enhance their career advancement.

Some research in this area has found that Latinas frequently point to the role of family support, mentors, and their own commitment to education from childhood as having a significant positive influence on their career growth (León & Martinez, 2013; González-Figueroa & Young, 2005). Participants in this research also mentioned that they had to overcome obstacles such as

breaking the perception of ethnic stereotypes, and gender roles (León & Martinez, 2013; Derks, Van, Laar, & Ellemers, 2016). Faced with these obstacles Latinas have must navigate a white, male-dominated system with significant obstacles in advancing their careers (Derks, et al., 2016).

Some studies explore the experiences of Latinas in presidency positions, despite the small number of women who occupy these roles (Sotello Viernes Turner, 2007; de los Santos & Vega, 2008; Menchaca, et. at., 2016). The research found that it was a convergence of factors that enabled them to reach their positions as presidents, such as early education and career success, interpersonal connections, a strong leadership style, and successful responses to challenges. (Sotello Viernes Turner, 2007). Since the network of Latina presidents is so small, many of them know each other and support one another routinely (Crespo, 2013).

Other studies have focused on Latinas in the faculty tenure-track positions (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González & Harris, 2012; Villanueva, 1999). This research found that Latinas, and other Women of Color, did not advance in tenure-track lines as quickly as men (Ortega-Liston & Rodriguez Soto, 2014). Other research found that Latina professors struggled with the lack of affirmation for their “intellectual contributions” at their institutions (Sotello Viernes Turner, p.6., 2007).

One common thread in these different studies is that professional development opportunities, defined as the formal and informal development of knowledge and skill to improve an individual’s career (Bachelier, 2015) were critical ingredients to these women’s success (Munoz, 2009; BlackChen, 2015; Crespo, 2013). The literature around professional development and factors for careers advancement is minimal (Taylor & Stein, 2014).

Furthermore, how professional development has contributed to career development for Latinas,

in light of the specific challenges Latinas face related to their unique positions, has received only limited attention in the research to date (Montas-Hunter, 2012).

Professional Development and Its Importance for Minoritized Populations

As mentioned above, Latinas in different kinds of careers within the context of higher education frequently point to professional development as a significant factor in advancing their careers (Menchaca, et. al., 2016; Crespo, 2013). However, research in this area suggests that Latinas in higher education also have challenges accessing and leveraging professional development experiences to support their career growth (Ballenger, 2010; Peganoff O'Brien & Janssen, 2005).

León and Martinez (2013) discussed the difficulties Latinas faced on their journeys to their positions as presidents, and found that the journey was particularly difficult. Latinas were judged differently than Latino men. For example, they were asked personal questions that men were not asked. Latina presidents also felt extra-pressure on their performances since they were usually the only Latina leaders at their institutions (León & Martinez, 2013). It was also unclear if and how professional development opportunities were available to these leaders that helped them confront challenges that might have been unique to their experiences as Latinas (Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2015).

Latinas are not alone in experiencing the limited opportunities for support as they confront challenges in the higher education. Employees across the sociodemographic spectrum have reported a lack of support for professional development in higher education (Bachelier, 2015). For example, women in higher education expressed that they had limited access to professional development because of the male hierarchical systems of many institutions

(Ballenger, 2010). Although this study is not focused on Latinas in careers as professors, it is interesting to note that Latina and Women of Color professors reported similar barriers as administrators resulting from the male dominant culture of colleges and universities. One example they reported was that they were expected to provide and engage in more service assignments in the institution than male faculty (Ortega-Liston & Rodrigues Soto, 2014).

In contrast to this research, more recent studies of Latinas who had successfully achieved senior leadership positions at colleges and universities, such as vice presidents and presidents, reported that professional development was critical to their success (Crespo, 2013; Gonzales, 2012). Other studies suggest that mentoring along with participation in professional associations and participation in professional development programs were essential to Latinas' career advancement (Muñoz, 2009; Caton, 2007). Several studies focusing on the impact of professional development found that it strengthened their self-confidence, knowledge, and connection to others in leadership positions (Peganoff O'Brien & Janssen, 2005; Burkinshaw & White, 2017). Using semi-formal interviews, Muñoz (2009) and Caton (2007) found that many of the women, vice-presidents and presidents, explained that having a mentor guide them in their positions increased not only their self-confidence but also decreased their sense of social and professional isolation. Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young (2005) specifically studied Latinas and the important role that mentoring can play in their professional success. While most of those studied preferred having a mentor of similar ethnicity; just having a mentor regardless of their ethnicity was what mattered most (Figueroa & Young, 2005; Sotello Iernes Turner, 2007; Ballenger, 2010). Along with mentoring, participation in professional associations is credited as assisting with the professional growth of Latinas.

There are a variety of professional associations today that support professional development through participation in their organizations: American Council of Education (ACE), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), and Association of College Administration Professionals (ACAP), these are just a few of the many associations. Muñoz (2009) found that many Latina leaders at colleges and universities were members of a professional association and credited their participation in these organizations with their professional growth. Along with professional advancement. These organizations also increased participants' connections to important networks of other higher education professionals (Darden, 2006).

Professional development programs like the Leadership Program offered by ACE and the Escaleras Institute offered by NASPA provide learning opportunities to prepare for leadership roles in a higher education institution. Furthermore, Escaleras focused specifically on building a network of Latinas (along with Latinos) in the profession. Program and initiatives such as these are also offered by a variety of organizations including: MANA: hermana.org, and National Hispana Leadership. While these organizations focus on the professional development of Latina/os in higher education, organizations in other occupational sectors seek to advance professional development for Latina/os as well. For example, the National Latina/o Psychological Association (NLPA) was developed to support leadership advancement for Latina/os in the field of psychology.

Although NLPA's focus is on a different career sector, their motivation is the same; supporting Latina/o in advancing their career with professional development and career advancement (Miville, Arrendondo, Consoli, Satiago-Rivera, Delgado-Romero, Fuentes,

Rodriguez, Field, & Cervantes, 2017). Miville, et. al (2017) recognized the uniqueness of the Latina/o cultural values that influence their leadership styles. This is not to say that all Latina/o cultures are the same, but they do share similar values within their cultures (Miville, et. al., 2017; Bordas, 2013). Family, *colectivismo*, respect, honesty and serving others are values commonly considered part of Latinas leadership styles (Bordas, 2013; Miville, et. al., 2017; Menchaca, et. al., 2016). Just as the cultural values are distinct to Latina/os, so are their lived experiences influencing their career decisions. The experiences of Latina/o are unique to their culture, and cannot be fully understood apart from their culture, and these experiences influence their career pathways (Menchaca, et. al., 2016; Bordas, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). As such, more research based upon Latinas leaders' perspective and in their own words is needed, particularly studies examining how professional development contributes to career advancement in light of the common cultural values and lived experiences that often shape career decisions.

To understand Latinas' distinct experiences of professional development, as well as the support they receive and barriers they encounter in higher education, this research focuses on the leadership journeys of a sample of Latinas in higher education. Much of the previous research (described above) focuses on retrospective data from leaders who have already "made it." Given that challenges and supports offered to Latinas in leadership positions may also change over time, and as the sociopolitical landscape in the U.S. changes, understanding aspirations and experiences of Latinas currently in higher education jobs who aspire to move further in their fields is also critical. This study also attends to current experiences of Latina leaders (interviewed in spring 2019) with complex identities at the intersection of their race, gender, and

ethnicity. The study explores how Latina leaders believe their identities, and thus the social positions they occupy, might relate to their career experiences, drawing on LatCrit.

LatCrit Research with Latinas in Higher Education

Latino Critical Race Theory emerged from Critical Race Theory (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) and developed during a conference in 1995 in Puerto Rico. Whereas Critical Race Theory focuses on the Black/ white binary, the inequities of the legal system, and the prolific racism in the United States; LatCrit was formed to focus on the unique issues (language, documentation, and region) of Latinas/os not addressed in law, policy, and society (language, documentation, and region) (Valdes, 2005). As such, as the U.S. social and political landscape continues to shift, ongoing research with Latinas in this context is required to understand how they are experiencing and confronting such issues. Solorzano & Yosso (2001), explain that Critical Race Theory has a family tree and the many branches include: LatCrit, FemCrit, and AsainCrit. They were all developed in the law but have evolved to focus on the unique issues of each group. The tenets are the same for each but focus on the individual issues that impact each group (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

There are five basic tenets of Critical Race Theory. The first tenet explains that racism is difficult to call out because it is not acknowledged, for example expressing that one is color-blind and does not see skin color. The second tenet is "interest convergence," suggesting that individuals with white privilege are less likely to support the dismantling of racial systems of inequality in our society, unless doing so somehow serves their interest (Delgado & Stefancic, p.8, 2012). A third tenet is that race is a social construct defined and used by dominant groups in the society to differentiate segments of the population concept. Delgado and Stefancic (2012)

describe the fourth tenet as "differential racialization" (p.9). This is the opportunistic use of race (as a construct) by the dominant society to manage and/or control racial and ethnic minoritized populations when doing so serves the interests of the dominant group.

The final tenet of CRT, which is also a tenet of LatCrit, focuses on voice and the importance of focusing on the unique stories of People of Color. Much of the history of People of Color has been written and told by member of the dominant society. This history does not fully acknowledge the work, sacrifice, and injustices that has been directed towards People of Color. LatCrit asserts that People of Color have lived in the oppression that has been created by the dominant group are best suited to explain their experiences and truths to white people. Their stories are unique to their lives, no two stories are the same, and someone who has lived in a privileged place cannot understand or accurately describe the reality of the lives of People of Color. The practice of storytelling has been used to share the many stories of Latinas and Women of Color (Molinary, 2007; The Latinas Feminist Group, 2001; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2015). This tenet of storytelling is used in LatCrit, and is the focus of the *Testimonios* approach guiding this study and informing the analysis of the study's interviews. The *testimonios* approach will allow the participants the space to share their lived experience, as well as offer this researcher the most salient information to inform this research.

The LatCrit perspective has also informed recent research in higher education, regarding their career experiences Latinas. Studies drawing on this perspective report that Latinas experience sexism, racism, and the need to code switch at their places of employment (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Gomez, Cooke, Fassinger, Prosser, Meja, Luna, 2001). Latinas explain code switching as behaving one way when individuals are with their families and communities, and

having to adjust their behaviors in order to fit in at their places of employment (Gomez, et al., 2001). Code switching as adaption for fitting in at school is a common theme amongst Latinas whose families chose to send their daughters to schools outside of their districts (Gonzales, 2012). Although Gonzales (2012) uses CRT to shares the stories of Latinas who have overcome barriers to education and how their success as a student, has carried them into their careers, their focus is on the unique experiences of Latinas.

Trying to understand what motivates some Latinas to invest in their career growth, and why some do not, has also been a topic of research over the years (Montas-Hunter, 2012; Betz & Hackett, 2006; Gomez et. al., 2001). This continues to be a topic that is not entirely understood. Latinas have a strong work ethic and connection to family, and they credit family support for their education (Villanueva, 1999; Gonzales, 2012). Other Latinas have explained how they had to choose between family and their careers, either to focus primarily on the family or not have a family in order to focus on their careers (González-Figuero & Young, 2005). How Latinas perceive themselves as they occupy leadership positions in higher education and their personal challenges and familial challenges they also experience need to be understood (Bandura, 1994; Bonifacio, Gushue, Mejia-Smith, 2018). Having an understanding of the positive or negative perceptions that Latinas have of themselves, and the structural barriers they encounter in their careers could lead to the creation of more supportive in colleges and universities.

Testimonios, Sharing the Silent Struggles Created by the System

Whereas storytelling, when used in LatCrit scholarship, provides a space where Latina/os can share their truths and also counter the stories that the predominant race creates, *testimonios* explicitly challenges the politics that Latinas often experience. DeRocher explains,

“...*testimonios* offers a sustained situational analysis of how larger power structures are felt and experienced at the level of marginalized actors.” (DeRocher, 2018, p.15). Through the methodological use of *testimonios* Latinas in this research shared their experiences of systemic oppression, and their collective truths are shared to shed light on the barriers that they have overcome.

Huber (2009) created a collective definition with participants in her *testimonios* research. They described *testimonios* as “a verbal journey of a witness who speaks to reveal the racial, classed, gendered, and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for more humane present and future” (Huber, 2009, p. 644). Similarly, *testimonios* was used in this research to acknowledge and give space to Latinas in similar leadership positions who were willing to give voice to their experiences, knowing that they would be received openly and without judgement by a fellow Latinas in higher education, and provided back to their community through the sharing of the findings. I also used this method hoping it would allow for stories to be elicited that could then be used to educate institutions, supervisors, and members of the Latino community about participants’ struggles, about their strengths and successes in their careers, and ultimately how Latinas in positions of leadership in higher education could be better supported within their institutions.

Self-Efficacy Research with Minoritized Populations in Higher Education

Bandura’s (1994) theory of self-efficacy is a particularly useful model for understanding Latinas’ perception of themselves in the context of higher education, and how such perceptions influence them. Bandura (1994) explains how a person’s sense of self-efficacy influences how they may perceive a task or experience. A low sense of self-efficacy will often lead to negative

perceptions whereas a positive sense of self will lead to more positive perceptions of a task or experience. Self-efficacy impacts the individual's performance which in turn affects their future career growth (Betz & Hackett, 2006; Bandura, 1994). Gomez et. al. (2001), credit a strong sense of self-efficacy to the career development of Latinas. The Latinas in research by Gomez et. al. (2001) research also noted that having a safe environment where individuals felt free to speak also influences self-efficacy. Positive support from parents, teachers, or mentors creates an even stronger sense of self-efficacy (Gomez, et. al., 2001). Within the theory of self-efficacy there are several sources to self-efficacy: Cognitive Processes, Motivational Processes, Affective Processes, and Selection Processes (Bandura, 1994). Each one is discussed further in the theoretical framework section. Each one influences how an individual approaches challenges in their lives. There are not many studies that connect self-efficacy to career development for women (Betz & Hackett, 2006). Even fewer that focus on Latinas and their career development.

Montas-Hunter (2012) recommended that further studies should be conducted to understand how self-efficacy and professional development influences the attainment of Latinas leadership positions.

Theoretical Framework

To gain an understanding of how Latinas understand the supports and barriers in their careers, the two main theories guiding this study were LatCrit theory and Self-Efficacy theory (Bandura, 1994). Bandura's (1994) self-efficacy model was used to understand how Latinas' beliefs in themselves influence their professional advancement and other career experiences.

Drawing on LatCrit, the study explores how experiences in their educational and career journeys, and particularly the barriers faced, related to participants' identities and social positions

at their intersection of their race, ethnicity, and gender. Additionally, the study relies heavily on the method that is more culturally relevant in research with Latinas, *testimonios*. *Testimonios* has been described as "... the documentation of voices from the margins of society..." (Adam, 2014, p.1). Research about Latina leaders in higher education is limited. Therefore, to develop a clear picture of their lived experiences, I used this *testimonios* to better understand the experiences that Latinas have encountered in their career pathways into higher education and how their personal and professional lives intersect. This method allows Latinas to add their voices to the research that is lacking about their experiences, particularly about the barriers they have experienced as they have advanced in their careers and how they confronted them (Menchaca et al., 2016).

As mentioned above, *testimonios* is connected to LatCrit with its specific focus on the voices and experiences of Latinas. In this study, and specifically, in the interviews and analyses, the focus is placed on participants' descriptions of their salient identities and the barriers and challenges they describe experiencing that are related to institutional inequities and prejudices they encounter. Additionally, the study focuses on participants' strength and resistance in their narratives, to ensure that the analyses capture their lived experiences as Latinas in an oppressive, white-dominated society accurately.

Testimonios as my primary research approach, supports these aims. The method of *testimonios* was used in several studies to bring to light the marginalization experiences Latinas encounter (Menchaca, et. al., 2016; Adam, 2017). For example, the Latina Feminist Group (2001) described *testimonios* as, "...a process that felt comfortable, the familiar story telling that harkened back to our mothers' and other relatives' kitchen." (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p.12). Likewise, the goal of using *testimonios* in this study is, in part, to enable each participant

to feel safe and in control of their experiences. I hoped that participants would be more open to sharing their experiences and self-perceptions with me, knowing that they had some control over their *testimonios*. As a researcher, I followed several procedures to ensure this control was maintained throughout the research process. I describe these here and in the section on research procedures. Specifically, I shared participants' transcripts with them as soon as they were available, and asked if any sections should be changed or omitted from analysis I shared narratives developed from longer stories with participants before including them here (see page 38) and I highlighted participants' strengths in the retelling of their stories.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory (1994), along with LatCrit theory, is used to better understand the experiences of Latinas in higher education leadership, and how professional development influenced their career paths. Bandura's theory is credited as a concept to understand the career development of People of Color (Betz & Hackett, 2006). Bandura explains, "Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives." (Bandura, 1994).

Bandura (1994) states that there are four principal sources that influence self-efficacy: cognitive; motivational; affective; and selection processes. The cognitive process influences the analytical thinking of an individual. If an individual does not handle high-stress situations well, they are not able to analyze situations to find the best solutions for dealing with problems. If a person has self-doubts they will not be able to visualize positive outcomes for a situation, whereas, people who have strong analytical skills are more capable of visualizing and planning goals to reach positive outcomes to a situation. The motivational process controls how

individuals can motivate themselves to reach their goals. According to this theory, a person who does not believe that they are able to reach their goal will just give up, but a person with a strong sense of their capabilities will not let failure hold them back and will continue to attack the challenge until they have accomplished their goal (Bandura, 1994). Gomez et al., (2001) found that the most successful Latinas were those most prepared to take on challenges that were presented. Here, self-efficacy theory will be used to further examine how barriers and supports participants describe influenced their self-confidence and motivation.

Cognitive and motivational processes may impact the mental health of an individual whereas affective processes can impact the individual's physical health. For example, Bandura (1994) explains, "There is some evidence that providing people with effective means for managing stressors may have a positive effect on immune function." (Bandura, 1994, p. 7). A person with a strong sense of self-efficacy will not be afraid to take on challenges that seem threatening, whereas a person with low self-efficacy will not be able to respond to situations that they fear and can become so stressed over the situation that they are susceptible to illnesses (Bandura, 1994). Here, I will also examine in more depth how barriers and supports influenced participants' emotional responses and experiences and their well-being during their educational and career journeys.

The final element in self-efficacy theory is the selection process. Having a low sense of self-efficacy may determine what choices an individual will make. A person who does not believe that they are capable of handling specific skills or navigate a social network may limit the career choices and development they pursue. An individual with a high sense of self-efficacy will see and be open to a wide variety of career options. In their study, González-Figuero &

Young (2005) found that many professional Latinas reported feeling marginalized in their professional communities. This feeling of marginalization can impact the career success of the individual. Finally, this study also examined how these experiences influenced the decisions participants made in their careers, including advancement decisions.

Montas-Hunter (2012) used Badura's self-efficacy theory to understand how a high sense of self related to the career growth, influences the leadership positions of Latinas. For this research, I also used the motivational, affective, and selection components of self-efficacy theory to guide interviews and analyses. LatCrit theory, as described above, was also used to understand Latinas' sense of self, and the aspects of their journey to and through their leadership positions that contributed to it. A focus was specifically placed on how professional development and other career experiences influenced self-efficacy for Latinas leaders. Using LatCrit and Badura's self- efficacy theories together helped focus the research and analysis on the individual Latina experience while also attending to potential structural barriers to success they encountered in higher education institutions. Self-efficacy was applied in a real world context with practicing Latina leaders.

Method

Participants

Ten leaders in higher education positions, who self-identified as Latina were recruited to participate in semi-formal interviews. Invitations to participate were sent to Latinas via social media outlets such as Facebook, and professional development organizations – NASPA, The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and my professional community. Participants for this study self-identified as Latina, currently employed in a higher education

institution, and had no less than five years of higher education experience. After consultation with experts in higher education, the five-year threshold was purposely chosen because at the five-year mark an individual will have had enough experience to understand the role of professional development and its importance in their career development. Along with the number of years a Latina has been employed, employment position was also a criterion for screening participants for this study.

Participants in this study currently are or have been program directors, deans, and vice presidents. These selection criteria were chosen with the aim of identifying Latinas who are in roles that can lead to further career and leadership advancement if they so choose. Furthermore, this study only focused on Latinas in full-time administrative positions. Latinas in full-time faculty positions, for example, were not included in this study. Full-time faculty positions have different requirements for tenure growth depending on the higher education institution, for that reason they were not considered in this study.

Each participant chose her own pseudonym for this study. They are employed in public and private institutions, located in the Western region of the United States (see Table 1 for more information). After a lengthy analysis, this researcher purposely expanded the region in order to gain a better understanding of how Latinas, from a wide range of areas in the country, have similar experiences in their journey through higher education leadership. The women in this group ranged in age and experience. Participants' ages ranged from their early 30s to mid 50s. Some participants had over 20 years of experience in higher education whereas others were just finishing their fifth years. Participants were generous in sharing their stories and experiences. Their interviews revealed details that could possibly identify an individual, therefore I have

purposely omitted details that could identify the identities of the Latinas participating in this study. The Latinas in this research have overcome a variety of obstacles in their careers and continue to persevere. They shared their *cuentos* (stories) and gave their *testimonios*. This researcher does not want to portray these Latinas simply in terms of their demographic characteristics, or from a deficit lens. In line with *testimonios*, I focus on participants as a strong group of leaders, with complex identities, who have succeeded and overcome internal and external obstacles. As such, rather than break each participant down by their backgrounds in this section, Findings Part 1 includes more detailed narrative profiles for each participant. As described there, their years of experience in higher education and their journeys to and through higher education are deeply personal. Describing such stories simply in terms of the length of their careers would deny some of the institutional factors contributing to them. Thus, in that section, more detailed information on each participant is provided, in narrative form.

Procedure

Data were collected from participants in the form of semi-formal in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, depending on the interviewee's preference. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the educational and career histories and backgrounds of the participants, including barriers and supports they experienced. They were also aimed at understanding how professional development experiences (e.g., leadership programs, conferences, internal institutional workshops, personal reading) influenced a participant's career growth and if and how self-efficacy played a part in their career advancement.

Once participants were recruited, interviews were conducted through telephone, in-person, or video conference meetings, depending on participants' preference. A series of semi-structured questions (see Appendix A) were used for the interviews. Interview questions focused on choices about professional development, educational history, and questions related to self-efficacy. The LatCrit method of storytelling was used to help bring out the personal stories and experiences of the participants. The *testimonios* were aimed at helping to shed light on the political makeup of higher education institutions and the systemic racism participants experienced. Semi-structured questions were purposely chosen to provide the participants the opportunity to share their personal stories/ experiences openly, but with some specific questions that were guided by the theoretical framework. Probes were used to generate storytelling (e.g., "can you tell me a story about that"), and to generate some additional details about how barriers were confronted (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Interviews were recorded, and notes were taken for accuracy. Interview transcripts were stored on an encrypted storage file for privacy. Interviews were transcribed using software, Rev, and transcriptions were reviewed and compared to handwritten notes for accuracy. Participants were given the opportunity to review transcriptions for clarity, and to identify if any sections that should be omitted from the analysis. This procedure was aimed at enhancing the credibility and rigor of this research, but also at ensuring participants had some control over their stories, in line with the *testimonios* approach (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). After interviews were completed and transcribed, data were iteratively analyzed, both within and across cases, using the theoretical thematic analysis method, described in more detail below (Braun and Clark, 2006). Short narratives were also constructed that highlighted supports, barriers and strengths of

each participant (see Findings Part 1). These narratives were also shared with participants before being presented in this dissertation. Once completed, the final research will be shared with all participants.

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in five steps. First, immediately after conducting each interview, some initial analytical memos were drafted highlighting salient pieces of their stories, including supports and barriers each participant talked about, and how their intersectional identities came up in their stories. Once interviews were transcribed, each was reviewed. Memos were then added to and expanded on and a document noting “Emerging Questions” was also created.

Second, after reviewing each transcript, steps of the theoretical thematic analysis procedure were engaged. Beginning with initial coding. Specifically, the researcher began creating some open codes using the latent approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Here, the researcher did not overly interpret the meaning of the words participants used, but focused rather on the content of their stories and on categorizing them into meaningful word labels.

I initially developed codes for each participant individually. However, after having coded my third interview, I began examining codes in relation to one another, to begin to develop some sense of the shared experiences among participants. Averill (2002) explains that the use of matrices is beneficial to seek and identify relationships in themes or codes. The third step, therefore, included examining what I was identifying as meaningful codes for each participant in a matrix. A sample of the matrices developed is provided in Appendix B. The matrix allowed for identifying the codes that were salient both within and across responses.

Once the matrix analyses were completed, and included codes from across each interview, forty-three main codes were retained. I did not include codes that departed significantly from my Research Questions (such as, for example, about details of childhood experiences that did not relate to barriers, intersectionality, or career experiences) in the analysis.

As part of the thematic analysis procedure, I then engaged in some thematic mapping to explore connections between code and to identify the most meaningful themes in the data (step four). Here, some codes were combined to form a more overarching category or theme. For example, when identifying barriers many of the participants identified experiencing microaggressions at their institutions. The participants went on to identify other barriers through their journeys. When reviewing themes, I identified several codes that were related to institutional barriers and community barriers, soon realizing that there was some overlap. Such as the use of the term community used to describe fellow Latina/os and the institutions. Therefore, I decided to create an overarching theme focused on barriers participants faced, which referred to the multiple kinds barriers they described.

Through the analysis, I identified five main themes: barriers, supports, intersectional identities, professional development, and self-efficacy. As I reviewed the excerpts that corresponded to each theme, I revised and honed themes (step five). To enhance the thematic analysis, I also incorporated a saliency analysis to ensure that themes that did not occur as often, but were important to the overarching research questions, were still included in the findings (Buetow, 2010).

Rigor

To ensure rigor in the process, my committee chair, who is an experienced qualitative methodologist, audited the process throughout the research. I also incorporated member checking and got feedback from a subgroup of participants about my interpretation of the findings, and engaged in ongoing reflexivity processes (Morse et al., 2002). This included ongoing memoing about my initial interpretations of each interview and ongoing discussions of the analysis, to be aware of how my positionality, including my insider status as a Latina in higher education with leadership aspirations, might influence the data. The focus was on understanding each woman's *testimonio* individually, and highlighting some potential shared experiences. An additional goal was to begin to develop some hypotheses about how self-efficacy and professional development may influence career experiences, and particularly successes, for Latinas in higher education leadership.

Reflexivity

The process of reflexivity entails reflecting upon the connection of self and the stories of the participants, as well as sharing my own truth and connection to this work with another person. If I was continuing the tradition of *reflexión*, I would share my *testimonios* with another Latina who has faced similar oppression and macroaggressions within the system (Espino, et al., 2012; The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). In order to protect the identity of the participants of this study, I shared my *testimonio* with my dissertation committee chair. Although she is not Latina, she has faced her own issues due to the nature of her intersectional identities connected to her race, religion, and age. We may not share the same struggles, but we identify and support one another in this work. She gave me a space to feel safe to share things that may not always be shared in this research in the same way that The Latina Feminist Group (2001) did with each

other when they shared their *papelitos guardados*, “...the stories often held from public view – and to express the full complexity of our identities, from the alchemies of erasure and silencing to our passions, joys, and celebrations” (The Latina Feminist Group, p 20, 2001).

As a Puerto Rican mid-level manager at a public four-year institution, I was well poised for this research. I have faced personal and professional obstacles as I have slowly advanced my career in higher education. With that, I also tried to remain aware that I must refrain from imposing my experience in the research and during the interviews. I met weekly with my committee chair to review findings from interviews. She helped me think through whether or not I was imposing my experience on my analysis of the interviews, rather than recognizing the array of individual differences within our stories as Latinas in leadership (as well as some key similarities).

Through ongoing discussion with my advisor, I also identified what aspects of my own experiences were shared with the women in this study, and which were distinct. For example, I shared in the experience of a teacher being a support for me when I returned to school as a college student at the age of 35, but was clear that I also had distinct experiences related to my own positionality in this work. I also recognized that I had some of the wisdom that only comes from working for many years in higher education that participants like Lilly had. I kept these differences in mind throughout the study so as not to privilege narratives that were more similar to my own.

Findings

Through *testimonios* (Espino, et. al., 2012; Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012), the participants shared experiences that were both distinct and similar to one another in some

ways, even though they were each located at different institutions of higher education. They had faced institutional challenges within the system (and outside of it) and with individuals who they worked with. They overcame (or were overcoming) these challenges and persevered. This persistence and ability to confront challenges connects to Bandura's (1994) theory of a strong sense of self-efficacy. Each participant shared their counter-stories (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) to help this researcher understand their negative experiences with the higher educational system and how they overcame the barriers that they identified. In each counter-story, participants also address supports they experienced; whether they viewed them as internal strengths of interpersonal, all pointed to supports as well as barriers. As described above, to do justice to participants' individual stories, before describing collective experiences, this section includes two parts.

The first section includes detailed descriptions of each participant in the form of brief narratives that I constructed from their longer stories, intentionally highlighting their strengths and supports, as well as some of the barriers they experienced. However, for each participant, I identified how they confronted these barriers throughout, to illuminate the resistance and power of Latinas in higher education leadership. The second section includes the findings from the across-case thematic analysis I conducted.

Table 1. Participants Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Identity	Diversity of Institution
Eva	55	Mexican American	Public HSI ⁴
Marisol	33	Puerto Rican	Private PWI ⁵
Carmen	41	Mexican/ Immigrated	Public HSI
Rita	47	Metiza/ Chicana/Latina	Public PWI
Penelope	38	Multi-Racial/ Italian & Mexican	Public PWI
Megan	31	Mexican & white	Public HSI/ AANAPISI ⁶
Lily	43	Chicana/ Latina	Public HSI
Camilla	38	Latina	Public HSI
Elizabeth	43	Latinas/ Hispanic	Private HSI
Reyna	57	Latina/ Chicana	Public, in process of transitioning to HSI

⁴ HSI: Hispanic Serving Institution, the U.S. Department of Education defines as: an institution that has enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic students at the end of the award year... (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

⁵ PWI: Predominantly White Institution

⁶ AANAPISI: Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander – Serving Institution Program, the U.S. Department of Education defines as: ...has an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10 percent Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander (U.S. Department of Education, 2019)

Participant Descriptions

Eva is in her mid 50's and identifies as a Mexican American. She is currently a Dean at a Hispanic Serving Institution, public, in the Pacific Northwest. Eva has been in higher education for eleven years. Prior to her position as a Dean she was a director and a faculty member. She grew up in Southern California and describes herself as a strong-minded individual who was considered a good student, even though she did not complete high school in the traditional way. Eva was a teenage mother who left school to support her child. She was encouraged by her mother to complete high school.

She had to support herself and her child, her daily mode of travel was to ride several buses to drop her child off at a babysitter and then back tracked on the bus to return to school. She was fiercely independent and her child motivated her. Watching her mother complete college and become a teacher after her marriage ended, motivated Eva to complete her high school education.

Eva spoke of growing up not speaking her native language of Spanish because she grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood and did not want to stand out to her friends. Eva would not respond to her parents if they spoke to her in Spanish in front of her friends. This was a way to fit in to the world that she was not a part of in the eyes of her peers. Eva points out that her family has been here since before these lands became America, her ancestors were here first. Eva is not the only participant to mention this point.

Eva would go on to complete her master's degree at a nationally prestigious college. She noted that people are often surprised to hear where she completed her master's degree. Even as a

Dean she notices that some of her colleagues question how she went to that particular school. She is now completing her doctoral degree at her state's flagship college.

Marisol is Puerto Rican and in her mid 30's, originally from the West Coast, now resides in the Pacific Northwest and is a Director for Students Programs at a Predominantly White Institution private institution. In her nine years in higher education she has held positions as an administrative assistant and a housing director, prior to her current position.

Marisol attended a school that had an enrollment that was made up of 80% students of color. Marisol was tracked to go on to college but did not have the guidance at home because her mother had not completed elementary school and her father dropped out in ninth grade. Marisol was accepted to a large four-year public institution in her area. Marisol's parents held on to cultural traditions when she was accepted into college. She was encouraged to live at home with her parents throughout college. Her family did not want to take on additional expenses, and they did not understand the expense of college. They also did not believe that she should be living alone on a college campus. Her major was nursing and she attended classes with 500 other students. The long commute, not being able to engage in the campus culture, all led to her dropping out by week six of her first quarter.

After getting married to a military person, Marisol attended community college. From there she went on to complete a bachelor's degree but it did not come easy. She struggled with personal issues, she was told by some universities that she was too "old" to be on a traditional campus, but she did not let any of these issues stop her. Once completing her degree, she began a position that would lead her to the person that would be her first mentor and would guide her to continuing her education, master's degree, and explore other options in higher education. This

mentor helped spark her passion for working with students and pursuing a career in higher education.

Carmen grew up in a very small town in southeast Texas. She was one of the top students in her high school and knew that she would attend college. Although her mother had not attended college, she was very determined that her daughter would, and she helped navigate Carmen through the process. Carmen credits her mother for being a strong advocate for her education. Even if her mother did not know what the steps were, she asked questions in order to find the answers that her daughter needed. Carmen describes her mother as “relentless warrior” and shares all of her degrees (Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral) with her family.

Although Carmen’s family did not have much money, she was able to attend college with the assistance of scholarships. Without these scholarships Carmen would not be able to attend school, so when she was placed on probation after three semesters in college, she realized that she had to find a way to get back on track with her grades. It was Carmen’s mother who was determined that her daughter would get her college education, but it was Carmen who had to learn how to navigate the system. Without her mother’s support and guidance, Carmen felt lost. Fortunately, she was able to make a strong connection with a professor. She credits this professor for helping her learn how to navigate the higher education system as a first-generation, Latina student.

Today, Carmen is an Assistant Director of a specialized college program at a Hispanic Serving Institution in the Texas area. She has been in higher education for 19 years. Prior to her current position she was an Associate Director and held a position in the communications office.

Rita is an Associate Vice President at a public four-year institution in the mid-West. She has been in higher education for over 14 years. Prior to her current position she held five other positions in higher education: a director, an advisor, a director of diversity & equity, and has worked in institutional research. Depending on the company of people she is with she identifies as Latina, Chicano, or Mestiza. She explained that she does not want to explain the meanings or the reasons for the different identities.

Rita, who is in her mid 40s explained that she was a farm worker but not a migrant worker in her childhood. She said that she did not have a choice but to be a good student. Her original focus in her education was science. She was a science major all the way through her graduate studies. Eventually, she realized that it was not her passion, but she still presents at various science conferences on the topic of STEM and women/Latinas in the field.

Rita's partner is white and is employed at the same institutions as Rita. Rita shared many examples of the differences between the way that he is afforded grace for mistakes and how she is treated, the differences were glaring. Rita also explained that her marriage to her partner gives her privilege. The fact that he is white and affiliated with the institution gave her the opportunity to step into her position. It was her partner that insisted that she apply for a doctoral program. She pointed out that they already had a degree because she had supported him during his doctoral studies.

Rita explained that as the only girl in her family, her grandmother was very instrumental in her educational life. Her grandmother only had an eighth-grade education but had won the local spelling bee. It was a story that she heard often and during our interview she shared a fond memory of her grandmother. As the only girl in the family, and with the "privilege" of her

education, she has a sense of responsibility to take care of her family. To guide younger family members through college or career decisions. She is also responsible for scheduling the family gatherings and taking care of the elders in the family. Although she is an Associate Vice President with a doctoral degree many of the women in her family and her elderly grandfather cannot understand the higher education world that she is a part of. Rita explained that her mother did not have, "... the scaffolding for that in her world." While growing up Rita explained that the women were "moms and wives and those were their professional titles."

Not having women in her family that she could turn to for her advice for her education or career is difficult. Rita does have a tribe of women that she can turn to who she has cultivated relationships with through her higher education network. It is these women who have guided her or have supported her when she faces challenges at her institution. These challenges that have made others turn away from higher education careers, has only made Rita more determined to stay in and be there to guide and support other Latinas. She feels that she has a responsibility to be at the table, to be heard, to be the voice for other Latina/os that are marginalized by the higher education system.

Penelope identifies as multi-racial Latina. She is Italian and Mexican. She is a Director and Principle Investigator for two programs at a PWI public four- year institution located in the Pacific Northwest. She grew up in a small rural area, that is predominantly white. After high school she went on the attend her state's flagship university. She described that this is where she really felt a sense of belonging because she began to meet other multiracial students. She came from a community where it was not common to see other multiracial families, but in college she was in a dorm with other multiracial students and she loved it.

Penelope is in her late 30's and is a very independent woman. From a young age she learned how to navigate her education for herself. She remarked that she did not have help applying for college. Her father had completed college but her mother had never attended college. Her parents did not discourage her from attending college but they also were not familiar with the process. Penelope did it on her own. When she did not know something, she sought out answers from friends who had or were attending college. Once in, she realized the skills she needed to be a successful student at her university and excelled.

Penelope had many student employment positions and it opened her eyes to a career she did not think possible. She has been in higher education for over 15 years. Prior to her current position, she had been an advisor, interim director, and director of a program. Once she completes her doctoral program she aspires to move into the student affairs side of the college. She sees herself applying for positions like a dean, or associate vice president of diversity and inclusion, or a chief diversity officer.

Reyna has been in higher education for 30 years. She has had the longest career of all of the participants. Her current position is a Vice President/CEO of a very large community college system, prior to this position she was a Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Student Success, financial aid advisor, TRiO advisor, Coordinator of Student Services, assistant director, admissions dean, and a center director.

Both of Reyna's parents had college educations and expected the same for their children. Although Reyna's grandparents had a limited education, Reyna points to them as the guiding force to their education. Her grandmother had ten children and all but one completed a college education. Reyna's father would review school districts every time they had to move because he

did not want his children in a school that would not challenge them due to biases held by teachers or staff about their ethnic group. They set the bar high for their children and their children rose to the challenge.

As an adult, Reyna would use these lessons taught by her parents. She worked on a grant for her institution and believed that she would be able to continue working for them but also advance her position if they were awarded this grant. Once they received the renewal she spoke to the supervisor about the opportunity to be the director of the program. This supervisor told her that she could not be the director because she did not have a graduate degree. A previous supervisor had told Reyna that if she was able to get the renewal on the grant, that she could be the director. Reyna did not let these obstacles stop her, she decided at that moment that she would never let education be a barrier to her carrier. She went on to complete her master's degree and swiftly moved on to earn her doctoral degree.

Megan is one of the younger participants in this study. She identifies as multiracial because her mother is white and father is Mexican. She did not grow up speaking Spanish. Megan majored in Spanish in college. She pointed out that she is a light skinned Latina but she also identifies as a lesbian. She struggles with who she can trust to tell she is gay because in the area that she is in she does not feel that people would welcome that and then you add that she is a light skinned Latina, which as she describes, has created identity issues for her. Identities related to skin color and sexuality were salient aspects of her intersectional identity.

Although her parents were divorced they both moved her into college. Her mother graduated from college as an adult so Megan did not have any idea what she was supposed to do

once her parents left her at college. She talks about how her roommate, who came from a privileged background, guided her that first year when she lived on campus.

Megan received support for her education while growing up and experienced higher education at an early age. She talked about attending class with her mom and how she thought the books and the class as a whole was cool. She was part of a dual enrollment program at her local college when she was 13 years old. The program occurred in the summer and both her parents paid for it. This was a big deal because they did not have much money. Her grandmother and aunts would take turns dropping her off and picking her up from the program because her mother's work schedule kept her from doing it. There was a very collective effort to keep Megan in the program. Even though she did not have a lot of family members that attended college, she was exposed to college at a young age. Currently, Megan is an Assistant Director at a public four-year institution.

Lily has 20 years' experience in higher education and is currently a dean at a community college. She is located in Texas and identifies as Chicana/Latina. She has also worked with Talent Search and Upward Bound Programs. Lily was an Associate Director for Upward Bound, and then moved on to recruiting. In her early 30's she was approached to serve as an interim director for a large program for her university. She explains that the transition into this position was great but she also began to see the "political nastiness" of higher education. She eventually moved into an assistant dean position and that was the catalyst for her entering into her Ph.D. program.

Although Lily's parents did not have advanced educations, they did want their children to continue on to college. Lily explained how her parents moved her to all her different colleges.

She was very emotional when discussing the sacrifices that her parents made so that she could attend college. Lily continues in the tradition of collective family support, by supporting other family members in their journeys. That support comes in many different forms: advising family members about the process to enroll in college or about their careers, as well as monetarily.

Lily has built her career around supporting her family. Even though she experienced a hostile incident at a previous position, she has continued to be passionate about her work and her family. She does not allow that incident to influence her relationships with others at the institution. As she explained, when teaching others about race issues she does it from a place of love. She learned that you cannot do this work from a place of anger or a position of hostility, but rather from a genuine place of wanting to teach.

Camilla is in her late 30 and identifies as a Latina. She is currently a Director for Strategic Initiatives at a public Hispanic Serving Institution. She has over 17 years' experience in higher education. Prior to her current position she was part of the Enrollment Management team, worked in Student Development, and the Cultural Center.

Camilla was raised by a single mother who only had an elementary education. Camilla helped raise her younger siblings while attending school. Although Camilla had the grades to go onto to college, she was limited to where she could go because her mother did not want her to move away. Camilla chose to take four buses to get to school, help her mother with her younger sibling and work all while attending a private college. Although she struggled those first few semesters, she would go on to complete her doctorate degree.

As a young employee, Camilla experienced an incident, as she explained it, a microaggression. She spoke of not reporting an incident of a male supervisor making

inappropriate passes at her. She told the supervisor that she was not interested and thought that it had settled the matter. Someone overheard and brought it to the attention of her other supervisor. Instead of the supervisor addressing the matter with the male supervisor, she spoke to Camilla and questioned if maybe her behavior created the situation. She was shocked and felt demoralized, the person that was chastising her was a Person of Color. This was her first time experiencing microaggression from within her community.

Elizabeth identifies as a Latina/Hispanic, is 43 and works at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) that is a private religious institution. She is the Director of Resident Life and Housing Operations. In her 19 years of higher education she has been a resident assistant, and worked in residence life. She was raised attending private schools until she went to middle school. Her family decided to move to Mexico as Elizabeth was about to enter middle school. Her father was from Mexico and her mother was Mexican but was raised in Texas. When her father said that he could make more money in Mexico, her mother responded that if she could have her own house then she would move there. Her father built her mother a house and they moved to Mexico.

Elizabeth had never lived in Mexico, did not speak proper Spanish and now was attending school. She struggled at first because she knew nothing about the country or the school. Her mother had to hire a tutor to get her children up to pace with the other children. Elizabeth talked about an encounter when she first started school that was related to her lack of the language in Mexico. In the United States she had great grades, but she struggled as a new student in a new country.

With the help of a tutor Elizabeth was able to catch up to the other students and eventually bring up her grades. Her mother was very supportive of her children's education and wanted to make sure they did not fall behind. Elizabeth attempted to go to college in Mexico but soon realized that the quality of the education was not the same and moved back to the United States. Since she had not attended high school in the United States she did not have SAT scores and she was behind in her English writing, so she had to test into the community college and catch up. She quickly did and then went on a private religious college to finish her BA. She remarked that her family comes first when making career decisions, but she also talked about feeling like her culture has held her back a little.

Part Two: Findings from Theoretical Thematic Analysis

As described above, this research began with goal of connecting professional development and self-efficacy to the career growth of Latinas in higher education. After analyzing the data, what emerged was an understanding that although research (Bachelier, 2015; Crespo, 2013) does point to the importance of professional development, it was not at the forefront of the participant's career growth, or even a central aspect of the stories they shared. Some of the participants acknowledged that they had received and appreciated most of the opportunities provided by their institutions. However, many shared that they also provided their own professional development through participation in grassroots organization with other Latinas, and some of the professional development identified is not what we consider traditional professional development. Therefore, professional development is not categorized as a key finding in this research, although it was identified in some interviews as relevant. Nevertheless, I opted to include some findings regarding professional development because they may inform

how higher education institutions and professional organizations can create more opportunities for Latina administrators that are accessible and equitable.

Accordingly, the main themes that I identified in this research were: 1. Barriers - institutional and community; 2. Support throughout educational and career journeys; 3. Intersectional identities and related influences on career advancement; 4. Professional Development – traditional and nontraditional; 5. The role of self-efficacy – affective, motivational, and selective process. The first theme describes the various institutional and community-level barriers the participants experienced, including institutional politics and microaggressions at their places of work, and community microaggressions, wherein they experienced microaggression from fellow Latinas and Latinos. Participants described how each of these instances could have stalled their career growth, but instead, for many of these individuals it only fueled their drive to succeed.

The second theme of supports describes the finding that participants talked about many individuals in their lives as being supportive and instrumental in their education and career growth. The Latinas in this study appreciated the support that they received along their journeys. As such, many felt that it was their responsibility to pay it forward and support the next generation of Latina/os through their educational and career journeys.

Another theme that unfolded through the interviews was the role of intersectional identities as participants sought (or some cases, fell into) career advancement. Racial identity, language, skin tone, and sexual identity were described by the participants as both salient aspects of their identities and their social positions, and as influencing the way that they navigated their

institutions and communities. They also discussed how their intersectional identities influenced the marginalization and discrimination they experienced within their careers.

As mentioned previously, despite being an initial focus of this investigation, the theme of professional development was a less prominent theme compared to the others. However, given the possibility that institutions of higher education might be able to better invest in such opportunities in the future, findings related to this theme are also reported here. Professional development was described as both something formal participants received from their employers (what I refer to as “traditional”), but also as leadership opportunities they found on their own (what I refer to as “non-traditional”).

The final theme, as presented below, self-efficacy, was applicable to participants’ descriptions of their professional development, especially related to non-traditional professional development opportunities. Where this theory is more prevalent, however, are in the findings presented that relate to the overall career experiences of the participants. The Latinas in this research all held a strong sense of self, they all had faced challenges and did not allow these challenges to curtail their goals and aspirations. A challenge with using self-efficacy as a framework in this research is that it significantly contrasts with *colectivismo* found in the Latina/o culture. This will be discussed further in the Discussion section. All themes and subthemes are presented in Figure 1.

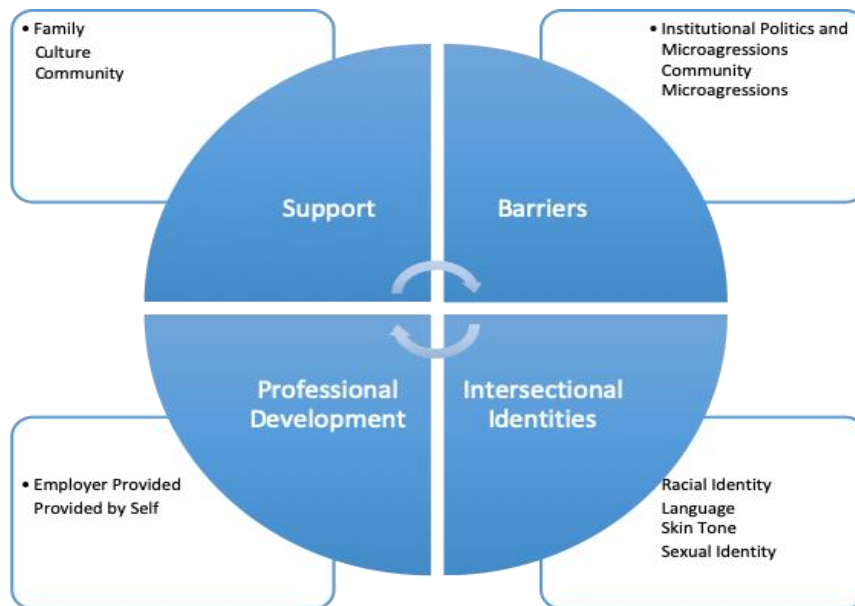


Figure 1 Variables that influence the career advancements of Latinas. Each quadrant identifies main themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews.

Theme 1: Barriers – Institutional and Community

Barriers came in many different forms and were identified as coming from other individuals, institutions, and community members who included both Latina/os outside of higher education as well as coworkers. Institutional politics and microaggressions were one form of barriers. Another barrier, which came as a surprise, was community microaggressions. Some of the Latinas shared stories about community members (Latina/os and other persons of color) who had created environments in which they were set up to fail. Findings corresponding to this subtheme suggest that individuals who participants expected to be supports were not supportive. For example, Marisol explained an incident that she encountered at her institution with another Person of Color: ...the Vice President of Equity and Diversity at her institution did not want to support the staff of color at her campus who wanted to present their experiences as persons of

color at their PWI. She felt disappointed that the Vice President, a Person of Color, did not support the concerns of the employees of color on her campus.

Carmen was told that if she completed her masters' degree she would be able to become the director in her area. She went on to complete the degree. But shortly before she finished the degree an Associate Vice President explained that Carmen would soon be reporting to a new person. Carmen found out that although the institution knew she was completing the degree for the position of director, they chose to bring someone in from the outside to fill the position. She felt undermined. Shortly after this person arrived she was laid off. Carmen believed she was exploited and even viewed as replaceable, possibly due to some of the institutional racism that she and her colleagues experienced. As she reported:

I was laid off even after I had been with the institution for 19 years, I had sacrificed a lot for this department and I was not given the position that I was promised. And so at the time, I went to HR to see what I could do because I was not getting much... like notice. So they basically said, "This is it." And I don't know if it's like this where you're from but here in my state, you contribute to a retirement system like every paycheck. So I had put in 19 years of retirement into the system. ... where I felt marginalized or where I had no power to do anything about it.... The memo that I crafted [explaining this] was submitted to HR five days after I got the said performance evaluation. Apparently, there's some policy that's hidden away in the policy book that says, you must submit any concerns or complaints within five working days. ... I'm finally like owning my voice and wanting to... I want the institution to do something for me to advocate for me? And that was not even on the table. And that's one of my frustrations with human resource departments,

they've lost sight of what they're there to do to help the human resources that the institution relies on.

Rita also shared a similar story about her boss that highlighted some of the microaggressions Latinas receive in the workplace: “My boss, I’ll give you example of my boss. She was told when she became a Director, that she couldn't hire a Latina as an Assistant Director because that would be too many.” Here, Rita, like Carmen, notes the feeling again of being a token Latina, and a replaceable one at that. From a LatCrit lens, it could be noted as well that her colleagues who informed her boss of this hiring position had the feeling, if even subconsciously, that “too many” Latinas at their place of work would put the racial dominance presumably maintained by non-Latinas under threat.

Finally, Lily went on to explain that, “...as an employee of an institution that’s considered a Hispanic Serving Institution, I think I suffered a lot of naivety in terms of how political things really were on my campus, and as much as I wanted to be a genuine person, and I still am and I was, it caused me issues.”

Barriers were identified as individuals who either purposely prevented the participants from excelling in their positions, or undermined them in different ways despite acting as if they had their best interest at heart. It is important to point out that each of these barriers became lessons to the Latinas. They learned how to navigate these issues and how to use them to support and teach fellow Latinas in higher education.

Theme 2: Support

Support was identified in many different ways, including in the form of family, institutional supports, official mentors, and unofficial mentors. Many of the Latinas discussed

people who had been major supporters of their careers and education. Several participants identified parents, grandparents, spouses, partners and community members as individuals that they credited for support through their educations and career. The support came in different forms. Megan talked about her family (grandmother, aunts, divorced parents) all providing support so that she could attend a college program during summer breaks. Megan shared:

When I was a freshman, I was about 13. I was a little bit young for my grade. I was asked to participate in a dual enrollment program at Cal State LA. And so I actually was able to go on campus, and take a few classes over the summer term with other college students. And my family had to make that happen for me. My mom had to pay for it, which money was not growing on trees, and my dad I remember sent me money in traveler's checks because it was the early 2000s for textbooks, and just to like give me some spending money while I was on campus. And my grandmother, my dad's mom, actually helped get me to and from campus because my mom had to work full-time in downtown Los Angeles every day, and she left the house at 6:00 AM and didn't get back until like 7:00 or 8:00 PM, L.A. traffic. And so my grandma or my great aunts on that side of the family would actually pick me up from classes for most of the time and take me there because that was the way to make it happen. And I just remember they were very supportive.

Although her parents were divorced when she was young, they collectively made sure that Megan would be able to go on to this college program. Family support was identified in other areas as well.

Eva shared how her mother influenced her return to complete her high school diploma, both materially and as a role model. Eva's mother returned to college as an adult and went on to become a teacher:

My mom divorced my dad later in life, when I was in high school, and then she went back to school. So she went back to school later in her ... At her age and she became a teacher. ... she encouraged me to finish high school.

Reyna's parents were first generation graduates, so she grew up knowing that she was expected to go on to college. As she explained, we didn't know how it would be paid for, we just knew that we were going.

...so my parents are first-generation college students. There were the first in their families to go to college. So the expectation that we go was definitely there. But as far as that planning and the systems in place to make that possible, not necessarily, ... My family, my father is no longer living, but my mom and my sisters and my husband and groups of women, and so they're like, I have those support systems.

These are just a few of the participants that credit family support during their education. Interestingly, this feeling of collective gain of the degree, whichever degree it may be, was mentioned several times amongst the other participants. They mentioned their degrees belong to their families because of the support and sacrifices their families made for their educations. It was a feeling of gratitude but it also gave many of the participants a new sense of responsibilities

for their families. Here the values of *colletivismo* and *familismo* are prevalent. Others went on to credit teachers.

Some of the participants credited teachers who were pivotal in their educational journey. Some were just there to help navigate the system and others continued their friendships past their time together in school. Marisol explained:

...Mr. "T" was my business faculty advisor and he was very pivotal in helping getting me connected and navigating through college.

Marisol also shared a story about her and her brother and the different ways they were tracked in high school:

...and it was primarily about 85% students of color. That's where I grew up, and I had a twin brother and he, both of us went to school together, but we were tracked differently. I had the opportunity to be in honors classes and he did vocational tech.

Carmen talked about being a top student at her high school and knowing that she would go on to college. Although her mother only went to school through 8th grade, Carmen describes her mother as a relentless warrior when it came to helping Carmen navigate the process for applying to college. Once in college, she no longer had her mother there to guide her, or give her the support she needed to navigate life in college. For the strong student that Carmen was in high school, she was placed on academic probation as a result of her struggles during the first few quarters in college. The turning point for Carmen was a professor that she met. He was white but spoke fluent Spanish and was the first person who made her feel comfortable and connected:

That right there was a connection with a person of a different race who

I connected with... He would give me advice and it was really good because he wasn't handholding me. He was providing knowledge in a non-judgmental way and I acted on it. And I think that was one of the biggest turning points for me is one connection, one relationship that opened up an opportunity for me to say, "I need to take care of my business and I need to listen to these people with more experience and more knowledge because they're giving it to you freely."

Another subtheme in this area that was prominent across interviews relates to the role of mentors both formal and informal. Many of the Latinas reported having relationships with mentors and mentoring others. Others did not identify anyone in their lives as a mentor, but they did have people that they would call on when seeking advice. Others still, mentioned that they had a group of women that they considered their career and life advisers. These were people that they had met either through work, professional organizations, or school. Most importantly, these were individuals that they felt safe with and trusted. Lily shared a great example of individuals that she considered mentors but all would not be considered traditional mentors:

She was my first mentor and she still remains connected. So she's probably the most stable mentor I have had in terms of just consistency and also so much of what she shared with me...sometimes I think...she was preparing me for stuff that was coming up. ... I think a new mentor I've had...recently is actually Mary (name changed). She's my classmate and we're the same age... So she's been a help in my writing process but also just in my professional and personal life.

Reyna explained her relationship with one of her mentors:

So I feel like what's great about that relationship it's been mutually beneficial.

We've both gotten things out of it.

When I asked the participants if they mentored anyone and why they felt it is important to be a mentor, their responses were connected to their own past experiences and not wanting others to experience the same situation. Lily:

...I think what I've realized is that, I wished I'd had a strong mentor that challenged me when I said things like, I'm not going to take that job, I'm not going to pursue it, right? Because I think part of the reasons that... I think initially I've made it seem like, oh, I just let the universe send me opportunities. There's no real agency in that, right?

Here, Lily suggests that mentors may be especially important for Latinas in higher education, who will undoubtedly face challenges that might lead them to feel more helpless at times, rather than to advocate for themselves and have confidence in themselves. Finally, Carmen shared that her Vice President of Equity and Diversity was very thoughtful and supportive of her as a woman of color on her campus. She also credited her as a person she identified as a current mentor in her career. Rita discussed how mentoring or having mentors help build a community of supporters:

I keep my network strong because you never know when you're going to need them. And you have to be willing, lift while you climb kind of thing, you have to be willing to do that too. Plus, I think that's double, and that took some realization. It was only in the last, guess, 18 months or so, I guess a year, I've been an assistant vice president. Realizing that I had made it to a place where I could leave doors open for others.

Support comes in many different forms. The value of having a support system was instrumental to many of the participants. Some credit family as the most important support they

received. Family being: parents, siblings, spouses, friends, and for some, children and mentors. Mentors do not have to be as formal as is usually described in research. Here I found that a mentor is identified as someone you can turn to when you need some quick advice, or just someone you trust that you can bounce ideas off of. Whatever form it comes in, support to Latinas in higher education leadership appeared to have lasting effects on the participants.

Theme 3: The role of Intersectional Identities in Career Advancement

This topic was prominently identified early in the interview process. It became apparent that the intersectional identities of each of the participants was just as important to understanding the experiences of these Latinas' careers and lives as was a focus on the supports they encountered. Participants spoke of skin tone and its relation to how they were treated at their institutions, as well as its socio-historical and cultural roots. Language in general, and participants' parents' and grandparents' choices to pass on (or not pass on) the Spanish language to their children and grandchildren was also a salient identity issue for most participants, and appeared to influence how they were seen and treated by other Latina/os.

I was aware that Latina does not mean the same thing to everyone and may not be the most meaningful racial/ethnic identifier for participants. I did ask them how they personally chose to identify ethnically. It came as a surprise that many of them had stories to share surrounding this topic. Finally, sexual identity, although not a focus of this research, was also discussed. Specifically, several participants talked about having to navigate predominantly white and heteronormative spaces as queer Latinas, and with the fear that people in those spaces would not be allies. These are just a few examples of how participants' intersectional identities came to the forefront in *testimonios*.

Megan for example, did not grow up speaking the language, she majored in Spanish in college. She states:

My dad was this small Mexican boy in Los Angeles during the 70's, so his mom intentionally did not teach him Spanish.

Megan also spoke about counter-spaces that are created for students. Here she describes an incident in college:

... that space was meant to be for Latinas and I just was not Latina enough or I wasn't Afro-Latina. It was not a very welcoming space.

Here, it seems, she felt excluded by other Latina/os due to her lack of Spanish, which was ironically a result of her grandparents not passing Spanish onto her father, due to their fear that he would then be excluded from Anglo spaces in the U.S. Megan also discussed the tone of her skin and how this relates to her identity and her career experiences. She stated that she is light skin, and shared:

and then because I do pass as white, people often make comments particularly around immigration, recently.

It's clear here that by passing as white, Megan is often privy to discriminatory comments about her own ethnic group, she is granted an "insider status" she may not wish to have.

Finally, Megan mentioned:

I'm also queer, and so there's also that component too. And just the intersectionality of queer, Latina, female, is something I'm having to navigate. When do I bring my partner to events? Or if I'm talking about my partner, there are people I watch pronouns around.

If you're friends with me on Facebook, you know I'm out, but there are some colleagues at work that it becomes a regular consideration.

As Megan's stories illustrate, participants experience privileges and marginalization, as well as a sense of inclusion and exclusion, that is related to their intersectional identities and the social positions to which they have access because of them. In addition, it is clear that exclusion is not always from a dominant white community, but can also come from their fellow Latina/o community members.

Eva's story reflects much of the same. She also talked about skin tone as it relates to her intersectional identities:

We grew up, culturally, the darker your skin is that, you know... You were treated differently. The lighter your skin was, you were treated [better]... So for example, I have siblings, We're all different shades of brown. ...growing up I think yes; you could see that privilege of the skin in the ---I don't know. Not all cases, I'm just saying in some cases I've seen that people respond or ...white people, I'll be more specific, attach themselves or bond better with people who don't look Hispanic but are Latino, Hispanic, because they're lighter skinned.

Rita also talked about her light-skin privilege and the access this provided her at her institution:

I believe very much that I have the privilege of being in spaces where most people like me aren't. white people often want to see me as white until I opened my mouth or say something. But I have light skin privilege, and I think it's my job to question things. If I get in that door, I'm not supposed to just sit there and I'm supposed to do something, when I'm there. I have the responsibility to do something when I'm there.

For Elizabeth, the experience was different because she identifies as mixed race, one parent was Mexican and the other Italian. She reflected on her experience in Spanish class:

My mom's first Language is Spanish. How do I not know Spanish? Then at the same time I was like, why is there this expectation on me to know something that not everybody knows? It just was, it's still a conflict with me, because I still haven't really completely learned Spanish.

Language had a significant impact for some of the participants. For others, culture and its influence on their careers.

Camilla: I think that institutions of higher education really need to stop, I guess not stop,

I should say they should start acknowledging things are there, the cultural wealth that we bring to the workplace, and not only of Latinos but of everyone. I think as a human development organization, as a human resources organization, really acknowledge that people don't leave who they are when they come into the door. And I think that sometimes institutions of higher ed are very bougie, pedigree is about everything, but it only accounts for some people not for others. ...And I just think if institutions of higher education stopped tokenizing us and really tap into our cultural wealth, our knowledge, and our skills, like I think we can advance the conversation.

A few of the Latinas referenced culture as influencing their careers. Latino culture has been the topic of books related to skills that are inherent in Latina/o culture and those skills are reported to benefit Latina/o leaders in higher education. For example, Castellanos & Jones (2003) point to specific traits, the strength of the skills that Latina/os have and use in their leadership roles: *Collectivism*, *Personalismo* (placing value on personal relationships), and

Respeto (respect) (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 169-172). Bordas (2013) explained that the base of our cultural values are what makes us great leaders (Bordas, 2013, p. 110). Yet not all of our cultural values are seen as supporting the career advancement of Latinas.

In one particular response, Elizabeth pointed out the we as Latinas are culturally taught to be humble and how that has impacted her own career advancement at her institution. Elizabeth:

I think that's in our culture and I could be wrong, maybe my experience has been different from a lot of answers you've been getting. But in our culture we're taught to work hard and don't complain. You are taught to don't look at the negative, look at every positive thing that you have. Sometimes that puts us like, I'm not, oh, how can I answer this? I'm a very, very humble person, but as my tether to strength, it's a huge weakness. Because you would not hear me brag about myself. So I think that as Latinas, we need to do a better job of don't stand back, stand forward, but with grace and with listen because we're big talkers.

The intersectional identities for the participants influenced how they navigated their community spaces and professional spaces. Latinas who spoke fluent Spanish may be seen as more Latina than those who did not speak the language at all by fellow Latina/os, but it also made them feel marginalized because others in the dominant race treated them differently if they used their Spanish language. Being a Latina, speaking Spanish (or not), skin tone, and sexual orientation were part of the identities that the participants described as the many layers of who they were. Layers that they had to manage in order to navigate their spaces, especially places of white privilege, but also in spaces that included fellow Latina/os.

Theme 4: Professional Development: Traditional and Nontraditional

As previously mentioned, the catalyst for this research was professional development experiences of Latinas and its influence on their career growth. What I found through the interviews was that among the Latinas that participated in this research, the limited professional development that each of the participants experienced did not warrant enough evidence to say that professional development was or could be instrumental in their career growth. Although, it was not a key finding, it was very informative and therefore I chose to include it.

Participants were asked about their Professional Development opportunities that their institutions provided, as well as Professional Development that they sought for themselves. Several responses were surprising, for example Marisol and Megan shared that they believed the investment in their doctoral degree was a form of professional development that they completed. The degree itself will help advance their careers. Marisol noted, "I think choosing to go the Ph.D. route has been a tremendous professional development endeavor." Megan also said "a lot of my professional development has been my Ph.D. program." Others remarked on the expense of Professional Development and their lack of access to it through their jobs. Eva expressed that although her institution for the most part said yes to her request to attend opportunities, they also did not have enough resources to completely support these trainings. For example, Eva shared how her president approached her to say that they would be offering opportunities for employees to attend an executive leadership training that was a yearlong program, but:

There was a caveat, even though the president opened it up, we had to pay like half of the costs so it wasn't really... Here's a professional opportunity, we'll support you. They're opening it up and it's our turn for three years, but you'll have to use your vacation days and we'll pay for the travel but you have to do it on your own.

Elizabeth discussed how she had to learn how to pursue professional development:

At first, I wasn't assertive enough to pursue, I kept going to regional conferences and regional conferences. I started pursuing the national conferences and then my boss..., she was like, "Absolutely not. You figure it out." She wasn't a big firm believer of professional development but I didn't go to conferences when I was under her as I can recall. But then my current boss is a very firm believer of professional development. So you really have to chase it. You want it, you need to go after it. It's not something that's going to be given to you in the silver platter.

Camilla also talked about the fact that professional development opportunities at her institution were not equitable. She shared:

It's mostly been a one-way street, honestly. It's me like highlighting the work, like presenting at ... Obviously, it's my opportunity to showcase like the work that I've done, but it's not like...like my boss had the opportunity to go to the Hearse conference, like the Harvard Institute, I think. ... I would love to go to one of those things, obviously this is not the right time because I would be gone for four weeks. ... But in terms of me as a leader and like my skills and developing my skills, like I honestly can't say that I've gone to something recently that really like helps me have a reflection about who I am as a leader. It's been sort of like a technical professional development.

Some mentioned that prior to accepting their positions, they negotiated for professional development to be included in their hiring package. Prior to her current position Lily explained that she had not participated in professional development since 2009:

So there has been an agreement that we reached when I accepted the job that because...even though my job is in a different division, and I'm an administrator I'm going to conferences like ASHE (Association for the Study of Higher Education and MALCS (Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social⁷).

Professional development experiences described in these *testimonios* are much more varied, and arguably, more meaningful than the kinds of professional development described traditionally. It is not just attending a conference annually; it is also about relationships and supports from other Latinas and Women of Color. Participation and investment in an individual advancing her education is also just as important as attending a week-long seminar. The only difference between the two is that employers will acknowledge and even financially support the work of a week-long seminar as professional development, but they do not typically value or invest in Latinas' pursuing more education, or in the informal relationships they seek as they navigate their institutions. Not all institutions behave the same way but institutions of higher education generally speaking need to begin to look outside of the box when supporting the professional development of its Latinas and Women of Color more generally.

Theme 5: Self-Efficacy

Three elements of Bandura's self-efficacy model were used for this study: Selective Process, Motivational, and Affective. According to the theory, each of these elements contribute to an individual's sense of self-efficacy. The selective process explains that individuals who have a high sense of self-efficacy will be open to career opportunities and will not let fear or

⁷ Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS): Women Active in Letters and Social Change

intimidation stop them from accepting new roles. The caveat is that they will no longer accept positions just to move forward, the position has to have meaning for them. Camilla, for example, the motivational element was connected to establishing goals for herself and accomplishing them. The Latinas in this study discussed goals that they set for themselves. These included goals for their careers, such as with Penelope and Marisol, or for their education, such as with Elizabeth and Reyna. Elizabeth and Reyna saw their futures and they were laying the foundation through education and doing the work to accomplish it.

Penelope talked about always wanting to move up, either as a Dean of Students or Associate Vice President:

As a Director you can't do much when your programing funding goes away.

You can't support your staff. ...you basically, you lose your job. Your staff loses their job.

Rita describes her career advancement as,

...not being a ladder but a lattice and sometimes you need to move sideways to move up and then make a decision.

The final element from Bandura's model used for this study was, Affective Processes. This element focuses on how an individual handles stressful situations. All the Latinas in this study presented as strong, intelligent, independent women. Although many of them had faced macroaggressions, racism and obstacles, they did not allow it to stop them. They overcame them and used the lessons learned, and their own sadness and disappointment in fellow People of Color, bosses or colleagues, to either prepare them for other challenges or to share them with fellow Latinas as way to help them not encounter the same situation. In this way, affective

dimensions of facing institutional and community challenges also motivated them to stay the course or reach for more. As Eva said:

I'm just a strong, persistent person, so I'll use my internal instincts or I'll find resources. That's my own inner strength to help me get through. Otherwise I'll just say screw it and move on. Deal with or don't deal with it, depending on the situation.

Reyna also talked about her emotional resources as she confronted challenges. She noted:

Then I also feel like I just have a really strong like I said, an internal locus of control. Sometimes even when other people think I should be insulted about something and I'm like, "Eh, don't worry about that." As my grandpa, I just loved him. He used to say it in Spanish, but I understood what he said, and I would notice, like injustices or something, my grandpa would say, "Oh don't mind them. They're still mad because we kicked their butts at the Alamo."

The participants in this study all have a high sense of self-efficacy. The way they described their tenacity, how they overcame obstacles, as well as the way they described themselves, are not ways in which individuals with low self-efficacy issues describe themselves. This high sense of self-efficacy may also be connected to the strong connections of supports that they described earlier or the cultural connection to *colectivismo*. Either way, I no longer believe that Bandura's theory of self-efficacy should be used to measure the success of Latinas in their careers.

Discussion

Although Latinas are increasingly represented among undergraduate and graduate students at colleges and universities throughout the U.S., they are still significantly

underrepresented among leaders at higher education institutions. This study was aimed at contributing to addressing this challenge through the use of *testimonios* with ten current Latina leaders in higher education. The use of *testimonios* gave the participants the opportunity to share their experiences as Latinas navigating the higher education system in their communities. Espino, et. al., (2012) explains, “By engaging in *testimonios*, scholars avoid essentializing a Latina experience and instead, honor the various subjectivities that correspond with sexual identities, immigration status, language, and phenotype, to name a few.” (Espino, et. al., 2012, p. 446). LatCrit theory informed the use of storytelling, as well as counter-storytelling, to confront the silencing of these Latinas by the dominant race, and to reveal their lived experience throughout their careers (Solórzano, D. G. & Yosso, J. T., 2001). Bandura’s (1994) Self-Efficacy Theory, explains that an individual with a high sense of self-efficacy is able to address challenges and develop skills over time to overcome obstacles. Each of the participants has overcome obstacles as they presented themselves within their careers. As similar as their *testimonios* were, they all had unique differences in the way in which they experienced obstacles, managed microaggressions, as well as navigated between their careers and personal lives. These differences were able to be brought to the fore through a focus on individual experiences, and shared experiences.

Below, I discuss some of the core findings in relation to previous literature, noting throughout the findings related to individual differences in participants’ experiences in stories.

Barriers Latina Leaders face in (and outside of) Institutions of Higher Education

Participants *testimonios*’ were similar in that they illuminated how each had experienced various forms of racism and microaggressions within their institutions and communities

(communities in this context are persons of color who create barriers within their work environment and outside of it). Yet their experiences cannot be generalized and do not speak for all Latinas in higher education. For example, Marisol shared how the Vice President of Equity and Diversity at her institution did not want to support the staff of color at her campus who wanted to present their negative experiences as persons of color at their PWI. Individuals who consciously or unconsciously create barriers to further the growth of an individual are seen as a barrier (León & Martinez, 2013). For Marisol, the individual she encountered- a colleague- is a difficult barrier in her career, but she has used this experience as motivator for her to call out the negative experiences that People of Color experience on her campus.

Yet, Carmen shared that her Vice President of Equity and Diversity was very thoughtful and supportive of her as a woman of color on her campus. She also credited her as a person she identified as a current mentor in her career. In contrast, Lily spoke of a previous supervisor who had Lily removed from her position after many years at her institution. This termination was later addressed in court and was eventually settled, but not without severe monetary consequences for Lily. Lily has not allowed these experiences to change her career, she has also used these lessons to grow and teach others. For example, she makes it a point to expose her staff to “community cultural wealth with regard to challenging deficit frameworks in student success.” Lily has taken a negative experience and used it to educate those who are not familiar with these theories but she also does not assume that the institution will do the work that is necessary to change the climate of the campus. The literature also describes how Latina leaders have had to overcome barriers in their careers (León & Martinez, 2013; Wallace, Budden, Juban, Budden, 2014). Lily’s experience suggests that these challenges can also continue to motivate leaders to stay the

course. Here we see how the affective and motivational components of Bandura's (1994) self-efficacy theory are connected.

It should not be assumed that actions like Lily employed will be the norm, nor should that be the expectation of Latina leaders in higher education. Trainings for navigating conflict should be supported by institutions and incorporated as professional development within the institution for all members of the institutional community. As was mentioned in the interviews, we, as Latina leaders, have our job descriptions and then some more. The Latinas talked about having to do their jobs and then do it twice as better than others. Having to prove themselves or being questioned by others about their skills was common for many of the participants (Sotello Viernes Turner, p.6., 2007). León & Martínez (2013) found that Latinas reported that they felt more pressure to perform at a higher level than others to perform in their positions. The pressures that are placed on Latinas when they do not have the support from their supervisors, are significant. More research examining resources Latinas can rely on when such challenges occur could contribute to enhancing their career success and overall well-being. Some of these resources were also identified in this study.

Supports for Latinas in Higher Education

As important as findings regarding the barriers Latinas face at their institutions, were findings regarding some of the supports they experience from formal and informal mentors as well as loved ones. One of the most prominent subthemes in the data was related to the role of mentors (León & Martínez, 2013; González-Figueroa & Young, 2005). Research suggests that engaging with a mentor could benefit individuals in their careers. The response to mentorship and its relationship to the careers of the Latinas in this research was mixed. The individuals in

this study not only referenced professional individuals as mentors, but they also referenced individuals that they reached out to for advice about their careers or issues related to work. These individuals were not called out as mentors, but rather, referred to as supportive people in their lives. Menchaca et. al. (2016) references this form of mentoring as, “informal mentoring.” Although the relationship is not seen as formal, the support is still essential to the career success of individuals at the receiving end.

Professional development was an additional support some participants experienced. Several talked about formal organizations and conferences they were connected to. However, more striking in the data set was the lack of stories about professional development opportunities. This finding suggested that these opportunities are not sufficiently available to Latinas in Higher Education. As some participants mentioned, they had to seek out their own support in their career, and even consider their PhDs as professional development. This suggests that although the research (Bachelier, 2015) recommends professional development for advancing an individual’s career, the Latinas in this study did not have the same opportunities as other leaders in higher education. Some, such as Eva and Camilla, even described having to create or provide their own professional development to themselves. Bachelier (2015) discussed the importance for employers providing professional development for their employees. The lack of professional development, whether it is formal or informal, curtails the career growth of the employee. Future research should systematically document what kind of opportunities are available to Latina leaders in higher education, and the extent to which these opportunities are equitable and accessible.

Intersectional identities

An additional finding discussed above was the role of intersectional identities in participants' career experiences. Notably, skin tone (lighter) and language appeared to be aspects of identities that either opened the door to opportunities and access within institutions of higher education, or were used to exclude participants. Participants also talked about being treated badly by other Latinos based on their skin color, and the internalized negative views fellow Latinos appeared to hold related to skin color. This suggests the aftermath of colonization is still present in Latinas lives and even relationships, and should be investigated further. Delgado & Stefancic, (2012) discussed that race is placed into categories that are used or manipulate and to serve the dominant individual. This behavior is now demonstrated within the Latina community as they discussed the inter-community racism that they have encountered. Below is a description of how these kinds of experiences might be addressed.

Self-Efficacy

Finally, additional findings were about self-efficacy and how it relates to the career development and success of the Latinas. Each of the participants were very aware of how to manage conflict that they encountered, they established formal and informal goals for themselves, and did not turn away from difficult projects that were presented. Betz & Hackett, (2006) discuss how deeply connected career development and self-efficacy are, the same was found to be true here. Research pointing to the role of affective skills in managing work-related barriers was very relevant to the findings (Bandura, 1994).

It's possible, for example, that participants were using their affective self-efficacy skills as they redefined what it means to be a successful leader. It is thought in much of the higher education literature that advancing an individual's career, for example, is connected to upward

growth at the institution. A program director might aspire to be a dean, and then possibly a vice president, and from there go onto a presidency. This was not how the participants in this study defined advancement or success, and most did not take such a straightforward path.

Participants suggested that advancement and success may mean something different for Latina leaders in higher education than is traditionally discussed in the leadership and higher education literature. In line with Bandura's (1994) Self-Efficacy theory, each of the participants relied on various skills to overcome challenges, and one of these skills was setting nontraditional goals. Penelope discussed wanting to move up to dean or associate vice president. Penelope noted, however, that she wanted these positions in order to be able to protect her staff from layoffs. Being in a position where she could better support others was what success meant for Penelope.

In contrast, Rita strongly considered what would be best for her family when making career decisions. She also explained that the work had to be meaningful for her. Rita was perfectly comfortable accepting what people would refer to as a lateral position if she felt it would satisfy her goal of doing meaningful work.

Rita and Penelope have been in higher education for approximately the same amount of years. Although their goals differ slightly from one another, both are prioritizing other people's well-being in their decision-making. Here, the well-being of the collective appeared to be more important than individual well-being. These values, *colectivismo* and *familismo*, are examples of the cultural characteristics that Bordas (2013) describes as being assets when describing the daily work life of Latinas. It's possible that participants relied on these assets as they faced institutional challenges and re-evaluated their goals.

Interestingly, this feeling of collective gain regarding the job or degree, was mentioned by several other participants. They shared that their degrees belong to their families because of the support and sacrifices their families made for their educations. It was a feeling of gratitude but it also gave many of the participants a new sense of responsibilities for their families.

Colectivismo and *familismo* are present in all participants' narratives when they refer to their careers and educations.

More research should be conducted that systematically investigates what success means to Latinas in leadership positions, and the kinds of supports they need to reach these potentially different goals. It would also be important to know, for example, if these goals were identified after participants faced barriers to traditional leadership paths, as a response to such challenges, or if they always had these goals in mind.

One reason to investigate this question further is that some of the participants spoke negatively about these values, even while admitting using them to guide their work. González-Figueroa & Young (2005) discussed how Latinas feel marginalized in their professional setting due to the isolation that they feel in their positions as well as having to separate their cultural identities within their places of employment. Perhaps they felt negatively about these values because they were out of synch with the institution in which they were working. More research should try and disentangle goal setting from how Latinas address barriers, and from the role of cultural values in Latina leaders' career experiences. Regardless of the initial reason, however, findings suggest that participants relied on their cultural values to persevere.

Recommendations

Several important recommendations were identified in this study. Although professional development was not found to significantly influence the career advancements of this group of women, it should be noted that some areas for improvement within institutions of higher education can be made so that more Latinas have opportunities to participate in these activities. A surprising finding in this research was the reference to programs participants experienced as undergraduates: DECA, TRiO, MECHA. Many of the Latinas explained that these programs helped build communities for them within their colleges but also taught them how to navigate the system, and introduced them to their future careers in higher education. Although not a focus of this research, I would be remiss if I did not mention how many times these programs were credited for guiding these Latinas as students in college. Higher Education should analyze what these programs are doing to support our students of color on campuses throughout the U.S., and find a way to replicate some of those programs for their staff and faculty of color.

Marisol, drawing on her own experiences in college, for example, took it upon herself to develop a Colleagues of Color Group on her campus. She explained that this group was for all staff and faculty of color. Sometimes we find that gatherings such as this one will only be for faculty or only staff. With the limited number of faculty and staff of color, these gatherings should include both, as Marisol's program does.

A number of the participants also remarked on the cost of professional development. Some had negotiated dollar amounts that would be budgeted for their professional development. Others noted that as much as they wanted to participate in leadership programs, they either could not afford it on their own or their institutions did not have the budget to send them to the

programs. The cost of the programs varies significantly, with some starting at \$5,000. In addition, participants noted the need for leadership programs that were shorter (one described a leadership program that lasted for four weeks). Location was also mentioned as an important barrier. It was recommended that, instead of participants traveling to the programs, the programs can be developed as a regional cohort model.

As mentioned earlier, many of the Latinas discussed non-traditional professional development that they sought for themselves: participating in their doctoral programs, connecting with fellow Latinas to engage in scholarly work, and seeking out their own trainings and readings. None of these areas is supported or encouraged by most higher education institution as professional development for administrators. It is time to start recreating what professional development is and can be. Some examples in which institutions can support these professional development opportunities is providing leave time for these professional development activities. Leave time that is not vacation time or sick leave, leave time that is designated as professional development leave. This is just one way in which professional development can be supported and create accessible opportunities for all.

Institutional microaggressions and racism were also noted in the interviews as an important challenge that needed to be addressed. Multiple participants remarked on how their human resource departments failed in providing them the support they needed, some even mentioned that these departments were forgetting to serve the humans within the institution and were more concerned with protecting the institution itself. Conducting an audit of human resource divisions to understand how they are serving the needs of Latinas and persons of color on their campuses is one way to understand what kinds of supports might be lacking. Another

option might be to incorporate more training for human resource employees in the area of diversity and equity; it cannot be presumed that all employees have the tools to support their work. It may behoove institutions to seek an external, unbiased individual or agency to review how incidences of complaints are resolved. As institutions of higher education focus on developing diversity and equity trainings for staff and faculty, hiring diversity and equity officers, as well as meeting federal requirements for equal opportunities on campus, they should also investigate whether their human resource departments are keeping pace with the changes that are occurring around their campuses.

As for the intersectional identities that each of the participants discussed, skin tone, language, ethnicity, and sexual identity were described as both salient identities but also influencing the marginalization and discrimination participants experienced at their place of employment and outside of it. They also described feeling excluded or discriminated against by Latinas/Latinos and other People of Color. The recommendation would be to have more conversation with employees regarding unconscious biases that they have regarding how they are treating People of Color as it relates to skin tone. As previously mentioned by the participants, because several are “lighter toned,” they felt that they had a responsibility to represent all Latinas when they were “at the table.” Another participant mentioned that she had to correct a colleague who shared discriminatory beliefs about undocumented students. This colleague was not aware that this individual was Latina because she is lighter toned and she does not have an ethnic last name. More support needs to be given to Latinas who are often included in conversations they don’t want to be included in. In addition, more antiracist work should be done regarding skin tone biases that people still hold, even within communities of color.

As a community of Latinas we need to work together to advance and support one another. A few of the participants mentioned that they had also been treated differently by other Latinas because they did not speak Spanish fluently. Higher education institutions profess that they want to increase the numbers of Latinas and persons of color at their institutions, but they also need to begin acknowledging that some of their campuses are not inclusive spaces. Institutions need to not only recruit Latinas, but also invest in them and their many forms of cultural wealth. Institutions also need to provide the various forms of support described here (professional development, bias training, formal and informal mentors, etc.) to help retain Latina leaders at their institutions.

Limitations

Despite the important recommendations and findings that were identified in this study, there were several limitations that are also important to mention. The sample size was limited to ten participants to be able to focus in-depth on their individual *testimonios* and to identify shared experiences among them. In addition, although participants were from Universities across the West coast region of the United States, only a handful of institutions were represented in this research. Participants' stories, nor the descriptions of their institutional contexts, cannot be generalized to all Latinas in Higher Education leadership. Nevertheless, their stories can be used to inform how similar institutions might try and better support Latina leaders and potential leaders.

To expand on findings presented here, future work should engage larger groups of Latinas from each of the sample population regions and see if findings reported here can be replicated. An additional limitation was that this study occurred over one year, and included

only one point of data collection and analysis. A long-term study with leaders might yield more information about barriers encountered in careers, and how they were addressed.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, this research yielded several important conclusions. The goal of this research was to understand if and how professional development and self-efficacy influenced the career advancement of Latinas in higher education. The findings suggested that professional development was not a main factor in the advancement of participants' careers, and even pointed to a lack of such opportunities. Furthermore, after analysis of the *testimonios* and self-efficacy theory, I have come to believe that Bandura's self-efficacy theory should not generally be used in research related to Latina/os or People of Color. Bandura's theory is focused on the individual, whereas the Latino culture is more connected to *colectivismo*. The Latinas remarked that their education and degrees not only belong to them but their whole family. As a white, privileged male, Bandura may not have taken into account the impact that Latina/o culture has on the growth and development of a Latinas' self-efficacy.

Nevertheless, through their *testimonios*, the Latinas described themselves with strong confident words, and revealed that they understood how to navigate difficult challenges and situations, suggesting that they all had a strong sense of self-efficacy even without meaningful professional development opportunities. They have built their own networks within and outside of their work communities. Each one has a desire to advance herself, but they all had a different vision of what that looks like. Common motivations for advancement were described as a sense of responsibility to pave the way for future Latinas, and to change the political system of higher education.

Another key finding was the role of intersectional identities and how Latinas navigated the various contexts of their lives given their intersectional identities. Unlike the dominant race, who may not have to think about ethnicity, skin tone, language and sexual identity and how each intersects within their careers, Latinas in this study all spoke to it and how it influences their daily working lives. Studies have researched how persons of color have to code-switch in order to fit into the dominant race, but future research should further address how the intersection of identities impacts the lived career experiences of Latinas, especially in the higher education sector.

Finally, I must note that the Latinas in this research were honest and shared many experiences with me and for that I am grateful. I chose not to use all of their *testimonios* (e.g., all challenges experienced were not reported here) because I did not want this research to be misconstrued and used in a negative way. These women have overcome institutional politics and microaggressions, have fled some toxic environments and still continue to power forward. They do this not just for their own careers but for the generations of Latinas that will follow them into higher education careers. As Camilla explained, “We shared similar stories obviously in our own way and how we experience it and react, but I think it’s a shared, it’s a common experience unfortunately. But I think that being a part of a support group and just like talking about it really supports us to try to work against those things or combat those things. But we have a long way to go. We’re only 1% of Latinas with doctorate degrees.” Indeed, we have a long way to go. I am honored and privileged that the Latinas in this study shared and trusted me with their *testimonios*. These women are strong and will continue to advance their own careers in whatever form they want it to be.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me a story about your journey to where you are now?
 - a. Schools attended, support throughout education
 - b. Family influences on education
 - c. Barriers you experienced along the way
 - i. Personal challenges
 - ii. Structural challenges – racism, discrimination, feeling like you weren't “valued” as a Latina in education
 - iii. How did you confront these challenges?
 - d. Career in higher education: current position, years in current position, how many positions have you held prior to your current positions
 - e. Position you aspire to
2. How do you define leadership?
 - a. Self
 - b. Others
3. How does your culture influence the leader you are today?
4. Can you tell me a story about a challenge in your career that made you feel marginalized? Can you share an example?
5. Do you believe that other Latinas have faced the same challenges? Can you share an example?

6. How do you address these challenges? What resources, if any, do you feel you have available to you to address these challenges?
 - a. Personal strengths
 - b. Professional resources
7. How would you describe the professional development opportunities your institution has provided for you?
8. How would you describe the professional development you seek out on your own?
9. What professional organizations do you belong to? If so, did your place of employment provide access or did you join on your own?
10. Do you have individuals in your life that you consider mentors? If you have had a mentor, please explain that relationship?
11. Do you mentor anyone?
 - a. Why is it important for you to do this?
12. In relation to your career, do you set goals for yourself? Why or why not?
13. When faced with a difficult challenge (task), how do you respond?
14. What factors do you use when making choices for your career?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences that would help me better understand what it is like to be a Latina seeking to advance her career in higher education?
16. Would you like to add anything that I did not ask?

Appendix B

Example of Coding Table

Major Code	Definition	Transcript ID	Excerpt	Notes
Support Family				
Support Institution	Feel the institution has their back	Penelope, Marisol, Reyna	Reyna: She had a Latina supervisor who was very instrumental in assuring that Reyna received professional development. “...she wanted to invest in me. She didn’t just want to take from me.”	Not all respondents felt the same way but good example of positive experiences.
Support Mentors				
Support Community				
Mentors				
Mentors others				
PD provided by employer	Membership to organizations, training.	Carmen, Penelope, Marisol, Eva, Reyna	Carmen: Lackluster Penelope: Grant funding allows us to participate in National Conferences.	Although the women received PD from their employers the quality of trainings varied.
PD provided by self	Paying for own PD	Carmen, Marisol		Joining organizations, doctorate programs
Negotiated PD				
Professional				
Organizational				
HSI				
PWI				
Career Aspirations				
Skin tone				
Institutional perception				
Collective Goal				

Racism/ Microaggressions				
Racism/ Microaggression within community				
Institutional Politics	The internal politics that impact the individuals experience	Camilla, Megan, Rita, Eva,	Rita: The men stick together	Rita discussed being targeted by a male dean, also a Person of Color, he paid to have her move to another division of the college.
Responsibility to community				
Career				
Characteristics				
Aspirations				
Goals				
Challenges				
Barriers not related to norm,				

Appendix C

Consent Form

Please read this form carefully.

What I will ask you to do:

If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct a face-to-face interview, and possibly ask some follow-up questions. The interview will include demographic questions, education history, years of employment, and employment classification, professional development experiences. In order to protect your identity, you will be assigned a pseudonym. The interview will take approximately up to 90 minutes to complete at a location of your choosing. The interview includes an introduction and face-to-face questions. With your permission, I would also like to audio-record the interview to ensure accuracy.

What are the risks of the study?

The risk to you as a participant in this study is minimal. There is the risk that you may find some of the questions to be sensitive. A pseudonym will be utilized on all forms of written responses, analysis, and summaries of the study.

What are the benefits of the study?

There will be no direct benefits for participating in this study. The study may benefit the careers of Latinas in higher education administrative positions.

Your answers will be confidential.

The records of this study will be kept private and in a secure location. In any sort of report, I make public I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only I will have access to the records and data will be saved on an encrypted file. Only the researcher will have access to any audio recordings. The researcher will destroy all recordings after transcription or within 9 months of recording.

Taking part is voluntary:

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

University of Washington

Consent Form

Research Study Title: Professional Development and Self-Efficacy: Its Impact on the Advancement of Latinas in Higher Education.

If you have questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Olga Inglebritson. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Olga Inglebritson at ingleo@uw.edu or heygigi2@gmail.com. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Human Subjects Division/Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 206.543.0098 or access their website at <https://www.washington.edu/research/hsd>.

Consent Form

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview audio-recorded.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Recruitment Flyer

SEEKING: LATINAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN DISSERTATION.

LATINAS WHO ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS, AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION WITH FIVE YEARS OR MORE EXPERIENCE.

TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF LATINAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

I am a Latina third year doctoral student at the University of Washington.

As part of my research, I will be conducting in-person interviews with Latina academic leaders. The interviews will last approximately 90 minutes. I hope you will consider supporting my research by participating in the interviews.

For more information, contact:

Olga Torres Inglebritson

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