THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL LATINA PRINCIPALS: A QUALITATIVE METASYNTHESIS LITERATURE CRITIQUE

Elsa Villarreal

Men have traditionally filled the high school principal role at the national level. In the state of Texas, White male principals remained the largest ethnic group of Texas high school principals; thus, female principals are not placed consistently across public school types. This qualitative metasynthesis literature critique encompasses the experiences of Latina principals or administrators. The purpose of a qualitative metasynthesis approach is to systematically interpret integrated findings with depth rather than interpreting findings from individual studies. Within these studies, Latinas faced three common challenges in obtaining leadership positions: (a) identity, (b) stereotypes, and (c) lack of mentorship programs. These themes were contextualized to study the life experiences of Texas high school Latina principals and offer insight into the placement of Texas high school Latina principals.

In the United States, the most saturated female labor sector is education with the largest share of women workers being preschool/kindergarten teachers (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). Concerning educational leadership positions, women in the United States have traditionally dominated the elementary school principal role while men dominated the secondary and high school principal roles. For example, between 1900 and 1950, women led over two-thirds of United States' elementary schools but were excluded from higher paying high school principal positions (Rousmaniere, 2013). Since the 1950s, women have remained a minority in high school principalship. Male high school principals surmount the number of female high school principals at both the national and Texas state level. The National Teacher and Principal Survey also indicates demographic underrepresentation of female principals at the middle and high school levels (Taie & Goldring, 2019). Hence, male high school principals have traditionally outnumbered female high school principals and continue to do so at the national level.

Table 1

National Percentage Distribution of Principals by Gender and School Type for the Years 2017–2018

School type	Male principals	Female principals
Primary	33.2%	66.8%
Middle	60.1%	39.9%
High	67.4%	32.6%
Total	56.6%	43.4%

Note. Details may not sum to totals because of rounding.

In Texas, women make up the majority of the public school principal population; nevertheless, their placement is concentrated at the elementary school level. For the years 2011–2015, the Texas male principal count decreased from 40% to 38%, and the Texas female principal count increased from 60% to 63% (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2015). As of 2017–2018, the Texas female principal count increased to 64% (TEA, 2022a); however, the placement of female Texas principals is not consistent across school types. Table 2 contains the 2017–2018 Texas principal count by school type for a grand total of 7,435 Texas principals (TEA, 2018b). This principal count does not include district charter schools, alternative schools, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement campuses. Of the 7,435 Texas principals, 2,572 (35%) were male and 4,863 (65%) were female. TEA calculated the principal count and categorized totals into the following school types: (a) elementary (grades PK–5), (b) elementary/secondary (grades PK–12, within the same campus), (c) middle (grades 6–8), (d) junior high (grades 6–9), and (e) high school (grades 9–12). Table 2 presents a breakdown of Texas principal counts by gender and school type (TEA, 2018b).

Table 2

2017–2018 Texas Principal Counts by School Type and Gender

School Type	Male (*n* = 2572)	Female (*n* = 4863)	Total Counts (*n* = 7,435)
Elementary PK–5	830	3500	4330
Elementary/Secondary PK–12	167	117	284
Middle School Grades 6–8	651	658	1309
Junior High School Grades 6–9	104	122	226
High School Grades 9–12	820	466	1286

Note: This principal count does not include district charter schools, alternative schools, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement campuses.

In Table 2, women exceeded men in the role of Texas elementary school principals by triple. Second, a balanced gender representation was observed at the middle school and junior high school grades as the gender difference between male and female principals was less than 10 in number at the middle school level and less than 20 in number at the junior high level. Finally, men outnumbered women in the role of Texas high school principals by a count of 354 (TEA, 2018b). Indeed, an imbalance of male representation at the elementary level was noted, and the high school principal gender counts support the research of Fuller et al. (2016) in their examination of the employment of female Texas principals in public schools from 1990 through 2012 in stating that Texas female principals were abundant in number in comparison to male principals, but they were not distributed equally across school types.

Ethnicity of Texas Principals

In 2018, TEA published a history of Texas public school principal gender and ethnicity demographics for the academic years 2012–2013 through 2016–2017. During this period, most of the principals were White with the second and third largest ethnic groups being Latino/a and Black/African American principals (TEA, 2018a). The population of Texas principals who identify as White decreased from 64% to 62% over this reporting period (TEA, 2018a); hence, White remains the majority ethnic group of Texas public school principals (TEA, 2018a). The Latino/a principal group increased from 22% to 24%, and the Black/African American principal group increased from 11% to 12% (TEA, 2018a) over this reporting period but are still minority ethnicities.

Note that across Texas public schools, Latino/a students account for the largest percentage of total enrollment in 2016–2017 (52.4%) followed by White (28.1%), African American (12.6%), Asian (4.2%), and multiracial (2.2%) students (TEA, 2017). Thus, there is a great ethnic disparity between students (majority Latino/a) and principals (majority White).

The racial disparity of Texas principals has been a concern for scholars. Davis (2012) stated the possibility of gender and ethnicity-based bias in the employment of Texas principals. Crawford and Fuller (2017) were concerned that Texas Latino/a educators were placed into assistant principal positions to symbolically address the growing Latino/a student population, perpetuating the notion of Latino/a leaders as primarily disciplinarians under a White principal. They cautioned this phenomenon as a troubling trend and called for further research.

Student Ethnicity Representation

In the 2001–2002 school year, the number of Latino/a students (41.7%) surpassed the number of White students (40.9%) for the first time, becoming the largest enrolled ethnic group in Texas (TEA, 2003, 2017). Also, within a 10-year span between 2006–2007 and 2016–2017, the number of Texas Latino/a students increased by 32% (681,739 students) as the number of White students declined by 8.1% (133,216 students; TEA, 2017). For the years 2017–2018, a grand total of 2,827,807 Latino/a students were enrolled in Texas schools (TEA, 2022b. Table 3 presents a breakdown of the 2,827,807 Latino/a students by Educator Service Center (ESC) regions.

Undeterred by the increase of Latino/a students, White male principals remained the largest ethnic group of Texas high school principals. Consequently, this ethnic disparity can disrupt the diversity in school leadership and deny Latino/a students an adult role model with whom they can identify racially and ethnically (Tayloe, 2016).

Table 3

2017-2018 Texas Latino/a Student Enrollment Counts by ESC Region

ESC region location	Latino/a student enrollment count
Region 1 (Brownsville)	421,181
Region 2 (Corpus Christi)	78,127
Region 3 (Victoria)	30,771
Region 4 (Houston)	613,926
Region 5 (Beaumont)	18,241
Region 6 (Huntsville)	71,602
Region 7 (Kilgore)	47,884
Region 8 (Mt. Pleasant)	11,881
Region 9 (Wichita Falls)	10,451
Region 10 (Richardson)	373,425
Region 11 (Fort Worth)	213,972
Region 12 (Waco)	59,507
Region 13 (Austin)	186,586
Region 14 (Abilene)	21,400
Region 15 (San Angelo)	29,194
Region 16 (Amarillo)	40,283
Region 17 (Lubbock)	49,196
Region 18 (Midland)	62,416
Region 19 (El Paso)	160,347
Region 20 (San Antonio)	327,417

Note. ESC Region 1 (Brownsville) is geographically located along the Texas/Mexico border.

The Dominant Culture

Almost two decades ago, Gardiner et al. (2000) perceived the dominant culture of educational administration as a White, male-dominated culture. This perspective has shaped the policy and practice in school culture, influencing students of color. Latinas seeking to lead secondary schools were told they were not the right fit (Gardiner et al., 2000; Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Tallerico, 2000). Social and political standards are also based on this norm, and individuals who are not part of this norm are often marginalized (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). For this reason, the right fit is subjective and is shaped by the dominant culture. Quilantán and Menchaca-Ochoa (2004) argued that the "good old boy" network impeded the possibilities for females in leadership roles. They referred to this impediment as a suppressor, keeping females from attaining administrative positions in the educational and corporate worlds. Carrillo (2008) reported Latina female assistant principals have been overlooked for principal positions due to gender and ethnic discrimination. Carillo explained how Latina female assistant principals were not given the same duties as their male counterparts. As a result, these Latinas were perceived as less capable and experienced prejudice against their ethnicity. Hence, this White male-dominated culture is difficult for aspiring Latina principals to navigate the political and hidden culture of educational administration. As well, Fernandez (2013) agreed gender was a factor in acquiring principal positions, sometimes

more than being Latino/a. Inci and Parker (2013) defined networking within the favorable group as old boy networks where informal groupings of individuals through personal and business interactions provide referrals about comembers to third parties. Individuals outside of this network do not benefit from these referrals, and they are marginalized by not belonging to this network. Hence, research into the placement of Texas high school Latina principals is crucial to the academic success of Latino/a students.

Moreover, the high school principal position is considered the unspoken training ground to the superintendency and is also favored in comparison to the elementary principalship due to the complexity of its role (Tallerico, 2000). For example, Yong-Lyun and Brunner (2009) studied the career pathways for females in educational administration and found male administrators moved up vertically via high school principal to the superintendency while females traveled horizontally to the superintendency through central office staff roles. In addition, some of the complexities with the high school principal role include administration of severe disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and expulsions, and navigation of political currents at high visibility/high media events, such as athletics, prom, and graduation. Men have traditionally filled the high school principal role; thus, female principals were not placed consistently across public school types.
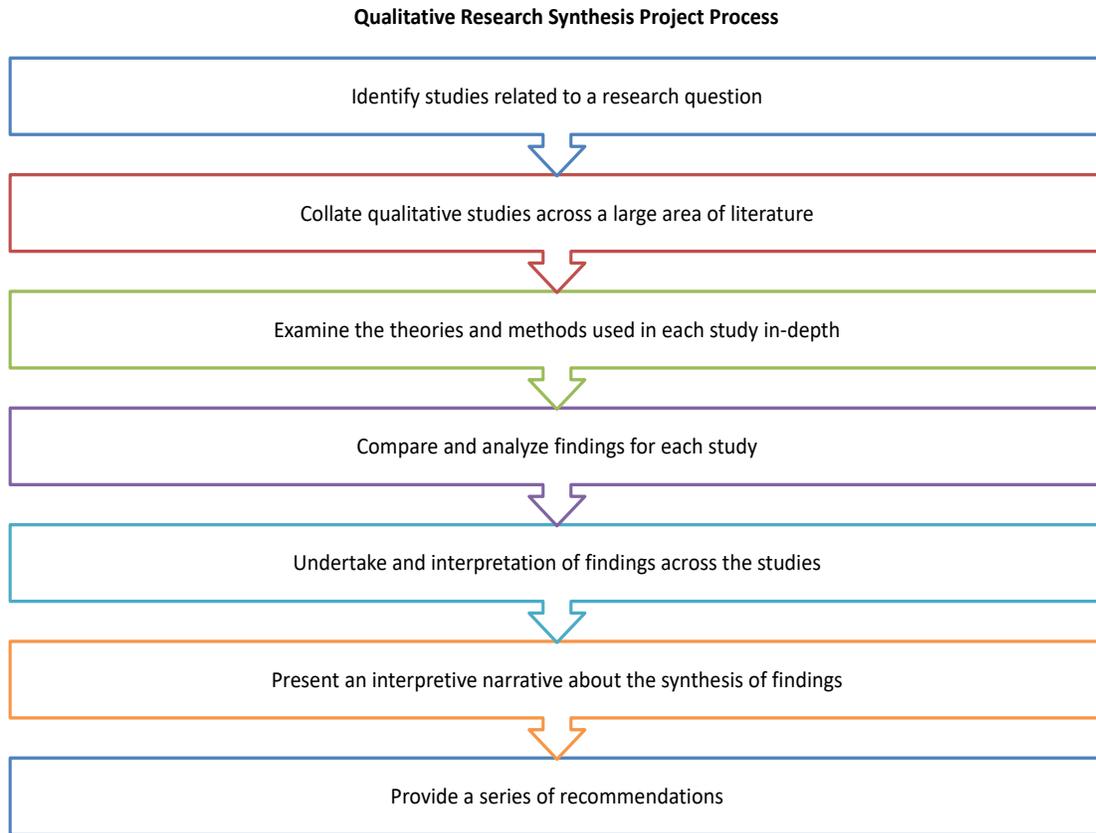
Qualitative Metasynthesis Approach

Qualitative metasynthesis is a systematic approach to analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting findings from qualitative studies (Lachal et al., 2017; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). The purpose of the metasynthesis is to interpret integrated findings with depth rather than interpreting findings from individual studies (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; Walsh & Downe, 2005). The application of this method gives the researcher an opportunity to reflect on the studies and link concepts across the studies. The metasynthesis method is recommended for qualitative studies, and synthesis of data includes phenomenologies, ethnographies, and grounded theories (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002, 2007).

Metasynthesis Research Process

The qualitative metasynthesis process is broken down into steps to systematically draw meaning at a higher level from existing qualitative studies by combining them into a new whole (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Researchers who conduct qualitative research synthesis studies have a duty to execute these studies in a systematic and justifiable manner. For instance, researchers are responsible for defending the inclusion and exclusion criteria in their research project. In turn, the researcher provides transparency to their research. Major and Savin-Baden outlined the process for qualitative research project synthesis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Qualitative Research Synthesis Process

Qualitative Research Synthesis Project Process

Identify studies related to a research question

Collate qualitative studies across a large area of literature

Examine the theories and methods used in each study in-depth

Compare and analyze findings for each study

Undertake and interpretation of findings across the studies

Present an interpretive narrative about the synthesis of findings

Provide a series of recommendations

Note. Qualitative research synthesis process. Adapted from *An Introduction to Qualitative Research Synthesis: Managing the Information Explosion in Social Science Research*, by C. H. Major & M. Savin-Baden, 2010, Routledge, p. 11. Copyright 2010 by Routledge. Adapted with permission (See Appendix).

Inclusion Criteria and the Latino/a Identity

The inclusion criteria consisted of qualitative studies per the nature of the metasynthesis process. In contrast to a meta-analysis in which literature is reviewed with quantitative methods, a metasynthesis is the systematic review and integration of findings from qualitative studies (Lachal et al., 2017). In addition, literature sources were included upon meeting the following requirements: (a) studies pertaining to Latina principals or administrators (assistant principals and superintendents), (b) studies published in English, (c) the research study took place in the United States, and (d) studies published in the 21st century were included for currency.

Throughout this study, I employed the term Latino/a to reference the research literature and to analyze the data in this study. However, multiple identities associated with the Latino/Hispanic culture surfaced from the literature search. The multiple identities were Latino/a,

Hispanic, Mexican American, and Chicano/a. To maintain the authenticity of the scholars who have contributed to this research, a list of definitions is stated below to clarify the meanings of these multiple identities.

Latino/Latina (Latino/a). The term Latino refers to a male, and the term Latina refers to a female. The term Latino/a can be of any race, and multiple cultures exist within the Latino/a label (Stokes-Brown, 2012). For instance, the participants in my study may vary in race. To be a Latino/a is when an individual or their ancestry is from a Latin American country, such as Brazil, Argentina, El Salvador, Cuba, or Mexico (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2015).

Hispanic. In 1976, the U.S. Congress defined the term Hispanic as Americans of Spanish speaking background and Americans who trace their ancestry from a Spanish-speaking country (Passel & Taylor, 2009). For example, Brazilians are from a Latin American country, so they are Latino/a. However, Brazilians do not speak Spanish; they speak Portuguese. Brazilians, hence, are Latinos/as but not Hispanics. Spaniards, nonetheless, do speak Spanish, but they are not located in Latin America. Spaniards, thus, are Hispanics, not Latinos. For my study, I have chosen not to use the term Hispanic. Rather, I chose to use the term Latino/a due to its inclusivity as it encompasses multiple cultures under the same Spanish language.

Mexican American. A Mexican American is an individual of Mexican ancestry who resides in the United States regardless of citizenship status (Pew Research Center, 2011). Mexican Americans can also be Latinos/as or Hispanics in broader terms; however, some Mexican Americans do not speak Spanish. Therefore, not all identify as Hispanic, but they could identify with being Latino/a.

Chicano/Chicana (Chicano/a). The term, Chicano/Chicana, is applied to males and females of Mexican origin or other Latinas/Latinos who share similar political perceptions (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). In the 1960s, the Chicano/Chicana identity emerged to protest the poor educational conditions in the Los Angeles School District by boycotting classes and organizing walkouts. Grievances to the Los Angeles School District's Board of Education included demands for smaller class sizes, bilingual education, and more emphasis on Chicano history (Solórzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). The Chicano community targeted activism towards a cultural and linguistically responsive approach to schooling, addressing the rights of farmworkers and asserting historical land rights (Rios, 2008).

Exclusion Criteria

Quantitative studies were excluded from this metasynthesis as they do not adhere to the qualitative criteria requirement of the metasynthesis process. Also, studies published in a language other than English, took place outside of the United States, and published before the 21st century were also excluded.

Literature Search Parameters

The sources for the study search were books, peer-reviewed journals, periodicals, dissertations, and papers presented at research conferences relating to the field of educational administration. Databases utilized in this study were Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), EBSCO, ERIC, Fuente Académica, MedLine, MedicLatina, ProQuest, PsychINFO, SCOPUS, Science Direct, Sci ELO, Social Sciences Citation Index, and the Texas A&M University LibCat. Keywords used to identify research pertaining to high school Texas Latina principals were *Latina principals or administrators, Hispanic female principals or administrators, Mexican-American principals or administrators, and Chicana principals or administrators*. At the conclusion of the database search, 99 references were identified after the removal of duplicates, 64 references were excluded due to thematic issues, and 33 studies were included in the metasynthesis. The search results are displayed in the figure below.

Figure 2

Qualitative Database Search Results
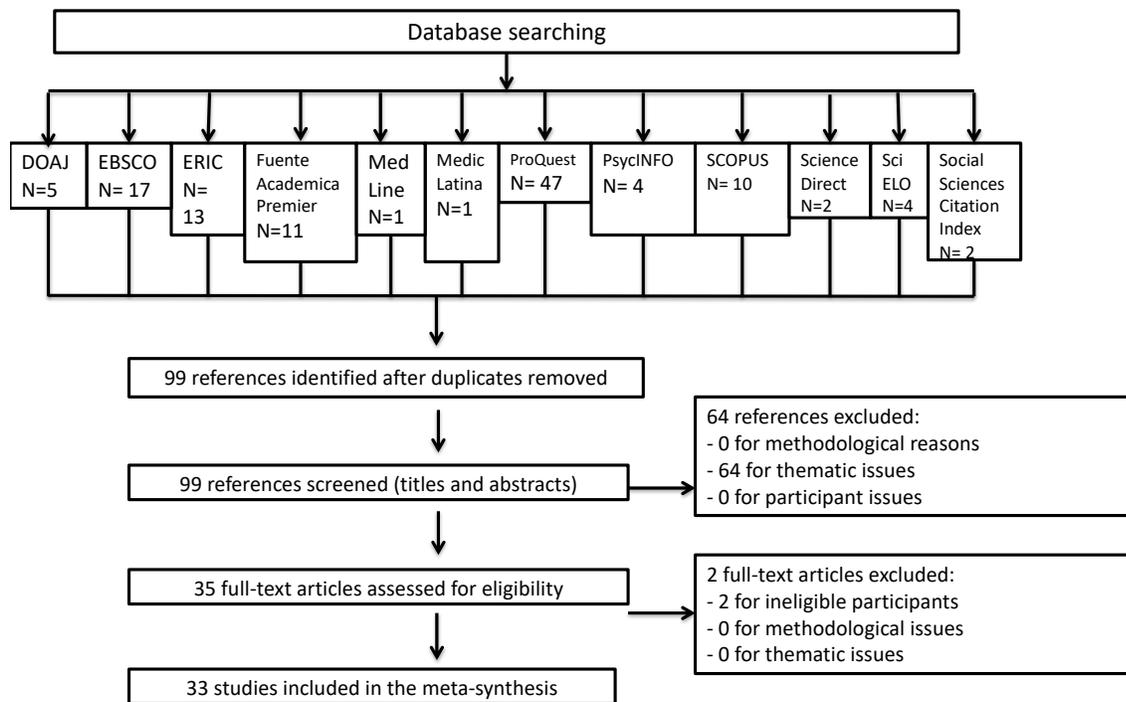
Appraising Reports of Qualitative Studies

To ensure the quality of the metasynthesis, guidelines have been developed in the past decade to assess the quality of the studies (Lachal et al., 2017). I chose the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2018) to systematically assess the trustworthiness, relevance, and results of published papers. After the appraisal of studies, none were excluded based on the quality criteria, and four studies were added to support themes that were interpreted from the metasynthesis critique. Table 4 contains the studies utilized in the metasynthesis. These studies are listed in chronological order by publication year.

Table 4

Literature Sources and Findings

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference Type	Research Design	Theoretical Framework or Concept	Sample/Context	Findings
2000	Méndez-Morse	Latina leadership, principals	Journal article	Phenomenological	Not available	Mexican American, Latina leaders	Latina stereotypes
2000	Tallerico	Latina leadership	Book	Literature Review	Not available	superintendent candidates from NY	Biases and challenges for females of color
2002	McCreight	Hispanic women, educational leadership	Monograph	Phenomenological	Not available	Hispanic principals	Barriers, career advancement
2003	Trujillo-Ball	Mexican - American female principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Chicana feminism	4 Mexican American Females	Identity, job placement, influences in identity
2004	Magdaleno	Latina leadership	Dissertation	Maxwell Interactive Design Model (1996)	Cross-race mentoring support system	6 Latino/a leaders in California	Mentoring
2004	Méndez-Morse	Latina leaders	Journal article	Phenomenological	Not available	6 Mexican American female leaders in West, TX	Caretaking, pride, tragedy
2005	Hernandez	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Latino identity Latino critical race theory	6 Latino/a principals, midwestern US	Racial identity
2006	Magdaleno	Latino/a principals	Journal article	Not available	Not available	Latino/a principals	Mentoring
2006	Magilvy et al.	Hispanic, caring for our own, nursing home	Journal article	Ethnography	Not available	Rural Colorado	Hispanic culture, aging elders
2008	Carrillo	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Critical race theory, storytelling and counter storytelling	22 K–12 Latinos in California	Culture, gender, inequity, mentoring, values and beliefs

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference Type	Research Design	Theoretical Framework or Concept	Sample/Context	Findings
2008	Wrushen and Sherman	Females secondary school principals	Journal article	Phenomenological	Feminist	8 female principals	Personal backgrounds, influences, identity
2009	Enriquez-Damián	Leadership, Latina education	Dissertation	Heuristic inquiry	Not available	4 Mexican American Latinas in Arizona	Discrimination, ostracism, language, stigma
2009	Murakami-Ramalho et al.	Latina principals, mentoring, principal preparation	Journal article	Program evaluation	Social justice	26 of 40 were Latinas	Mentoring, principal preparation, partnerships
2009	Santiago	Hispanic female administrators	Dissertation	Case study	Role theory	Central Florida, 8 female Hispanic principals	Family background, token Hispanic, placement, mentors
2009	Sperandio and LaPier	Female principals, principal preparation	Journal article	Phenomenological	Not available	15 women in US	Mentoring through cohorts
2010	Rosario-Schoenfeld	Hispanic, educational administration	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Life course theory	9 Puerto Rican Latinas from New York	Identity, mentorship
2011	Falk	Hispanic female leaders	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Not available	12 Hispanic women from Texas	Barriers, tenacity, courage, and persistence
2012	Chávez	Latina principals	Dissertation	Case study	Social role theory	3 Latina principals, California	Identity, guilt, external barriers
2012	Roberts and Hernandez	Texas Latina principals, principal preparation	Journal article	Program review of preparation programs in Texas	Not available	16 Texas leaders	Mentoring, university principal preparation program
2012	Roybal	Hispanic woman, educational leadership	Dissertation	Auto-ethnography	Latina feminist theory, *mujerista* theology	1 Hispanic female principal in Northern Mexico	Gender, race, and salary inequities
2013	Fernandez	Hispanic secondary principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Latino critical race theory	5 Suburban, Texas principals	Mentors, family support, gender
2013	Palacio	Latina, high school principal	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Social cognitive career theory	8 Latina female high school principals from California, Texas, and Florida	Early influence, background, mentors, networking
2013	Ramsey	Latina principals	Dissertation	Ethnographic study	Critical race theory, Latino critical race theory	10 Latina secondary principals, Texas and California	Identity, social justice, obstacles, racism
2014	Hernandez et al.	Latina principals	Journal article	Case study, phenomenon	Latino critical race theory	K-3 US Female principals	Background, race, gender,

Year	Author(s)	Keywords	Reference Type	Research Design	Theoretical Framework or Concept	Sample/Context	Findings
2014	Morales	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological narrative	Not available	8 Latina Texas principals	Age, racial, and gender stereotypes
2015	Crawford and Fuller	Texas principals, administrators	Journal article	Descriptive statistics	Representative bureaucracy	n=49,945 Texas leaders	Disproportionate placement of principals
2015	Méndez-Morse et al.	Latina school leaders	Journal article	Phenomenological	National survey	Latino/a principals and assistant principals	Latinas leading urban elementary campuses, identity, background
2015	Murakami	Latino/a school principals	Journal article	Phenomenological	Latino/a identity	1,000 Latino/a leaders identified, n=213	School demographic, career path, leadership identity
2015	Reyes	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Role congruity theory	4 Latina assistant principals	Challenges, motivation, support systems, identity
2015	Ruiz-Williams	Latina leaders	Dissertation	Ethnography, case study	Emotional Intelligence	2 Latina school leaders	Latina Identity, impact on leadership styles
2016	Barajas	Latina principals	Dissertation	Narrative inquiry	Mujerista theory	2 Latina principals, 2 Latina leaders in Arizona	Culture, gender, race, and class
2016	Fuller et al.	Texas principal placement	Journal article	Descriptive Statistics	Not available	n=48,628, Texas leaders	Texas principal trends, gender, ethnicity, and age
2016	Hernandez et al.	Latina principals	Journal article	Descriptive statistics	Critical race theory	94 assistant principals, national study	Challenges to the principalship
2016	Mendieta	Latina principals	Dissertation	phenomenological	Latino critical race theory, social learning theory	10 Second generation Latino/a principals	Mentoring roles
2016	Tayloe	Female principals	Dissertation	Mixed methods	Critical race theory	30 Latina leaders surveyed; 4 Latina principals interviewed	Role conflict, stereotypes, job assignments
2017	Niño et al.	Latino/a principals	Journal article	Texas survey, descriptive statistics	Cultural wealth model	Likert scale survey	Activities type, and time spent principals
2018	Benavidez	Central office administrators	Dissertation	Testimonios, interviews	Women ways of knowing	Interviews	Struggle, mentors, networking
2019	Barrera	Latina principals	Dissertation	Phenomenological	Social role theory	Principals interviewed	Resiliency, persistence, grit, and social supports

Metasynthesis Theme Analysis

From the literature sources listed above, I followed Major and Savin-Baden's (2010) process for qualitative research project synthesis as outlined in Figure 1. Step 4 of the process is to compare and analyze findings for each study. I listed the findings for each study in Table 4 under the heading titled "Findings." Step 5 of the process is to undertake and interpret the findings across the studies. I applied the individual findings from each study to link concepts across the studies to align with the intent of a metasynthesis approach of interpreting incorporated findings instead of individual findings (Bondas & Hall, 2007; Major & Savin-Baden, 2010; Walsh & Downe, 2005). In summary, the individual findings were combined to draw meaning at a higher holistic level.

Metasynthesis Findings: Challenges Latinas Face in Leadership Positions

In this section, I synthesized the common findings and themes across the studies included in the scope of this literature critique. Within these studies, Latinas faced three common challenges in obtaining leadership positions: (a) cultural identity, (b) stereotypes, and (c) lack of mentorship.

Cultural Identity

Cultural identity and a subtheme of family expectations emerged from the combined findings in the research literature. A conflict lies within the Latina identity in functioning as a leader in a dominant culture while struggling to maintain her cultural identity. Latinas are conflicted in functioning as a leader in the workplace while struggling to maintain their cultural identity (Barajas, 2016; Carrillo, 2008; Chavez, 2012; Falk, 2011; Hernandez, 2005; Hernandez et al., 2014; Magilvy et al., 2006; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015; Murakami-Ramalho et al., 2009; Niño et al., 2017; Reyes, 2015; Santiago, 2009; Trujillo-Ball, 2003; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Trujillo-Ball studied how the Latina female principal identity changes due to experiences, influences, and expectations from family, culture, society, and self. Trujillo-Ball described the identity of Latina females as a chameleon, adapting to the expectations of society, family, and culture. In nature, chameleons are constantly working toward changing their identity to fit the environment in which they thrive. Latina principals use the same adaptation behaviors of chameleons in order to adapt to the norm of any given social situation. Consequently, the unique Latina identity becomes invisible to adopt the normed identity established by the status quo. Trujillo-Ball addressed this invisible identity as a problem in educational administration, rationalizing for the small numbers of successful women and people of color in educational administration.

In addition, Hernandez (2005) analyzed the racial identity development experiences of Latino/a principals and the impact of their experiences on leadership practice. Hernandez examined the conditions under which their identity is expressed and suppressed in their practice. One of the principals in Hernandez's study noted her "passion can be overwhelming for some, and that she is working on toning it down, especially for the white audiences" (Hernandez, 2005, p. 347). Hernandez concluded the life experiences of the principals who participated in the study contributed to their identity development. These life experiences included language, family, school, differences, social class, religion, customs and traditions, adulthood experiences, birthplace, and residency paths.

Moreover, Latina principals struggle with an inner identity conflict. Chavez (2012) explained how cultural upbringing is a complex cultural factor in balancing work and family duties since traditional culture is responsible for house domestics, child rearing, and taking care of elderly parents. For first-generation families, parents expect their daughters married and raising a family; therefore, college is not a priority (Falk, 2011). For example, first-generation Latina female principals in Falk's study indicated their parents clashed with the notion of allowing them to leave home for college as this process was unfamiliar territory for first-generation parents. Although Latina females have been perceived as homemakers and caregivers within the Latino culture, this perception is evolving as more Latina females enter the workforce (Barajas, 2016; Ruiz-Williams, 2015). Specifically, Chavez (2012) explored the work-life balance of Latina female principals and found many support systems, such as family and friends. Notably, the Latina female principals in Chavez's study affirmed their husbands were the greatest support system by assisting with domestic duties and offering emotional support for success in the professional realm. The presence of Latina principals in the workforce has also resulted in opportunities to incorporate their cultural identities into their workplace environments. Thus, the balancing of the Latina identity in a leadership context can be both challenging and advantageous.

Family Expectations

Magilvy et al. (2006) studied the phenomenon of aging Latino/a parents in a 10-year longitudinal study along Northeastern Colorado and the San Luis Valley in California. Their findings identified an obligation to take care of their elders, a characteristic of the Latino/a culture (Falk, 2011; Magilvy, 2006). Yet, a conflict existed where societal, economic, and other changes were causing the shift in family support provided to Latino/a elders (Magilvy et al., 2006). These changes depend on the availability of jobs, the distancing of families because of seeking these jobs, and the changes in cultural traditions as younger generations establish themselves and establish their own cultural traditions. The cultural phrase of "we take care of our own" is an example of a factor that would weigh heavily on the identity balance of a Latina principal, being that placing one's parents in a nursing home is frowned upon in the Latino/Hispanic culture. The expectation of moving a parent into one's home and taking care of them at home in lieu of placing them in a nursing facility impacts the time and identity role for Latina principals.

Moreover, the Latina racial identity conflict could stem from *marianismo*, a gender role script in Latin America based from the image of the Virgin Mary (Kosmicki, 2017; Palacio, 2013; Sanchez et al., 2018). The term *marianismo* was introduced by Stevens (1973) to describe women's subordinate position in Latin American society and to bring attention to the glorified gender-role expectations of women (Castillo et al., 2010; Ertl et al., 2019; Kosmicki, 2017; Mendieta, 2016). Castillo et al. conceptualized *marianismo* into five dimensions: (a) priority to maintaining family, (b) expectation of a Latina to maintain her virginity until marriage, (c) obedience and respect of the Latino/a family structure, and (d) avoidance of conflict and self-silencing to maintain relationship harmony. Within the educational administration context, Carrillo (2008) discussed the White culture as valuing children to be independent and moving out to make it on their own. Conversely, Latino culture is more interdependent and discourages their children from leaving home, particularly young Latina females. Principals in Carrillo's study stated the family was the most important Latino value, and this value steered the mindset of how these principals established relationships with their school staff. Participants in Carrillo's study confirmed that their parents reflected this perspective, and some of the participants noted that they

were not expected to leave home until they were married.

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) also studied female principals from different ethnic backgrounds and investigated their family dynamics. Their findings revealed struggles to balance family and work. For instance, some females struggled with balancing the rearing of their children and work. Other females questioned their capacity to maintaining relationships and marriages while serving as principals. Wrushen and Sherman asserted females lack role models who have proven themselves to be successful in maintaining both realms of work and home; therefore, the struggle of balancing the two realms has remained a challenge for females to overcome.

Santiago (2009) concurred family connections are an essential component of the Latino culture. Santiago found family relationships overlapped into the personal and professional realms of Latina principals. Morales (2014) confirmed how the Latina high school principals perceived their job as a difficult balance between being mothers, wives, and principals. Even the single Latina principal in the study affirmed she would not have been a high school principal if she were married with children. Murakami-Ramalho et al. (2009) and Reyes (2015) also found Latina principals expressed conflict in dealing with their roles as females at home and their roles as principals.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes and a subtheme of salary inequities transpired from the combined findings in the research literature. The term *token* (Ortiz, 1982) was used by scholars to describe the stereotypical placement of Latina principals (Enriquez-Damian, 2009; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Santiago, 2009). Méndez-Morse (2004) concluded minority female administrators share the same experiences of limited recruitment, focus on the elementary school principalship, or lead from a distance as a department director of a curriculum area. Hence, they are considered tokens. Latina principals have been typecast into bilingual schools despite them not requesting the placement (Rosario-Schoenfeld, 2010). Santiago addressed the myth perception of Latina females not being capable or tough enough to handle high school discipline issues. Santiago further explained this myth contributed to the stereotyping of Latina females and their ability to lead at the secondary school level, such as high school. Santiago recommended future research with respect to the placement of Latina principals. For example, the Latina school administrators in Santiago's study recalled painful memories when they were selected for a principalship because coworkers and community members made comments to them about how they were only hired because they needed another Latino/a administrator. These Latinas used the term token to describe their experiences. The term token caused Latina principals to have mixed feelings about being hired at schools with majority student Latino populations. Although these principals were proud to serve their communities and act as agents of change for social justice, they were concerned if they were placed at these schools solely because of their skin color rather than their skills and qualifications. Santiago also found Latina principals who acknowledged the importance of being hired at a school with a low number of Latino students because this placement would demonstrate acceptance for their leadership abilities for all students, not just the Latino population. Enriquez-Damian found challenges on the journey to the principalship in predominantly White schools in the forms of racism, prejudice, ostracism, language stigma, and rejection. Enriquez-Damian described Latina professionals meeting the degree requirements for the principalship but who were told to apply at another school district because of their skin color and accent.

Researchers (e.g., Carrillo, 2008; Gardiner et al., 2000; Hernandez et al., 2014; Hernandez et al., 2016; Palacio, 2013; Ramsey, 2013; Rosario-Schoenfeld, 2010; Santiago, 2009) indicated

Latina principals were traditionally hired to successfully lead schools in deteriorating conditions where most of the population was students of color. Those who do eventually become principals advance through a stereotypical position, such as special program director. These Latina principals are often placed in these positions without them requesting or expressing the desire to occupy the position (Rosario-Schoenfeld, 2010). For instance, The National Research Study on Latino Principals Survey conducted by Méndez-Morse et al. (2015) collected demographic data and professional development experiences of Latino/a principals. They found half of Latino/a principals were counselors, athletic coaches, or directors before obtaining their administrative positions. Therefore, Latinas who became superintendents advanced through a position where they felt typecasted. Latinas are typecasted into their administrative positions for their ethnicity or bilingual abilities. This typecasting serves as a challenge to Latinas seeking a path to high school principalship. Typecasting can perpetuate false notions. In turn, these false notions impact school board district hiring decisions and impede Latinas from obtaining high school head principal positions.

Furthermore, Hernandez et al. (2016) concluded the consistent placement of Latino/a principals in these schools creates the following problems: (a) the possibility to pigeonhole Latino/a principals into work positions fueling the false notion that Latinos are only capable of working with students of color, and (b) the success of Latinos working in challenging schools with achievement gaps of diverse student groups can negatively impact their promotion beyond the campus level. Indeed, further research into the job trajectory of Latino/a leaders can provide insight on how Latinas navigate their path through the principalship up to central office (Benavidez, 2018). For example, Barrera (2019) interviewed a Texas high school Latina principal, and the high school Latina principal indicated she was the first high school Latina principal in her school district. For contextual purposes, her school district was established in 1949, and the first female high school principal (who was White) was not hired until 2000. Barrera noted she and her participant sat in silence to process how it took 51 years for a woman to be the first female principal of a high school and even longer for the first Latina high school principal to be appointed.

Salary Inequities

Stereotypes can lead to deficit notions, and deficit notions can lead to discrimination through salary inequities. Roybal's (2012) autoethnography of working as an administrator in a school district in New Mexico revealed salary inequities in comparison to her male counterparts. Specifically, she earned a principal salary of $60,000 while the male high school principal earned $85,000. She had more years of professional experience, was responsible for supervising double the number of faculty, and oversaw double the number of students. Roybal's résumé was extensive. She graduated valedictorian of her high school, earned a bachelor's degree in K–12 music education (cum laude), and earned a master's degree in bilingual education from New Mexico Highlands University; in 2002, she began a doctoral program at New Mexico State University. Her five educational state licensures permit her to teach and practice as an administrator in grade levels PK–12 with endorsements in language arts, performing arts, and bilingual education. Despite her extensive résumé, Roybal noted the superintendent of the district had no previous administrator experience nor did he have a teacher or administrator license to practice in the state of New Mexico. His salary was $80,000. She was stereotyped into her position, and her salary suffered.

Lack of Mentorship

Lack of Mentorship and subthemes of establishing networks and mentoring through principal cohorts emerged from the combined findings in the research literature. Due to the androcentric culture of educational administration, the majority of administrators are primarily White males (Lloyd-Jones, 2011). Consequently, a strong possibility exists that minority protégés will be limited in the possibility of being recognized as potential leaders. Researchers have recommended mentorship programs to assist aspiring Latina leaders to process their inner identity conflict and navigate the dominant culture, a White, male-dominated realm (Carrillo, 2008; Fernandez, 2013). Although mentors are meant to act as sponsors and provide support for potential networking, researchers have suggested there have been few mentors for Latina leaders to navigate and advance in their careers (Carrillo, 2008; Falk, 2011; Fernandez, 2013; Hernandez et al., 2014; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Santiago, 2009). Carrillo contended Latinos did not have equal access to principalships due to the good old boy network controlling the hiring as well as the mentoring of their own future leaders. Falk found aspiring Latina leaders look for a Latino/a role model or mentor to help them navigate through the journey of obtaining and maintaining the principalship. For Latinas to experience interaction with principals of their own ethnicity, Latina leaders must be present in positions of leadership. In the circumstances where Latinas were able to interact with a Latina mentor, the mentor served as a role model and a coach for the protégé's knowledge, training, and skills (Falk, 2011).

Establishing Networks

Scholars (e.g., Amancio, 2019; Fernandez, 2013; Hernandez, 2005; Hernandez et al., 2014; Magdaleno, 2004; Méndez-Morse, 2004; Palacio, 2013) have suggested mentorship programs for aspiring Latina leaders. As already mentioned, historically mentoring has been a White, male-dominated realm and the androcentric culture of educational administration has led to a proliferation of White male administrators; thus, aspiring principals of color could be limited in being recognized as potential leaders. Reyes (2015) explained how the "politics of hiring an assistant principal depended on an endorsement from an influential administrator in the district" (p. 128). Consequently, the lack of Latina role models and mentors will forfeit the potential of Latinas obtaining leadership positions and future networking with aspiring Latina leaders.

Méndez-Morse (2004) argued more Latina leaders are entering the workforce, but female leaders of color lack mentorship for job advancement due to the traditional history of mentoring being dominated by White male culture. Méndez-Morse interviewed six Latina principals in West Texas to inquire how they attained their positions in the absence of formal mentors. Three descriptions of role models emerged: familial, distant, and professional. First, familial role models were influences, such as parents. The parents modeled work ethic, the value of education, and active support of school activities. Specifically, the maternal role model was important to these administrators. Despite the fact that the educational levels of their mothers were not beyond high school, these mothers played an active role and valued the success of their daughters (Méndez-Morse, 2004). Second, distant role models were individuals who they knew of but did not interact with or know personally. These role models were examples that obtaining that job or continuing school was possible. Distant role models served as a motivator for seeking opportunities for continuing education. Third, professional role models were coworkers or supervisors. Some of the administrators stated that the teachers they had along their educational journey were the inspiration

for them to consider a career in education.

Like Méndez-Morse's (2004) study, Mendieta (2016) analyzed the perspectives of Latino/a principals' mentorship experiences in both formal and informal platforms. The principals described their respective Latino/a principal mentors offering *consejos*, which is a Spanish translation for advice. This advice ranged in topics from gender in race issues to navigating political undercurrents. The Latino/a principals in Mendieta's study provided (a) encouragement and counseling, (b) opportunities for career advancement, (c) modeled leadership, and (d) modeled leadership for a successful school culture. Hence, mentorship was a critical factor in the perseverance of Latino/a administrators.

Mentoring Through Principal Cohorts

Conversations with mentors about race and social justice can be difficult to mediate in a work environment embedded with hidden politics, especially if the mentor and the protégé work within the same building. Sperandio and LaPier (2009) collected data from two female minority teacher cohorts who aspired to become urban principals. This 2-year program was a collaboration by a university partnership, the city school district, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals under a grant from the U.S. Department of Funded Schools. The goal of the program was to assess an experimental leadership preparation program for aspiring urban principals. The researchers sought to offer a leadership preparation program that would benefit aspiring female leaders with a support system as they became leaders of schools. The first cohort consisted of 11 leaders, eight female (two White, two Hispanic, and four African Americans) teachers recommended by their principals. These females were selected for their leadership potential from the perspective of their supervisors without seeing themselves as potential leaders of schools or reflecting on how their potential leadership could be linked to serve as a social justice agent. The second cohort consisted of 10 participants, including seven females (three White, one Hispanic, and three African Americans). The researchers found that the second cohort was able to articulate the intersections of racism and motivation for social justice. Opportunities to express their concerns in the safety of the cohort were valued amongst the participants. Sperandio and LaPier found this cohort setting functioned as a support and suggested female participants require safe spaces to have difficult conversations with females who were aware of gendered/ethnic stereotypes of leadership. The cohort setting fostered an environment of self-reflection while having critical conversations about stereotypes and social justice issues in a safe forum free from workplace politics.

Discussion

Common findings and themes across the studies are included in the scope of this literature critique. Within these studies, Latinas faced three common challenges in obtaining leadership positions: (a) cultural identity, (b) stereotypes, and (c) lack of mentorship. As the Latinas across these studies were informally inspired to become principals by principal/administrator supervisors and family, formal mentoring experiences lacked in solidifying the construction of a leadership pipeline between a principal preparation program and the prospective school district where a principal candidate aspires to obtain a leadership position. Roberts and Hernandez (2012) reviewed methods applied in principal preparation programs from 42 Texas colleges and universities using the criteria from the University Council of Educational Administration. The criteria consisted of program

hours, course content, principal certification requirements, internship, and use of cohorts. Sperandio and LaPier (2009) found that an all-female principal preparation cohort can function as a support and suggested female students require safe spaces to have difficult conversations with other female students who are aware of gendered/ethnic stereotypes of leadership. Thus, the cohort setting can foster an environment of self-reflection while having critical conversations about stereotypes and social justice issues in a safe forum free from workplace politics.

Furthermore, principal preparation cohorts could further be enhanced with the addition of a mentoring and coaching component. Mendieta (2016) researched Latino/a principals' mentorship experiences in both formal and informal platforms. The principals described their respective Latino/a principal mentors offering *consejos*, which is a Spanish translation for advice. Considering the placement of competent and culturally responsive mentors, a mentoring and coaching program infused into a principal preparation program could achieve the following: (a) assist the principal candidates in connecting theory from the university classroom into applied practice in the field; (b) introduce and include the principal candidates to a network of practicing principals via the mentor's guidance; (c) advise principal candidates in topics from gender, race, and politics; and (d) orient the principal candidate through the school district job application process. Examples of Texas principal preparation programs that incorporate a mentoring and coaching component within an internship/practicum residency are Accelerated Preparation of Leaders for Underserved Schools and Preparing Academic Leaders at Texas A&M University (Center for Research and Development in Dual Language & Literacy Acquisition, n.d.). Both principal preparation programs have trained over 100 school leaders to receive a M.Ed. in educational administration and Texas principal certification and bilingual/ESL certification prepared to lead campuses and influence policy in districts that serve diverse learners, particularly English learners and economically challenged students. Hence, a layer of mentorship embedded within a principal preparation program would ensure Latina principal candidates' access to an experienced mentor to help them navigate the principal application process.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This metasynthesis literature critique was conducted within the context of the underrepresentation of women in high school leadership at the national level and in the state of Texas. Further, a phenomenon of Latino students as a majority ethnic group in Texas in comparison to the underrepresentation of Texas high school Latina principals was addressed. The scope of the study was limited to literature resources that were qualitative, per the nature of a metasynthesis approach. With respect to replication of findings, this study may be replicated and analyzed with respect to other Latino identities, such as Afro-Latina principals and Asian-Latina principals. The scope of this study can also be expanded to other countries to encompass Latina principal populations across the globe.

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APPENDIX

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