

CASE STUDIES OF WOMEN OF COLOR LEADING COMMUNITY
COLLEGES: PATHWAYS TO RECONFIGURE THE
LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

by

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Abstract

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Using De Anda's (1984) framework of Bicultural Socialization theory that indicates that individuals from minority groups have to learn to function in two environments, the environment of their own culture and that of the main society culture. This research study present findings from a qualitative study that examined how women of color (African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American) navigated the community college pipeline and were able to achieve success by obtaining higher-level administrative positions. Six women of color who held higher ranking administrative positions at a community college district in North Texas shared their experiences, achievements, adversities, and resiliency approaches. The study examined the strategies for success that these women implemented in order to secure leadership roles at their community colleges. The study investigated the obstacles and opportunities participants

encountered as they traversed the leadership pipeline. The study provides an understanding to the extensiveness of women of color in higher-level administrative positions in community colleges in Texas. The significance of this study expands the literature about women of color in higher-level administration and contributes to the transformation in the hiring practices that community colleges currently use. The study provides a paradigm to current community college leaders about practices for employee recruitment and retention that benefit women of color. Finally, the study contributes to the literature about the influence that culture has in the career path of women of color in higher-level administrative positions.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Community colleges in the United States enroll over ten million students each year (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). In the state of Texas, the location of this study, there were 79 accredited community colleges with a total enrollment of 712,478 students in 2015 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB] Almanac, 2015). Community colleges in Texas are experiencing demographic shifts; the data show students of color are more likely to enroll in community colleges. In 2007, the student demographics of community colleges in Texas included, 46% Whites, compared to 33% Hispanics, 12% African Americans, and 9% classified as Other (THECB, 2008). The most current research of student demographics in Texan community colleges include, African Americans (14.2%), Hispanics (39.8%), Whites (35.8%), and (8.5%) classified as Other (THECB, 2015). This student enrollment shift demonstrates a marked increase from 2007 on the enrollment of students of color in Texan community colleges.

Despite these enrollment trends, recent reports indicate that people who hold higher-ranking administrative positions (i.e., deans, vice presidents, and presidents) at community colleges do not reflect the diversity of the student body at these institutions. For example, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reported that 79% of college presidents are White, compared to

6% African American, and 3% Hispanic (2012). When disaggregated by gender, the AACC (2012) reported that 72% of college presidents are men, compared to 28% of women. Of the 28% female community college presidents, 71% are White, compared to 7% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Asian American (AACC). The percentage of instructional staff (i.e., lower-level administrators) at community colleges is comprised of 7.4% African American, 5.5% Hispanic, and 4.3% Asian American (AACC, 2016). When disaggregated by gender 53% of instructional staff members are female, compared to 47% male. These data demonstrate women, particularly women of color, remain underrepresented in higher-ranking administrative positions in community colleges (AACC, 2012).

Community colleges would benefit from a diverse cadre of higher-ranking administrators who mirror the student body of the institution. These individuals can serve as role models, mentors, and coaches to students and the employees they supervise (Gonzalez & Young, 2005; Sagaria, 2002). Yet, little is known about the relationships and experiences that contribute to women of color achieving success in higher-ranking community college administrative positions.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American women, since these subpopulations are most representative in administrator roles at Texan community colleges. Therefore, this qualitative study explores how Bicultural Socialization (De Anda) influences women of color as they navigated a pathway to earn higher-

level leadership roles in a community college. Bicultural Socialization Theory indicates that individuals from minority groups have to learn to function in two environments, the environment of their own culture and that of the main society culture (De Anda, 1984).

Background on Community Colleges

Community colleges were established in the early 20th century with the goal of providing vocational training to meet the needs of local communities (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). During the 20th century education was perceived as an avenue for economic mobility because it was seen as element to the wealth of the community, therefore the demand for community colleges increased with the increase demand of schooling needs (Cohen & Brawer). During 1947, the Truman Commission was established in order to encourage higher education institutions to advocate for a decrease of the strong relationship that existed among socioeconomic background and educational achievement level among individuals. The Truman Commission mostly advocated for an increase of education for African Americans and recommended an expansion of the community college system (President Commission on Higher Education, 1947).

Currently, the United States has 1,200 community colleges that enroll over ten million students each year; these students represent half of the nation's undergraduate student population (NCES, 2016). These higher education institutions have an open door policy and programs to ensure all members of the

community have an opportunity to access college (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). As a result, community colleges often provide open access to post-secondary education to underrepresented student populations such as low income, immigrants, first-generation, and ethnic minorities (Berkner, Choy, & Hunt-White, 2008). The students who attend these institutions often seek opportunities to increase their skills, job training, personal enrichment, and to transfer to 4-year institutions (Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014). The transfer function of community colleges is also integral in supporting students' four-year college aspirations (Brawer & Cohen, 2003). However only 40% of these students transfer and complete an undergraduate degree, within six years (Radford, Berkner, Sheperd, & Wheelless, 2010).

Studies have revealed that the transfer approaches that community colleges are implementing have deficiencies and have found a disparity on the transfer rates with a significant correlation to race, ethnic, and socio economic status (Zamani, 2001). Typically students are unable to transfer to four-year institutions due to financial barriers (McDonough, 2000), lack of academic preparation (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015), and campus climate and culture (Zamani, 2001; Dougherty, 1994). The federal government and other agencies have recently placed community colleges under scrutiny and have demanded these institutions to increase the number of students holding undergraduate degrees as a strategy to improve transfer and graduation rates (Bailey, Jaggars &

Jenkins, 2015). In order to provide an incentive for colleges to increase their graduation rates, policies have been implemented, where colleges occasionally receive monetary incentives based on the number of students that they graduate (Bailey, Jaggars & Jenkins, 2015). In Texas, the THECB recently implemented the *60X30 Initiative* in order to increase graduation rates. The *60X30 Initiative* provides opportunity for two and four-year institutions achieve the four established goals, while maintaining the unique mission of their institutions. The four goals of *60X30 initiative* includes, (1) overarching goal: at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 years old will have a certificate or degree, (2) completion goal: at least 550,000 students will complete a certificate or associate degree, bachelors, or master's degree, (3) marketable skills goal: all graduates from Texas public institutions will have completed programs identified as marketable, (4) student debt goal: by 2030 student loan debt for undergraduates will not exceed 60% of first-year wages (THECB, 2016).

Background of Inclusion Community College (ICC). The purpose of this section is to provide a historical background of Inclusion Community College District (ICCD) the site for this study. ICCD was founded in 1965. The College District is managed by the Board of Trustees, which is composed of seven members who are elected in six-year terms. ICCD is a centralized district, which is defined as one-district with six campuses, included an online-based campus. This means that there is one governing body, but each campus has its individual

leadership model. For instance, the district has six Presidents, six Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs (VPAA), five Vice Presidents of Student Services (VPSS), and 20 Academic Deans.

These higher-ranking positions are occupied by women of color (21.62%) compared to 81% of White women and man who occupy higher-ranking administrative positions. When disaggregated by women of color, only one out of six presidents identify as a woman of color (16.67%). In the case of VPAA's, only one out of six identify as women of color (16.67%). The percentage of women of color VPSS is (40%). The total percentage of Academic Deans that identify as women of color equals to (20%). For more information on the demographics of women of color that hold higher-level administrative roles at ICC, please refer to Table 1.

Table 1: Chart of Women of Color Representation at ICC

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Total Positions</u>	<u>Hispanic Women</u>	<u>African American Women</u>	<u>Native American Women</u>	<u>Asian American Women</u>	<u>% Women of Color</u>
Presidents	6	1	0	0	0	16.67%
VPAA	6	0	1	0	0	16.67%
VPSS	5	2	0	0	0	40%
Academic Deans	20	0	3	0	1	20%
Total	37	3	4	0	1	21.62%

ICCD degrees. ICCD offers various types of associate degrees, including: (1) Associate of Arts, (2) Associate of Arts in Kinesiology, (3) Associate of Arts in Music, (4) Associate of Arts in Teaching, (5) Associate of Science, and (6) Associate of Science in Chemistry, among other. In addition to the associate degrees, ICC grants degrees and certificates in more than 60 different occupational/technical programs, career readiness classes, lifelong learning courses, and community outreach programs.

ICCD serves a diverse student body. The enrollment of ICCD for the 2014-2015 Academic Year was 97,545. The student body is comprised of African-Americans (18.6%), Whites (41%), Asian Americans (5.8%), Hispanics (28.9%), Native Americans (0.5%), and those classified as Other (4.3%). The gender distribution is females (58.2%) and males (41.8%) (THECB Almanac, 2015). In 2010 the student demographics at ICCD included African Americans (17%), Hispanics (22.2%), and Whites (52%) (THECB Almanac, 2015). These student enrollment shifts demonstrate that in the past four years there is a marked increase on the enrollment of students of color at ICCD, this trend continues to rise.

ICCD locations. ICCD has six physical campuses and an online campus component. The online campus was excluded from this study because the campus is a special case, since it only serves online students and weekend courses.

Moreover, this study is interested in physical campus locations where women of color administrators exercise leadership roles.

Navarro Community College was funded in 1967 and it focuses in Architecture Technology, Automotive, Computer-Aided Drafting (CAD), Construction Management, Electronics, Gaming, Heating Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, and Welding. The student demographics at Campus 1 is comprised of 26.5% African American, 31.4% Hispanic, 35.3% White, and 6.2% other (THECB Almanac, 2015). This campus has one administrator identified as women of color.

Palo Pinto Community College was funded in 1968, with a focus on Child Development, Dental Hygiene, Information Technology, Teacher Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and World Languages. The student demographics at Campus 2 is comprised of 16.3% African American, 23% Hispanic, 40.5% White, 9.4% other (THECB Almanac). This campus has two administrators that identify as women of color.

Comanche Community College was funded in 1976 and it specializes in Aviation, Fire Technology, Criminal Justice, Dance, and Horticulture. The student demographics at Campus 3 is comprised of 11.9% African American, 33.1% Hispanic, 47.1% White, and 7.2% other (THECB Almanac). This campus has two administrators that identify as women of color.

Ellis Community College was funded in 1996, specializes in Culinary Arts, Dietetics, Drama/Theater, Hospitality and Management, and Engineering. The student body at Campus 5 is comprised of African-American (27.2%), Hispanic (28.1%), White (31.2%), and 12% Other (THECB Almanac). This campus has two administrators that identify as women of color.

Napa Community College was funded in 2009, with a focus on Health Information Technology, Long Term Care Administration, Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Care, and Surgical Technology. The student body at Campus 6 is comprised of African American (17.6%), Hispanic (27%), White (46.5%), and 8.2% Other (THECB Almanac). This campus does not have any women of color in a higher-ranking administrative position.

Background on Leadership Development

Leadership has been studied from the perspective of personal improvement, social and professional advancement, among other perspectives (Northouse, 2013). Originally leadership was studied because corporations believed that individuals with leadership ability provided positive results to their corporations by improving the outcome of their companies (Northouse).

People had the idea that leadership would give them the tools to improve their personal, social, and professional life style. Therefore, researchers focused in studying leadership from perspectives such as, trait, behavior, and information

processing or from a relational standpoint (Northouse, 2013). With the path of time leadership perspectives, focus, and ways of defining leadership evolved. For instance, Northouse (2013) adapted a historical evolution of leadership from the scholarly work of Rost (1991). Northouse indicated that during the 1920s, leadership was emphasized on control and a centralized power. Northouse wrote that leadership was associated with words such as, respect, loyalty, obedience, and impressing the will of the leader.

In the 1930s, researchers focused their studies of leadership from a perspective where leadership was perceived as influential rather than as domination (Northouse, 2013). During this decade leadership was associated with the interaction of the specific personality traits of an individual with those traits of a group. Leadership studies showed that the attitudes and activities of the many [followers] were changed by the one [leader] but the many may also influence the leader (Northouse, 2013).

In the 1940s, leadership was focused from the perspective of the interaction of an individual while directing activities to a group of people (Hemphill, 1949). During this decade leadership by persuasion was differentiated from leadership by cohesion (Northouse, 2013). In the 1950s, leadership was described on three premises that included; (1) continuance of group theory (e.g. leadership as what leaders do in groups), (2) leadership as a relationship that develops shared goals (e.g. leadership based on behavior of the leader), and (3)

effectiveness (e.g. leadership is defined by the ability to influence the effectiveness of overall group) (Northouse, 2013).

In the 1960s, leadership scholars found unity in their definition of leadership, since the prevailing definition of leadership encompassed behavior and the influence that such behavior has among people who work towards shared goals. Seeman (1960) described leadership as “acts by persons which influence other persons in a shared direction” (p.53).

During the 1970s, Burns (1978) provided a definition of leadership that marked one of the most important ideologies about leadership, he wrote “Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources in a context of competition and conflict” (p. 425) with the purpose of producing independent and mutual goals that are held by the leaders and the followers.

In the 1980s, researchers used several themes in order to define leadership, (1) do as the leader wishes, (2) influence, (3) traits, and (4) transformation. In the 21st century scholars agreed that the definition of leadership had a different meaning to different people (Northouse, 2013). The argument in the 21st century continues to be that leadership and management are two separate processes. Northouse (2013) indicated that having a common definition of leadership is challenging because of the increasing global influences and the generational differences that prevail among people. The interest that people has in learning

about how to be effective leaders has been significant and scholars have placed their interest on researching leadership from a standpoint of theory and practice in organizations (Northouse). The study of leadership is important for management in organizations, because the culture of leadership and the effectiveness of leadership are connected (Ayman and Korabik, 2010).

This brief background of leadership demonstrates the developing line of inquiry related to leadership development. Most of the studies about leadership have focused on men and their leadership traits, skills, and styles. More research is needed on the experiences of women, since they were not specifically included as the population under investigation until the 1970s (Chemers, 1997). More specifically, must be understood about women of color, because they remain underrepresented in leadership roles, especially at community colleges.

Statement of the Problem

Students of color make up more than half of the total student enrollment of community colleges in Texas (THECB Almanac, 2015). However, employees of color do not hold positions in higher-ranking administrative levels, especially women (Moore & Sagaria, 1991). Among those women who are able to achieve upper level administration, research shows the majority are White women (AACC, 2012), leaving women of color underrepresented. It is important to invest in the research of women of color, because community colleges with diverse faculty and administrators in higher-ranking positions help with student

completion of goals, since these campus leaders serve as role models and mentors for students (Gnage & Drumm, 2010). Moreover, women of color in higher-ranking leadership positions administration who are able to understand their own culture and the implications of being a minority can help other women of color who want to pursue a career in administration (Salaria, 2002).

Due to the lack of representation of women of color in higher-ranking positions at community colleges (AACC, 2012), there is a need to study the experiences of women of color who successfully have attained higher-ranking administrative positions in community colleges. In order to increase the number of women of color administrators at community colleges, it is important to study the challenges and opportunities women of color encounter and overcome throughout their career to pursue a campus leadership role.

This study explored the strategies that women of color used in order to achieve success in securing higher-ranking administrative positions. The obstacles and opportunities these women encountered while traversing the leadership pipeline, as well as the role that culture played in achieving a higher-level administrative position. The purpose of this study was to examine how successful women of color navigated the community college system to earn higher-level leadership roles at these institutions. This study focuses on women of color who currently hold higher-level administrative positions at a community college district in North Texas and answers the following questions:

1. How do successful women of color describe their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions?
2. What obstacles and opportunities, if any, do women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions encounter and overcome?

The research questions were selected with the aim of understanding the individuals and events that enabled women of color administrators to achieve success. These research questions were helpful for the understanding of how women of color navigated the mainstream culture, their own culture, and the role that Bicultural Socialization played in their professional success. Finally, the research questions were selected with the purpose of finding a career pathway for women of color who are pursuing a higher-level administrative position.

Significance of the Study

Considering the demographic shift of the student population in the community college system in Texas where the majority of students are students of color; Hispanics, African Americans 14.2%, and those classified as Other 8.5% (THECB Almanac, 2016). The significance of this study expands the literature about women of color in higher-level administration and contributes to the change in the hiring practices that community colleges currently use. Fully understanding the extensiveness of women of color in higher-level administrative positions in community colleges in Texas is important, because women of color serve as an asset and resource for students. Therefore, this study provides a paradigm to

current community college leaders about practices for employee recruitment and retention that benefit women of color and the students they serve. Lastly, this study contributes to the literature about the influence that Bicultural Socialization has in the career path of women of color in higher-level administrative positions.

Personal Relevance

As a Hispanic woman and current mid-level administrator at a community college, I have always pondered how women of color overcome challenges and are able to acquire higher-ranking administrative positions in the community college system. I am committed to the mission of the community college and the success of all students, especially underrepresented students, and consider that the presence of women of color in community colleges is imperative for the success of students of color. I believe it is important for women of color who are pursuing higher-ranking administrative positions to identify success paths that other women of color have taken and helped them to achieve success in their professional careers. As a Hispanic woman it is helpful to identify what other Hispanic women at community colleges have experienced and endured in order to be successful in their leadership roles.

The decision to focus this study on leadership from the perspective of women of color working at community colleges occurred, because throughout my career I have observed many White men and women holding higher-ranking administrative roles at these institutions. However, I have not observed many

women of color in higher-ranking leadership roles and I am intrigued in studying this phenomena. As a woman of color working at a community college, I am thrilled to study factors that contribute to the success of women of color. For example, one of the factors that I am interested in exploring is the role that bicultural socialization plays among women of color achieving their career goals. In my personal experience by understanding my culture and the culture of the main stream has helped me to navigate the community college system and had a positive impact in my career development.

This study is important because in my personal experience it is difficult for women of color in community college to take decisions regarding career paths and job opportunities, because we do not have enough social capital that enable us to make such decisions. In many instances in my career, the decisions about professional development or career options have been taken based on my mentors' advice. Therefore, I believe this study provides pathways that have been helpful for successful women of color who hold higher-ranking administrative positions at community colleges. Moreover, such techniques can provide guidance for women of color who are pursuing higher-ranking administrative positions at community colleges. I am passionate about this topic, because I am apprehensive about women of color who do not have social capital nor mentors who can advise them about career options. As a woman of color, I feel that other people should know the stories of successful women of color administrators. For

instance, it will be helpful to learn how successful women of color were able to overcome obstacles while pursuing their professional goals.

I decided to focus this study on leadership from the perspective of women of color, because I would like for higher-ranking administrators at community colleges to understand women of color. My objective is for these leaders to understand the needs of women of color who are pursuing a career in administration. Therefore, I hope this study can provide an insight to current leaders on how to empower women of color who have the desire to grow in their administration careers.

Previous experiences in leadership have given me the opportunity to reflect about the importance of good leadership and the aspects that certain leaders have that make them great leaders and of course the aspects that make leaders to fail in their leadership roles. Therefore, this study will provide higher-ranking administrators the opportunity to learn about the needs of women of color employees at community colleges.

I consider myself privileged women of color, because throughout my career path I have had the opportunity to meet great mentors that have guided me to take effective decisions regarding my professional life. Due to the good advice of my mentors, I had been able to surpass many difficulties at the work place. However, other women of color are not as fortunate as I am, because they do not have mentors who can provide advice about their professional growth or do not

have any mentors at all. Therefore, through my study I hope to provide a perspective of how to support women of color in the community college system. Finally, I hope that my study can help to improve the working conditions of women of color in the community college system.

Definitions of Key Terms

- Bicultural socialization theory- indicates that individuals from minority groups have to learn to function in two environments, the environment of their own culture and that of the main society culture (De Anda, 1984)
- Cultural competence- is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations (National Education Association [NEA] n.d., 2016).
- Cultural congruity- is the cultural fit within the college environment (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996).
- Cultural dissonance- is the experience of dissonance or conflict between one's own sense of culture and what others expect (Torres, 2003a).
- Cultural mediators- individuals in the mainstream group, who serve as providers of information to minority people (De Anda, 1984).

- Cultural role models- individuals in the minority environment whose behavior serves as a pattern to be emulated by the minority person (De Anda, 1984).
- Cultural translators- individuals from a minority individuals own ethnic or cultural group (De Anda, 1984).
- Women of color (WOC)- the term *women of color* is a political and feminist term that refers to describe Africa American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American women (Gutierrez, 1990). For the purpose of this study the term women of color will be used to describe African American and Hispanic women.

Dissertation Organization

The organization of this dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of community colleges and leadership development, and it states the problem and the reasons of the importance of studying leadership from the perspective of successful women of color in community college institutions. This chapter highlights the purpose of the study, its significance to the field of higher education, and the goals of this research project. Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature and describes the theoretical framework that this study will using in order to understand leadership from the perspective of women of color working in two-year institutions. Chapter 3 describes the proposed research design, approaches to data collection and

analysis, and limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 4 provides the findings of the study. Chapter 5 summarizes the study, presents key findings, discusses implications for research, policy, and practice, and guides the reader to a conclusion of the study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter synthesizes literature related to women of color administrators leading higher education institutions with a special focus in the community college system. Academic researchers have marginalized women studies until 1970 (Chemers, 1997). Due to the increasing number of women in leadership positions and academia, this marginalization has shifted and researchers have become interested in studying leadership from a female perspective (Northouse, 2013). However, still today, faculty and administrators in higher education are overwhelmingly White (AACC, 2012; Moore & Sagaria, 1991; NCES, 2010), while diversity among students continues to rise (Berkner, Choy, & Hunt-White, 2008), particularly in Texas (THECB, 2016).

The literature in this study outlines characteristics in higher education institutions that women of color value and the characteristics that these women consider as an obstacle for their tenure. The culture of leadership and the underrepresentation of women in this field is also included in this literature review, since this study focuses on women of color leading community colleges and it is important to discuss the leadership opportunities that community colleges offer to foster the success of these women at their institutions.

The chapter is divided in the following three sections: (1) women administrators in higher education, (2) leadership, and (3) theoretical framework.

Women Administrators in Higher Education

Multiple perspectives of the factors that contribute to the challenges and success of women in higher education have been presented. Women administrators in higher-ranking administrative positions face challenges that affect their experiences while performing their daily work duties. For instance, women administrators have to juggle their personal and professional lives, thus finding a family friendly work environment is essential for these women (Seay, 2010). Additionally, Eddy (2013) indicated that women in higher education face challenges such as marginalization, lack of authenticity, and cumulative disadvantage when confronted with the choice of professional promotion.

Challenges and successes for women in higher education. The Buckingham and Coffman (1999) study addressed factors that contribute to women's decision of joining organizations and the factors that these women considered as an obstacle for their tenure at the organization. The study showed that people typically join organizations due to the pay and benefits, but the relationship with immediate supervisor determines how long the employee is going to stay with the organization (Buckingham & Coffman). The Buckingham and Coffman study coincided with the findings of Jo (2008), thus Jo's participants were women and the study was designed from a female perspective. The Jo cross-sectional study was designed to study reasons why women administrators would make the decision to turnover their jobs at top tier universities. The sample was

collected from women who left voluntary from top tier universities during the years of 2000-2003. These women were full time employees, 30-40 years old, and held middle level administrative positions, with at least 2 years of job tenure. The study revealed that the main reason why these women left top tier universities was due to the lack of good treatment from supervisors (Jo). The study also found that female administrators left their positions, because of the aversion they encountered about having the responsibility, but not the authority to make decisions (Jo). Lastly, the study showed that female administrators left top tier universities, because of the lack of opportunity for advancement in their careers. The female participants stated that trying to get promoted was one of the most frustrating aspects of their career (Jo).

The Gerdes (2003) study collected data from women faculty and administrators at higher education institutions from 1976 to 1995. Responses were obtained from 94 women of whom 11 were presidents or recent presidents or chancellors, 40 academic deans, provost/vice presidents for academic affairs or faculty, and nine other administrators. The researchers asked the women participants to provide a piece of advice for women starting their academic career. Participants of the study (51%) recommended to cope with gender disadvantages and the importance of standing for themselves, (41%) of participants stated the importance of personal wisdom and perform what was best for their life and their happiness, rather than referring to success in a career, and (38%) of participants

discussed the importance of facts in higher education that women would have to accept, for instance, the fact of the necessity for women to work harder than men in order to succeed (Gerdes).

In a study conducted by Dindoffer, Reid, and Freed (2011) they interviewed six women from four Christian colleges and universities whom were Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Provost. The purpose of the study was to explore how these leaders of higher education institutions integrated their professional lives with their personal lives. The study indicated that family influences, mentoring, and training were factors that contributed to their professional success. The women participants reported to value hard work through seeing their mothers or grandmothers working hard (Dindoffer, Reid & Freed). Also, the study showed that the role of mentoring was very important for the success in the career development of these women. Participants accredited their mentors with providing support, training, and guidance for them to have achieved their current positions in higher education (p. 298).

Factors that addressed the influence of mentoring among women in higher education were also a significant finding in the Giddis (2003) study. The female administrator participants indicated that having a mentor was an important factor that contributed to their success (Giddis). Crawford and Smith (2005) wrote that the role of a mentor is to accept the mentee into an inner circle by providing the

mentee with learning opportunities, practice opportunities and the opportunities to increase knowledge, performance, and motivation.

Other scholars have studied mentoring such as Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011), their study revealed that females who were pursuing administrative positions considered mentoring as an important factor that contributed to their goal achievement. They wrote about the importance of mentoring relationships for females who want to pursue an administrative career. They concluded “leaders of educational institutions at all levels need to become proactive in encouraging mentoring relationships for new administrators” (p. 22). Schott (2004) found that female administrators had higher levels of confidence in their career when they had the presence of mentors. In a study by Moreton (2001), Female Chief Academic Officers recommended females who wanted to pursue a career in administrative positions to get mentors and build networking relationships because mentoring and networking are important for career advancement and promotion.

The Seay (2010) qualitative study, surveyed 345 women employed in North Carolina academic institutions. The study suggested that both first-generation college graduates and non-first generation college graduates whom are female administrators would benefit from family-friendly workplace policies. The study revealed that 17.7 percent of the participants had to interrupt their career plans due to personal or family related health issues. Moreover, 41 percent of the

participants indicated that they provided financial assistance to children. The factors mentioned above need to be considered while strategizing for recruiting and retaining female minorities in higher education, since the U.S. Social Security Administration reported that women are more likely to change jobs for reasons that do not include economic remuneration (Seay).

Christman and McClellan (2012), in their qualitative study, discussed the patterns of resiliency traits among men and women, by interviewing 17 men and 16 women who were asked to describe their resiliency aspects or traits. In the case of resiliency traits men participants stated that they were seeking a holistic strength that is often attributed to women aptitudes; however, they were afraid of being perceived as weak. Therefore, these participants stated that they had to be prepared to play the role of male attributes (i.e. play the role of the hero). The study showed that men enjoyed leadership or viewed leadership from top to bottom. Women however, appeared to be more engaged focusing on earning their leadership position (Christman & MacClellan).

The studies outlined above are focused on the factors that contribute to women administrators' decision on staying or leaving organizations. Examples of advice from successful administrators to future women administrators included the importance of developing personal wisdom and acceptance that being women has challenges and about the importance of learning to cope with such disadvantages. Moreover, the literature presented above included the findings

about the influence of mentoring for the encouragement and success of women administrators. However, it is important to design a study that focuses on the influence that mentors from the mainstream group and from minority groups have on the career path of women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions at community colleges. Thus, this study is unique because it contributes to the needed literature of women of color at community colleges and not four-year institutions, since the literature in this section only addressed four-year institutions. This study gathered information from women of color that are successful leaders in the community college system. The uniqueness of this study relies on stories that I obtained from the experiences of the women of color that were interviewed. For instance, I collected information regarding their struggles, successes, and leadership strategies that helped participants to achieve success in their leadership roles.

Women of color administrators in higher education. Women of color administrators in higher education institutions experience challenges and shortcomings that are generated not only because of their gender, but also due to their ethnicity. Such challenges include; hostile work environment, discrimination, and lower payment (Blum, 1991). Sagaria (2002) found that disadvantages that women of color experience begin in the hiring search, since these hiring committees only benefit white men and some White women, leaving women of color in disadvantage. The purpose of Sagaria's study was to learn if

the search process used to hire administrators was the reason why the administrative groups at the university were not diverse. The sample included 147 administrative and professional positions. The study indicated that although the hiring committee members tried their best not to use color as a filter when interviewing candidates, their biases or prejudices, sexism, and racism came along as part of the process after the initial phase of the recruitment in some searches. Sagaria concluded that such beliefs benefited White men and to a lesser degree White women, eliminating people of color from the applicant pools.

African American women in higher education. Perceptions about the factors that contribute to the vulnerability and the underrepresentation of African American women in higher education have been presented. For instance, Northouse (2013) addressed the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and provided three possible reasons, (1) lack of human capital (education, work experience, developmental opportunities, and work-home conflict), (2) gender differences (style and effectiveness, commitment and motivation, self-promotion, negotiation, and trial), and (3) prejudice (gender stereotypes, biased perceptions and evaluations, vulnerability and reactance, and cross-pressures).

Women in higher education are at a disadvantage and when the literature is delineated into ethnic categories, the disparities confronting African American women are even more compelling. For instance, about 7% of CEOs in community

colleges are African American and only 28% of the CEOs are women (AACC, 2012). In a qualitative study by Hinton and Patitu (2003) they interviewed five middle and senior level African American women administrators at five different institutions. The participants' positions included one public researcher, one private research extensive, one regional comprehensive, one urban commuter, and one public two year. The participants in the study indicated that being African American was more influential than being female at the time of pursuing promotion or maintaining their current administrative positions. For instance, one of the participants stated that her ethnicity surpassed the fact of being a woman, because due to her ethnicity she had to deal with challenges that White women did not have to confront (Hinton & Patitu).

Dowdy and Hamilton (2011) developed a qualitative case study focusing on the experiences of an African American woman scholar and her experiences as the first non-White female chair of a department in 100 years. Interviews were conducted with African American women scholars and her two mentors in order to study cultural aspects and challenges of being the first African American woman working at a predominantly White campus. Dowdy and Hamilton found that to be successful in her role as the first non-White female chair, this African American woman had to create a leadership vision of her own and not allow negative attitudes interfere with her success. Dowdy and Hamilton's findings coincided well with the findings of Sagaria's (2002) study. For instance, Sagaria

found that for African American women in leadership positions it is important to place their focus on values that are important to them. For instance, for African American women in leadership positions it is important that they understand their culture and the implications of being African American women, by doing this they will be helping other African American who want to pursue a career in administration (Sagaria).

Crawford and Smith (2005) found that the lack of sensitivity towards minorities on most university campuses have made African American females aspiring to be administrators vulnerable (p. 53). Regardless of the gender differences, minority administrators face barriers such as isolation, loneliness, and racially motivated victimization (Crawford & Smith). However, women of color had an additional barrier, the barrier of being a woman (ASHE, 2009).

The literature above describes the barriers that African American women in higher education institutions experience due to their ethnicity and gender. The studies demonstrate how being an African American is more influential at the time of promotion for women administrators than any other aspect of their professional and personal life. The articles provided highlights on how African American women administrators must battle negative attitudes due to their ethnicity and in order to be successful in their career they need to have a clear understanding of their culture and themselves. The literature above also addressed the importance of mentoring for the success of African American women in administrative roles.

This study is unique because the study was conducted at a community college district in Texas. Moreover, the sample of the study included women of color who hold higher-level administrative positions (i.e. Presidents, Vice Presidents of Academics, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Academic Deans).

Hispanic women in higher education. Hispanic women are at a disadvantage when they join the community college system and try to pursue a career in higher education administration. Some of the major challenges include gender role expectations, societal expectations (Gonzalez and Young, 2005), and the lack of mentors from their own ethnic group (Aschenbrenner, 2006). The trend of Hispanic women underrepresented in higher-ranking administrative positions at community colleges is noticeable, since only five percent of CEOs at community colleges are Hispanic and only 28% of the total CEOs are women (AACC, 2012).

Gonzalez and Young (2005) sampled 103 Hispanic women with the purpose of learning their ethnic identity and the influence of mentoring in their careers. The participants received a questionnaire in the form of Likert-Scale and they stated that if given the opportunity to select a mentor they would prefer someone of similar ethnicity. Also, the study showed that Hispanic women deal with societal challenges and gender role expectations. For instance these women must negotiate the assumption that Hispanic women are submissive and should have passive roles in administration. Moreover, the study revealed that since

Hispanic women are consistent with a bicultural profile (e.g. mentoring and preferred a mentor from similar ethnic background), it is important for researchers and CEOs to apply culturally approachable strategies at their campuses (Gonzalez & Young).

Long and Martinez (1994) studied differences in self-esteem, self-acceptance, masculinity, femininity, and locus of control among Hispanic professional women. A total of 455 women between 19-65 years old volunteered to participate, however only 114 Hispanic women were self-identified by answering three of the demographic data questions. The participant pool included; non-Hispanic professionals (n=89), scientists (n=60), college students (n=83), mental health clients (n=52), and victims of domestic violence (n=57). The results of the study showed that Hispanic women have challenges that are specific to their ethnicity, such as balancing majority culture values with a more family oriented ethnic identity. In the case of self-acceptance, the scores of Hispanic women were significantly lower than for other women professionals.

In the Aschenbrenner (2006) study, she developed face-to-face interviews with four Texan Hispanic women leaders in higher education institutions. The purpose of the study was to define the educational and socio-cultural characteristics that Hispanic women leaders in higher education possess. The study examined the participants' background, informal and formal academic preparation, and identification of career paths these women experienced. The

findings of the study provided information about Hispanic women leaders. The participants of the study provided the following advice to Hispanic women who are pursuing a career in higher education; (1) understanding the values and own culture, (2) rise above gossip by not participating, (3) be willing to take risks, (4) get a terminal degree, (5) if you choose to have a significant relationship, select a smart professional and do not stay in an unhealthy relationship, (6) be able to financially support yourself and your children, (7) be mentored and mentor others (pass it on), (8) network and become active in meaningful organizations, (9) be confident in your role, (10) obtain great support system, (11) invite talented people to be around you to learn from them, (12) be awake and ready to be called upon, and (13) have an innate desire to learn (p. 130).

The articles above highlighted the societal challenges and the gender expectations that Hispanic women have to juggle while working in higher education institutions. The studies described pieces of advice to Hispanic women pursuing a career in administration. This study is unique because it is focused on the obstacles that Hispanic women in higher-ranking administrative positions have encountered and overcome during their career pathways. The feedback provided by the participants is important, because it contributes to the literature of learning the obstacles that Hispanic women face while pursuing careers. Moreover, in-depth narratives that successful Hispanic administrators provided is

beneficial for other Hispanic women to overcome barriers and achieve success in their administrative careers.

Asian American women in higher education. Literature relevant to Asian American in higher education shows that the lack of Asian American in higher-ranking administrative positions is due to sexual and racial harassment, along with the accent discrimination that these women experience (Cho, 1996). The literature suggest that Asian American women are at a disadvantage when they join the higher education administration system, since the values of higher education do not mirror the values of the Asian American Culture. For example, in the Asian American culture and as a women it is seen as good manners when the women allows the men to speak first, however the perception in the administrative field is likely to be seen by the male culture as lacking leadership or lacking original ideas (Hune, 1998). According to Ideta and Copper (1999) Asian American administrators' main challenge is not fitting the typical stereotypes of Asian women such as docile, passive, and silent (Ideta & Cooper, 1999). In their study ten Asian American women described themselves as having greater determination to achieve their goals.

Native American women in higher education. The literature relevant to Native American women in leadership roles in higher education institutions show lack of literature focused on Native American administrators, because both female and male Native Americans are new to the field of education administration

(Johnson, Benham & Van Alstine, 2003). The literature on Native Americans shows a relevant cultural disconnect on their culture and the culture of higher education. For instance, Native Americans experience dissonance in their work environments, because cultural expectations are significantly different from tribal communities (Warner, 1995). An example given by Swisher and Benally (1998) is that in many Native American tribes, humility is seen as a value and it is inappropriate for individuals to talk about their accomplishments or deeds and in higher education it is seen as a lack of leadership.

Women of color administrators at community Colleges. The challenges that women of color face in the community college system are not different from challenges that women of color face at any other higher education institution. For instance, ASHE (2009) reported that women of color suffer the dual effect of racism and sexism, among other challenges.

Barriers for women of color in community colleges. The community college system is not exempt from obstacles in providing equity to women of color, since the number of White women and men holding higher-ranking administrative positions at community colleges surpass the number of women of color holding the same position (NCES. 2010). Moreover, minority administrators face barriers that affect their interpersonal attitudes and the way they perceive their self-efficacy (Abney and Richey, 1991). Barriers such as isolation, loneliness, and racially motivated victimization are some examples given by

Crawford and Smith (2005). Additionally, Benjamin (1997) wrote that barriers that are faced by people of color who have administrative positions affect their experiences in the work place. Hurtado, Milen, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen (1999) found that underrepresented groups who work in institutions that are not diversified considered that they are seen as symbols or “tokens” rather than individuals.

In the Oguntoyinbo (2014) qualitative study, he interviewed 35 female senior-level administrators from different colleges and universities, 15 were presidents or chancellors, 10 vice-presidents or vice chancellors, and five were provosts. The rest of participants were chief diversity officers, treasures, or deans. Twenty of the participants were White and the other were women of color. The study revealed that female higher education administrators face obstacles in their careers, such as having different expectations when compared to their male counterparts. They also found that females experience lack of support, discouragement and sabotage, when compared to males. The study revealed that one of the challenges for women is finding a pathway for resilience and a pathway to overcome the barriers that these women face while working at higher education institutions.

Opportunities for women of color in community colleges. Historically female students and female administrators have always been well represented in community colleges since its inception (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). The

Townsend and Twombly study showed that the representation of women in community colleges is relatively good, however the efforts to make the institution equitable for women has not been practical, since the equity that appears to take place at community colleges is accidental or by default due to the low status of community colleges as an institutional type. Thus, a path for success for women of color administrators or literature on a path that can help these women to achieve higher-level administration positions in their campus is limited. Also, the community college system is facing an exodus of their current employees (NCES, 2010); therefore, this is the perfect opportunity to fill anticipated vacancies with women of color. The presence of minority administrators in community colleges is important since minority students are more likely to be enrolled in community colleges than four-year universities (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2009).

Canada (1989) suggested that non-White women administrators in higher education institutions decided to pursue an administrative career because of the positive role models that they had in this area. Seay (2010) found that First-generation women administrators who aspire to have an academic position in higher education look for institutions that are family friendly and with policies for equitable pay for women and health insurance options coverage for elderly parents.

Tedrow and Rhoads (1999) conducted a qualitative study, interviewing 30 senior women administrators (i.e. directors, deans, vice-presidents, provost,

assistant to president, president or chancellor). The gender was comprised of 24 White women and 6 African American women. The results of the study showed that women administrators at community colleges built their leadership style as a result of the expectations of the community college and the norms established by male roles. Additionally, the study revealed that women who try to succeed in these types of environment (i.e. norms established by male roles) face significant psychological and communicational challenges.

The literature discussed in the section above describes the barriers and opportunities for women of color at community colleges. Thus, a research that addresses the influence that culture plays in the career path of women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions is important, because the insight provided by current women of color who hold higher ranking administrative positions is beneficial for the literature about the benefits of having cultural mentors. Moreover, information provided about cultural mentors is beneficial for women of color pursuing higher ranking administrative positions.

Leadership

For the purpose of this study, it is important to address leadership, the culture of leadership, and the characteristics that differentiate women and man in leadership roles. Bass (1997) described leadership as a universal phenomenon, stating that no society is completely absent from leadership. Since, every time that people get together there is always a leader who leads the group (Schwarzkopf,

1994). Proponents of the literature suggest that decision makers view leadership as a process that requires a mutual input from stakeholders and such process requires innovation (Randall & Coakley, 2007). Additionally, the leadership that occurs in any society is affected by the organization and the culture that exists in such organization (Schwarzkopf, 1994). Due to the exodus of administrators in community colleges (AACC, 2012) it is important to fill anticipated vacancies with women of color. Therefore, in order to hire women of color and fill such vacancies it is important to study women of color and find a possible success path for these women of color.

Culture of leadership and underrepresentation of women. Leadership has been traditionally studied from a perspective of White male administrators (Eagly & Karu, 2002), leaving women historically underrepresented in leadership positions (AACC, 2012). Even research that focuses on women issues was ignored until 1970 (Chemers, 1997). However, due to the increasing number of women in leadership roles and academia, studies focusing on female topics started to be an interest area for research (Northouse, 2013). When the literature is delineated into ethnic categories the disparities confronting women of color are even more compelling, because women of color have to experience racial or ethnic prejudice (Bell and Nkomo, 2001).

Researchers contribute the lack of women representation in leadership roles and studies focusing on women issues to specific gender responsibilities that

women have to face. A good example is the lack of self-promotion and negotiation for leadership positions that prevail in the female culture (Northouse, 2013). Also, domestic errands and the expectations about children responsibilities cause challenges for women aspiring to obtain higher leadership positions (Northouse, 2013). Another reason is the tendency that women have when they depict themselves as facilitators instead of leaders (Eagly and Karu, 2002), creating a negative perception for women at the time they are promoted to positions of authority (Rudman and Glick, 2001).

Women receive less formal training than the training received by men due to the prejudice against women leaders (Northouse, 2013). Deaux and Kite (1993) indicated that prejudice against women can be explained by the stereotypes among women and men. In the case of women stereotypes such as concern for others, sensitivity, warmth, and helpfulness and those of man, include, confidence, assertiveness, and independence rationality, leaving women in at a disadvantage because the stereotypes of men fit better with the criteria that organizations use for the selection of leaders.

Literature addressing the selections of leaders indicated that the criteria that organizations utilize for selecting managers for leadership roles decreases the tendencies for gender stereotypical behavior (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Moreover, they found that people, who are not selected nor trained for leadership roles, do have the tendency of manifesting stereotypical leadership behavior according to

their gender. Proponents of the literature such as Astin and Leland (1991) coincide with Eagly and Johnson (1990) indicating that females have the tendency of leading in a cooperative manner instead of independently, giving their followers the opportunity to gain empowerment and leadership. The ASHE (2009) studies concluded that diverse leadership groups in higher education institutions would respond more accurately to the concerns that the multitude might present, due to their diverse background. Therefore, it is important to increase the hiring of women of color in higher education intuitions, especially in the community college system.

Leadership traits and ethnicity factors among women and men.

Studies regarding leadership traits that differentiate women and men have been previously addressed. Ayman and Korabik (2010) indicated the importance of addressing gender and culture in order to understand leadership, because these both terms coexist and are very important to each other, since leadership and its effectiveness is comprehensive. Their study pointed out that outcomes are different for men and women in leadership, because men have more privileges, since they hold leadership roles that are inclusive to their gender, when compared to the lower status and fewer privileges of women holding leadership roles.

Kezar (2012) conducted a qualitative study, interviewing forty faculty members and administrators at a small community college. The study revealed that females and people of color have the propensity of believing in a

nonhierarchical leadership style when compared to White man. Kezar (2012) indicated that White women and people of color have the tendency of describing their leadership as collective, empower based, and is characterized by an equal relationship of powers.

In the Nica (2013) study it was found that the disadvantages of women as leaders increase when they encounter positions that have been labeled as masculine type or to a male dominated area. Chin and Sanchez (2007) wrote that stereotypic expectations based on gender creates obstacles to women leaders, because it places double standards, resulting in negative performance evaluations for women because such evaluations have been based in the standards of men.

In the Chin and Sanchez (2007) study they found that the challenges that have resulted in leadership theories have occurred, because of the emphasis that scholars have placed in studying leadership from the perspective of those who hold leadership positions, instead of gathering input from those who do not hold leadership positions. This lack of input from people who do not hold leadership positions has created an incomplete and lack of effectiveness in the results of leadership theories (Chin & Sanchez). Additionally they found that the lack of inclusion in diversity have placed problems to minority racial, ethnic, and women, due to the expectations of them to behave according to the stereotyped characteristics and according to their gender or racial ethnicity. Eagly and Johnson (1990) coincide with Chin and Sanchez (2007) regarding the difference

in leadership styles that prevails among men and women. They stated that leadership styles were gender stereotypic (Eagly & Johnson). Moreover, Eagly and Johnson found that women tended to adopt a more democratic or participative manner of leadership when compared to men. For instance, they found that women were more tasks and interpersonally oriented, when compared to man.

Dahlvig and Longman (2010) developed a qualitative study and interviewed 16 women and were asked to describe their leadership styles. Two thirds of the 16 women involved in the study, described their leadership style as (a) collaborative, (b) democratic, (c) empowering, (d) guiding, (e) transformational, (f) serving to others, and (g) taking for people. The qualities above are aligned with those of transformational leaders defined by Bass (1997).

The studies outlined above described leadership styles and how literature has associated leadership with gender, favoring White men and White women, leaving women of color at a disadvantage. The framework used in this study is unique, because contributes to the field of leadership by providing an understanding regarding women of color, their challenges, and strategies to mitigate such challenges. Understanding the culture of leadership, how women have been historically underrepresented in leadership discussions and higher-ranking administrative positions, and the leadership traits that differentiate women among men is important for this study in order to provide the platform minorities can exercise their culture. Thus, these ethnic minority leaders are in charge of

understanding the success that faculty members contribute to their institutions, along with the goals that such faculty members have to accomplish (Bacalu, 2012).

Leadership development programs at community colleges. Research about the need for leadership development programs for administrators working in community colleges have been addressed in previous reports. Researchers have written about the effectiveness of leadership and the challenges that leadership is facing. Thus, such research about leadership has been focused on the process of leadership theory, resulting in a lack of research that underlines leadership development (Northouse, 2013). Challenges such as new technologies, market demands, and competition in higher education have forced leadership to focus on restoring confidence, hope, and optimism among their followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Moreover, indications about the exodus of employees in community colleges (AACC, 2012) has resulted in some challenges for these institutions of higher education resulting in concerns about finding replacements for their future retirees (Eddy, 2013). Thus, there is a need for professional development and leadership programs to improve preparing the people who can meet the challenges that are affecting higher education institutions (Boggs, 2013).

The exodus of current employees at community colleges (AACC, 2012) and the challenges that leadership is facing with new technologies and market opportunities (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) represent the perfect opportunity to fill

anticipated vacancies with women of color. Therefore, it is important to design a study with a focus on leadership development for women of color. However, college administrators are experiencing challenges in developing leadership programs, since the most significant challenge for college administrators is developing faculty and administrators who believe in the values and the mission of the community college (Boggs, 2003). The Boggs study indicated that community college critics and uninformed individuals question the creditability and effectiveness of the mission of community colleges and leaders of these institutions have to continuously defend the values of their college mission. Therefore, new leaders have to understand the problems that community college are facing and must learn how to improve the climate of their critics with the hope of serving as a guide for curriculum development for institutions, mentoring, and doctoral programs (Boggs).

The Nica (2013) study indicated that middle-level leaders in higher education require more practical evidence direction, because the nature of leadership requires a combination of both management and leadership skills. Thus, sharing leadership is very important among these leaders because by empowering colleagues is a representation of institutionalized practices of distributed leaders (Nica).

In the Peters (2013) study it was found that leaders of higher education institutions do not have the necessary preparation to lead in an effective manner.

Therefore, researchers have found different strategies that community colleges are implementing in their institutions in order to develop the administrators that will be leading their organizations in the near future. For instance, Campbell, Syed and Morris (2010) indicated that many institutions use the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ) in order to select employees for executive positions. The questionnaire is also used to develop such employees and create a succession plan. According to the OPQ Conceptual Framework, they suggested that leadership development occurs in three levels, (1) the discipline or traditional coursework, (2) inquiry-based or dissertation process, and (3) development of interpersonal competencies (p. 34). However, Goleman (1998) wrote that the real distinction of an exceptional leader is the great emotional intelligence that the leader possesses.

In the Eddy (2013) study the researcher interviewed presidents (n=20) and vice-presidents or deans (n=20) from rural community colleges, defined as a college with a population of less than 35,000 inhabitants. The purpose of the study was to define the preparation that these leaders had to undergo for their positions and the type of challenges that such leaders had to face in their current leadership positions. The study revealed that the leaders learned how to lead by doing the job instead of attending formal training (Eddy). Also, the researcher found that these leaders were able to advance in their career due to their relationships with other people, mentors, and interactions with people. Eddy found three competencies

areas that leaders must have in order to be successful; the three competencies are (1) community college advocacy, (2) collaboration, and (3) communication. The study also showed that leadership is weak in resource development (i.e. doing more with less) and organization strategy (i.e. lack of leadership preparation). The Eddy (2013) study indicated that due to the concern of replacing leaders who are about to retire, different professional associations are placing an emphasis on creating training and development opportunities for leaders. A good example of such organizations is the American Association of Community College (AACCC) and the League of Innovation of Community College (LICCC).

The studies above showed the great opportunities that community colleges have in order to develop leadership programs for their employees. The literature discusses academic tracks that focus on leadership and leadership programs that can be develop at community colleges. It is important for community colleges to address the type of population that they would like to target, for this study woman of color that aspire to have higher-level administrative roles at community colleges. This study is unique because outlines the needs of women of color who aspire to acquire a higher-level administrative position. The responses of the participants of this study provided a paradigm for future development programs that target the retention of women of color administrators in community colleges.

Defining moments for women of color in leadership roles. Studies about women of color defining moments that influenced them to take decisions about leadership roles have been addressed in literature. For instance, in the qualitative study by Dahlvig and Longman (2010), the purpose was to explore defining moments of female administrator leaders who worked at Christian higher education institutions. Seventeen women participated in the study, they were faculty and administrators nominated by administrators' leaders from their home campuses for involvement in a women leadership program. The participants indicated that their defining moment in pursuing a role in leadership was due to (1) life changing impact of someone speaking potential, (2) event that had led to reframing a previously held understanding of leadership, (3) situation in which the women began to view themselves as leaders as they stood up for something greater than themselves often in the face of perceived injustice. They also found that women did not look for leadership positions, instead the leadership positions arise because they were concerned about injustices in a particular situation.

In a phenomenological study by Montas-Hunter (2012), she examined the identity, self-efficacy, and culture among eight Hispanic women and the connection that these factors played in the interference in the attainment of leadership positions at higher education institutions. The results of the study indicated that Hispanic women needed to have a shared value system with the mainstream group in order to survive the academe; therefore, requiring high levels

of ethnic identity and acculturation. The study indicated that social models were important to leadership development, because they provided individuals with the opportunity of seeing similar people in positions who strived for and will recognize in them similar capabilities needed for successful progression into leadership (Montas-Hunter). For instance, one of the participants stated that it was very encouraging for Latinas to see other Latinas in leadership positions, because this makes them believe that it is a feasible journey (p. 326).

In the Haley (2012) study, they used qualitative methodology in order to study the reasons why women selected their academic career and the time when they realized that they wanted to pursue that specific career. They interviewed women in higher education administration (n=18), with a 1-12 years of experience in faculty roles. The results of the study reflected that women (n=14) decided to pursue a degree in student affairs during their undergraduate years (i.e. research assistants, student organizations). Other women found their desire to pursue a career in student affairs through conversations with staff members who persuaded or convinced them that student affairs could be a career for them. Two of the participants decided to pursue doctoral degrees to obtain advancement in their career (i.e. dean of students or vice-president of students).

The studies outlined above reflected different motivation for women in academic leadership roles. The participants in the study were not selected based on the gender or ethnicity and this study is unique in that it uses case studies of

women of color who hold higher-ranking administrative roles in their community college. This study obtained evidence regarding the factors that these women of color felt it was crucial for their success in their leadership positions.

Sustaining leaders. Higher education institutions continue to have discussions about strategies that can be implemented at their campuses in order to support and retain administrators in leadership positions. However research that addresses the contributions of women administrators to higher education is limited (Schwartz, 1997). Moreover, there is a need of literature that addresses strategies to sustain women of color administrators in higher education institutions, since their resiliency methods differ when compared to men. For instance, Christman and McClellan (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of finding factors that contribute to the persistence and resilience of women administrators at higher education institutions. The study analyzed the view of scholars regarding resiliency and they found a correlation to the coping and adaptation that forms positive skills such as patience, tolerance, responsibility, compassion, determination, and risk taking (p. 7). The results of the study showed that women leaders' resiliency happens because of the interchange of leadership styles that characterize women with the leadership styles that identify males. Moreover, the study indicated that women foster resiliency by supporting one another and from gaining support from others. Lastly, the participants in the study

stated that receiving recognition subsidized their prevalence at their leadership positions (p. 16).

The Christman and McClellan (2012) study indicated that gender and resiliency among administrators in higher education institutions is significant. For instance, the women participants indicated that they became resilient due to the support of others or the relationships that they had with other people. In the case of man, they stated that the reason why they were resilient towards adversity was due to their adaptability and flexibility towards the adversity. However, they wrote that regardless of what the participants thought that they have acted, the perceptions of others about them it made a difference in their actions. “We learned that it is only when thoughts and actions are cast back to the subject do they have an opportunity to better see themselves” (Christman & McClellan, p. 660).

The studies outlined above described strategies that leaders have used in order to endure the daily demands of their leadership roles. Moreover, differences in resiliency approaches among men and women are highlighted in the articles above. Therefore this case study is unique, because I studied woman of color leaders, a group that has been neglected from previous studies. I provided an opportunity to participants to express their success stories. I obtained information of how these women of color were able to cross barriers such as gender, culture, and color and were able to be successful in their leadership roles. Also, based on

their responses I obtained strategies of success for future women of color who are pursuing leadership roles at community colleges.

Theoretical Framework

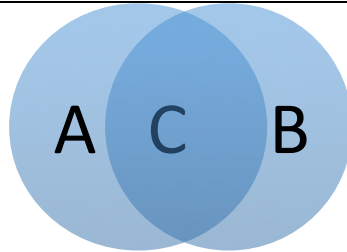
The inequity that predominates among men and women in leadership positions maintains its prevalence in leadership journals and conversations (Northouse, 2013). In recent years, the topics regarding leadership from the perspective of women has increased, due to the rise of women in leadership positions (Northouse). However, more research is needed to understand the unique experiences of women of color administrators at community colleges. This understudied population has the potential to positively influence community college campuses, particularly in student and subordinate mentorship (Gnage & Drumm, 2010). Women of color serve as an asset and resource for students' completion of goals, because of the role modeling and mentoring provided by these administrators (Gnage & Drumm).

The framework selected for this study is centered in the Bicultural Socialization theory that indicates that individuals from minority groups have to learn to function in two environments, the environment of their own culture and that of the main society culture (De Anda, 1984). De Anda depicts six factors that are important for the understanding of Bicultural Socialization, such factors include:

1. Degree of overlap of commonalty between the two cultures with regard the norms, values, beliefs, perceptions, and the like.
2. The availability of cultural translators, cultural mediators, and models.
3. The amount and type (positive or negative) of corrective feedback provided by each culture regarding attempts to produce normative behavior.
4. The conceptual style and problem-solving approach of the minority individual and their network with the prevalent or valued styles of the majority culture.
5. The individual's degree of bilingualism.
6. The degree of dissimilarity in physical appearance from the majority culture, such as skin color and facial features.

De Anda (1984) revealed that bicultural experiences occur, because there are similarities between two cultures and not because the two cultures are totally different. Table 2 provides a pictorial of how De Anda recapitulated Biculturalization.

Table 2: Biculturalization Theory (De Anda, 1984)



Note: Table 2 represents the 1984 Bicultural Socialization Theory of De Anda. (A) Represents the Majority Culture, (B) Represents the Minority Culture, and (C) Represents the Shared Values and Norms that coexist among both the majority and minority culture.

De Anda incorporated the concept of shared values and shared norms that can be used to describe, how people can make it possible to understand and predict two cultural environments and adjust behavior according to the norms of each culture. The fusion of two worlds or two cultures through their shared values and norms helps researchers to explain how individuals can interact in two different cultural environments, and it is possible for these individuals to adjust their behavior according to the norms of each culture (Braxton, Sullivan, Johnson, 2000).

Bicultural Socialization was ideal for this study because it helped to portray how women of color navigated the norms and culture of the mainstream group and their own cultural group to earn higher-level leadership roles. Braxton, Sullivan, Johnson (2000) indicated that the fusion of the two cultures through their shared values and norms could allow individuals to function in a more productive manner. By studying women of color through the use of Bicultural

Socialization it was possible to study obstacles women of color encountered, the individuals and resources that supported their success, and the events that enabled successful women of color to pursue success in their career.

Chapter 3

Research Design

This chapter outlines the research design that was used in this qualitative study. This study explores how successful women of color navigated the community college system to earn higher-level leadership roles. The study answers the following questions:

1. How do successful women of color describe their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions?
2. What obstacles and opportunities, if any, do women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions encounter and overcome?

A qualitative approach provided an in-depth, comprehensive depiction of how women of color navigated the community college system and were able to obtain higher-ranking administrative positions. Creswell (2013) recommends the use of qualitative research when the researcher needs participants to share their stories, hear their thoughts, and minimize the power that often occurs between the participant and the researcher. Therefore, a qualitative approach was ideal for this study, because the stories of participants provided information about the strategies they used to succeed in securing higher-ranking administrative positions, the obstacles and opportunities that they encountered while navigating the leadership pipeline, and the role that culture played in achieving their professional success. Through in-depth interviews, campus observations, document analysis, and

analytic memos this study provided a detailed account of the experiences of women of color administrators in community colleges.

Methodology

In order to investigate in-depth how women of color were able to overcome challenges and achieve success in their higher-level administrative roles, this study used cases studies of six current women of color who hold higher-level administrative positions at community colleges. The purpose of a case study is to investigate real-life cases or events over the time (Creswell, 2013). The use of case studies was essential in this study, because it allowed an in-depth learning about how six women of color traversed the community college system and successfully attained higher-level administrative positions.

In order to use a case study approach, research studies should meet conditions, such as, gaining the viewpoint of participants, the ability of the researcher to not control the behavior of the participant, and the ability to focus the case study on events from a particular period of time (Yin, 2014). This study met such conditions and explored the success pathway of six women of color who currently hold higher-level administrative positions at community colleges. The participants' work and life events were examined in order to gather information about how they were able to gain withstand and learn about the contributors to their success.

Participants Recruitment and Selection

After receiving IRB approval, I used purposeful sampling to recruit participants. Purposeful sampling is when the researcher selects participants, because such individuals will purposefully inform and provide an understanding of the study's research problem (Creswell, 2013). In the case of this study site, the employee e-mails were public record, and I obtained the emails by extracting the information from the employee directory. Once I obtained the e-mail addresses of the sixteen female presidents, vice presidents of instruction, vice president of student services, and academic deans, I then sent the recruitment e-mail to all and let them self-identify as (1) female African American, Hispanic, Asian American, or Native American (2) currently hold higher-ranking administrative positions, and (3) have been the position for more than one year. Participants who did not respond to the first e-mail (Appendix A) received a second follow-up e-mail (Appendix B) two weeks later. A third e-mail was sent three weeks later to encourage additional participants. Administrators who did not respond to the third e-mail were considered as not interested in participating in the study.

My goal was to recruit at least five participants, since Creswell suggests that case studies should have 4-5 participants in a single case study in order to provide an opportunity to develop themes and cross-case theme analysis. However, six women of color responded to the e-mail and stated their interest in participating in

the study. Administrators who participated in this study received pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Site Selection

This study took place on campuses at a community college district in North Texas. The sites were selected using purposeful sampling and the goal was to select sites that provided the richest and most detailed information in order to help answer the research questions (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegthe, 2010). After identifying five campuses within the district, I selected sites that met the following criteria: (1) have administrators who identify as female and African American, Asian American, Native American or Hispanic who (2) hold higher-ranking administrative positions (i.e., presidents, vice presidents of instruction, vice president of student services, academic deans), and (3) have been the position for more than one year. Ultimately, four sites were included in this study.

Data Collection

Data collection began in Fall 2016 and concluded in Spring 2017. For case studies, Yin (2014) recommended six key sources of data, including; “documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (p. 79). For the purpose of this study, data collection included: participant interviews, campus observations, document analysis, and analytic memos.

Interviews. To ensure participants fully understood of the study, I covered the informed consent document with them and answered any questions prior to beginning the interviews (Appendix C). One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were used to understand the experiences lived by the person being interviewed (Seidman, 2013). Each participant was interviewed twice. Each interview ranged from 15 to 60 minutes. In the first interview, participants were asked to share their life experiences and provided a deeper understanding of the experiences of the individuals or issues that supported their success (Appendix D). In the second interview, I gathered additional details on the influence of Bicultural Socialization and how it influenced to the participants' pathways to achieve success in their leadership roles (Appendix E). Moreover, the interview protocol helped to answer the research questions of this study.

The interviews occurred on ICCD campuses. Some participant decided to do the interview off ICCD premises. The interview protocol was provided to participants via email prior to the interview. Two recorders were used to capture interviews. The use of recording is important in order for the researcher to have access to the original words for verification of correctness (Seidman, 2013). After the interview, each audio recording was transcribed verbatim. I followed the steps for data management suggested by Seidman (2013) that include: keeping track of the participants forms, making sure that written consent forms are copied and

filed in a safe place, labeled the audiotapes (two recorders), and managed the files that develop in the course of working with the transcripts.

Campus observations. The use of participant observations in a study is important because it provided proximity of real time actions, cover case's context, and provides insight into interpersonal behavior and motives (Yin, 2014). In the case of this study, three campus observations were proposed to participants (e.g. official meeting or any events that participants suggest). The purpose of the observations was to look for vocabulary, tone, or vernacular participants used when they talked to people of majority culture and the minority culture. I observed how participant reacted to campus constituents (e.g., administrators, faculty, and staff). Each campus observation lasted approximately 60 minutes, and my field notes were logged in a binder indicating the day, time, and location of each observation (Lodico et al., 2010).

Document analysis. The use of documents (e.g., letters, agendas, administrative documents) is helpful to validate information from other sources, such as interviews or observations (Yin, 2014). The use of documents was imperative to the data collection process of this case study, because these documents corroborated participants' names, titles, or positions in the hierarchy of organization (Yin). For the purpose of this study the following documents were collected: (1) six organization charts, (2) two curriculum vitae or resume, (3) two leadership philosophies, and (4) 14 meeting agendas. I proposed to collect

organization charts in order to corroborate participants' official professional titles and the geographical location of their campus and offices. The curriculum vitae or resume provided verification of their degrees, career paths, and professional organizations or affiliations. The participants' leadership philosophies provided insight into their perceptions on the role of culture in leadership as well as their ideologies about leadership and education. Finally, the meeting agendas provided insight of the leadership style and priorities these women of color had during official professional meetings on campus. It is important to mention that some participants provided all documents, but other participants decided to provide only organizational charts.

Analytic memos. The use of memoing was used to collect evidence that can be particular to a specific idea that might have captured the attention of the researcher through the data collection process (Yin, 2014). I wrote memos after each interview and throughout the data collection and analysis process. The memos helped me reflect and annotate common themes and subthemes that aligned with the research questions and theoretical framework.

Data Analysis

The data analyzed included interviews, campus observation notes, documents, and analytic memos. Bicultural Socialization is the theory selected for this study and along with the interview protocol and research questions was vital for the data analysis of this study. For the data analysis, I organized the

transcribed interviews, documents, and campus observations in order to reduce data into relevant text passages (codes) and condensed the codes into themes and sub-themes (Creswell, 2013).

Within-case analysis and cross-case synthesis were ideal to analyze the data collected from the six case studies (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) suggest analyzing data using a within-case- analysis approach because it provided first detailed description of each case and themes within that specific case. For the purpose of this study, I followed the following guidelines: First, I separated paperwork for each case in an electronic folder (i.e., interview transcripts, analytic memos, campus observations' notes, and documents). This information was organized in Word documents. Second, in order to provide detailed description, I examined each data source (e.g. interview transcripts, analytic memos, etc.,) individually and looked for insightful text passages within each case. Such insightful passages arise from the research questions and theoretical framework. Moreover, the research questions and theoretical framework helped me differentiate between important and less important data. Third, the narratives that arise were annotated in a Word document and such document was labeled according to the case study number. The third step was repeated for every case study and every method collected in an individual basis. The relevant passages were organized in a table. Please see Table 3 for an example of within case analysis by potential topics.

Table 3

Within Case Synthesis: Participant #1

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Relevant Text Passages</u>			
	<u>Interview Transcript</u>	<u>Analytic Memos</u>	<u>Campus Observations</u>	<u>Document Analysis</u>
Personal Background -Education, skills, associations, family Leadership Obstacles -Race/ethnicity, family Sources of Support -Individuals, community Role of Culture -Perceptions of campus culture, relationship to personal culture Role as administrator of color -Relationship with students, employees. Leadership Style -Leadership approach -Race and Gender				

Once all the significant passages were noted, then the second step was to conduct an analysis across cases (Creswell, 2013). The cross-case synthesis approach developed the findings for the study by first treating each individual case as a separate case study, and then aggregating across the series of individual studies (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggests analyzing the data by creating Word tables that display the data from each individual case according to one or more uniform categories or themes. I followed the following steps in cross-case synthesis. First, I gathered the topics and created a matrix to identify common features among each data source. See Table 6. Then, I compared and contrasted the cases and grouped related topics into emerging themes in a Word document. Finally, using my theoretical framework and research questions as a guide, I grouped the related topics into themes. Once I identified the themes, I wrote a descriptive interpretation of the findings (themes and subthemes) based on the multiple cases. Please see Table 4.

Table 4

Matrix of Topics: Interviews

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Case #1</u>	<u>Case #2</u>	<u>Case #3</u>	<u>Case #4</u>
Topic A: Mentoring	*	*	*	*
Topic B: Obstacles		*		*
Topic C: Culture	*		*	

* indicates topic present

Trustworthiness

In order to promote trustworthiness I conducted member checks, debriefed with experts, and triangulated multiple data sources (Seidman, 2013). For this case study, each participant was interviewed individually. Participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts of the interviews in order for them to check for accuracy on their responses. In addition, I debriefed with peers who are experts on community colleges, women of color in leadership, and Bicultural Socialization. These debrief sessions provided an opportunity to check my biases and identify new areas of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Using multiple data sources also helps ensure trustworthy data (Yin, 2014). Thus, this study collected multiple data sources, including one-on-one interviews, campus observations and field notes, document analysis, and analytic memos (Yin).

Limitations

While this study offers an in-depth perspective on the life experiences of women of color and their leadership roles at community colleges, it is limited. First, the participants are female and of African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Native Americans, and the findings may not reflect differences between other ethnicities, or genders. Second, this study is only at community colleges, it does not shed light on the administrative pathways of women of color at four-year or for-profit institutions. This study only examined the experiences of successful women of color administrators. It did not focus on women who left the

administrative pathway or a community college leadership role. Third, the nature of the study, since it was located at a community college district in North Texas and the answers provided by participants might not be inclusive of experiences of participants in other parts of Texas or the country. Finally, my role as administrator might be a limitation, because I am an employee at the research site and my views about leadership might be challenging because the participants might be hesitant to provide answers.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the research designed utilized in this study. Qualitative data were collected from six women of color who hold higher-ranking administrative positions at a community college district in North Texas. Within case synthesis (Creswell, 2013) and cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2014) was used to analyze the data. These findings in the next chapter highlight the experiences of women of color who currently hold leadership positions at community colleges.

Chapter 4

Experiences of Women of Color Leaders at Community Colleges

The presence of women of color administrators is important for community colleges, because these institutions benefit from diverse higher-ranking administrators who mirror the student body of the institutions. For example, these administrators serve as role models, mentors, and coaches, thereby contributing to student success (Gnage & Drumn, 2010). Yet, despite these benefits, women of color remain underrepresented in leadership roles on community college campuses. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter was to provide a comprehensive description of the experiences of women of color who successfully navigated the community college system and were able to obtain higher-ranking administrative positions. Using a qualitative case study design, this study highlights the unique experiences of women of color community college administrators and provides insight into their pathway to leadership roles.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section provides a brief biographical sketch of each participant. The second section describes the strategies women of color employed to obtain higher-ranking administrative roles on their respective campus. The third section presents the obstacles and opportunities the participants encountered as they traversed the leadership pipeline.

Participants

This section provides a description of the six participants. The participants shared their lives growing up and the lessons that they learned from their parents. They further described the individuals and experiences that influenced their achievements and pathways to community college leadership roles.

Laura. Laura is the daughter of Mexican immigrants and identifies as Hispanic. She was born in Brownsville, Texas. She is the youngest child of six children in the family. Her father was a migrant worker and her mother was a housewife. She describes her family background as very traditional Hispanic household. She often remembers her mother cooking traditional Mexican food (e.g. rice and beans) and her father introducing her to the community center to Latino music, where the family listened to Latino music, dance and had fun.

Laura is currently serving as a Vice President at Palo Pinto Community College. She has served in this role for more than seven years. Prior to obtaining this role, she served as a Dean of Student Support Services, and Director of Student Support services. Laura earned her doctorate in Higher Education and Community Colleges.

Florence. Florence was born in India and she identifies as Asian American. She comes from a family background in mathematics and physics. Her father has held many administrative positions in India and her brother is a Dean of Computer Math and Computer Science. During the younger years of Florence,

she was an actress in Bollywood, but after she married she decided to immigrate to the United States.

Florence is currently serving as a Dean of Math and Science at Navarro Community College. She has served in this role for more than three years. Prior to obtaining this role, she served as a faculty member and Department Chair. Florence earned her doctorate in Mathematical Physics.

Ava. Ava was born in Alabama and identifies as African American. She is the sixth child of seven children. Parents did not have a higher education, but always encouraged her and her siblings to earn a higher education degree, which they did. Her parents taught her about the importance of working hard and studying a career in an area that she enjoyed. Her family provided emotional support and financial support.

Ava is currently serving as an Academic Dean at Comanche Community College. She has served in this role for more than two years. Prior to obtaining this role, she served as a faculty member and a Divisional Chair. Ava earned her master's degree in Criminal Justice, and a master's degree in Organizational Management.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth was born on a farm in southeast Iowa and identifies as Hispanic. Elizabeth's mother was from a Spaniard background and her father was White. Elizabeth described her hometown as the most impoverished county in the state and the habitants' main economic resource was working at a factory.

Elizabeth worked at the factory night shifts during her high school years and college. Her mother told her to go to college, because it was the only way out of the factory. Her dad told her that if she worked at anything, she could be what she wanted to be in life, but college was the solution.

Elizabeth is currently serving as a Vice President of Developmental Services at Ellis Community College. She has served in this role for more than three years. Prior to obtaining this role, she served as a Dean of Academic Services and Associate Dean of Academic Services. Elizabeth earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration.

Barbara. Barbara grew in North Texas and identifies as African American. She grew up in a household of ten children, four of the children were her siblings and the other five were children of her aunt, but her mother adopted them. Her parents were married, never divorced, but separated. Barbara was the first one to attend college and that is the reason it was difficult for her mother when she left home to go college. However, her mother was supportive of her going to college and her siblings also supported her decision by driving her to school and picking her up during vacation.

Barbara is currently serving as a Vice President at Ellis Community College. She has served in this role for more than three years. Prior to obtaining this role, she served as Executive Dean and Interim Vice President. Barbara earned her doctorate in Higher Education.

Linda. Linda grew up in a rural area in Mississippi and she identifies as African American. She is the fourth of six children. She grew up in a segregated (all-African American) farming community and her parents owned their own farm. She attended a segregated school, and she was the last class to graduate from a segregated high school in the town. Her parents did not have a higher education degree, but they stressed the importance of education, a strong work ethic, and accountability for their actions.

Linda is currently serving as Academic Dean at Palo Pinto Community College. She has served in this role for more than five years. Prior to obtaining this role, she served as a faculty member and department chair. Linda earned her master's degree in Biology.

Findings

The purpose of this section is to introduce the key themes and subthemes relevant for this study. The first theme focuses on the strategies for success participants encountered while navigating the community college pipeline. The subthemes include, ability to withstand, approaching others with respect, mentoring, and the influence of culture in creating a pathway to success. The second theme are the obstacles that participants experienced in their leadership roles. Subthemes include, balancing multiple responsibilities, administration dominated by males, fatigue and isolation in leadership roles. The third theme are the opportunities that participants encountered as they traversed the leadership

pipeline. The subthemes are the cultural assets that women of color bring to the campuses that they serve and their role as mentors of future generation of leaders.

Strategies for Success

The first research question for this study explored the participants' approach to successfully securing a leadership role at a community college. Participants reflected about how they arrived at their current administrative leadership roles, and they attributed their professional success to their ability to endure and withstand circumstances that sometimes occurred due to their cultural background or gender. Another strategy was their ability to approach other individuals with respect. Participants talked about the availability of mentors and how these mentors played a positive role in their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions. Finally, the participants described the positive influence of their cultural background on their leadership pathway.

Ability to withstand. In order to obtain higher-ranking administrative positions, participants in this study had to persevere challenging moments and had to endure circumstances that centered on their qualifications or biased treatment. For example, Linda and Ava shared that, due to their gender and ethnicity, they were required to prove themselves and show that they deserved to be in their current position. Linda said, “[You’re] just always having to show your credentials, that you can really do the job, so the enduring of just comments and criticism. It’s not always corrective.” Linda felt that women of color

administrators had to develop resilience to constant questioning regarding qualifications in order to successfully secure a leadership role.

Similarly, Ava expressed the ability to overcome the endless probing of credentials and work ethic as a useful strategy. As other campus leaders doubted her ability or competency, Ava felt she needed to “always [go] the extra mile.” She further stated, “You cannot do the bare minimum. Being a person of color. I think you always have to strive to do a little more.” By constantly working harder and doing more, Ava felt women of color administrators needed to demonstrate that they deserved to be there. In other words, their presence was not just for diversity, but these leaders earned their position based on their experience and education.

Aside persistent questioning of qualification, some participants shared their frustration when competing against less qualified applicants. For instance, Barbara shared,

I had to endure watching at times colleagues whom I felt like were not as prepared or as educated move up the ranks over and above me for positions that they probably didn’t deserve. They had done nothing, or we were on equal footing in terms of academic and career experience, and yet they were the ones who were selected, of course, typically, Anglo females.

Barbara had to endure observing other women, especially White women getting the promotions for jobs that by longevity and qualifications she deserved.

Although Barbara encountered this critical obstacle, she focused on persevering to her goals. Her ability to withstand, despite this inequity, helped her ultimately achieve her current leadership position.

Finally, participants shared their strategy for success was to persevere past name calling or labeling for being outspoken. For example, Laura said, “Everyone wants folks to comply, to not rock the boat. I like to speak up [for the underrepresented] because if I don’t, who will.” She felt an obligation to speak on behalf of issues related to people of color, because she was one of the few administrators of color in a higher-ranking administrative position. Laura wanted to represent people of color who did not have the opportunity to have a voice in such meetings. Although she endured criticism from the majority and was labeled as “radical,” she saw her position as an opportunity to advocate on topics related to underrepresented students, such as Latinos and African Americans. In this regard, her campus advocacy supported her and gave her strength in her pursuit of a campus leadership role.

These women provided examples of the challenges they encountered as they sought higher-ranking administrative positions in community colleges. Although they were doubted, questioned, or given labels, the participants exhibited strength and fortitude as an essential strategy to obtain their leadership roles. Thus, the participants in this study addressed the importance of defying adversity with perseverance.

Approaching others with respect. The participants shared how being respectful towards others was essential for them to successfully navigate the mainstream culture. Ava talked about her experience navigating the mainstream culture and how the use of respect was essential for her success. She added, “The one thing I think is very important in mainstream society is being respectful, being respectful of other people’s positions, being respectful of just other people in general.”

Laura similarly expressed the importance of using respect to successfully navigate the mainstream culture. She shared a story about her growing up in a *de facto* segregated community where she had to translate English to her parents who were immigrants from Mexico, that at times were discriminated and it was there where she learned the importance of respecting others. She stated that at her workplace she has learned about the value of respect. She further added, “I think that I’ve observed that people will get into trouble with other people when they're not respectful.” For that reason she exercises respect to other because she believes that the lack of respect “creates a lot of ill will and animosity, when people feel they're being disrespected.” Elizabeth has a similar view regarding the importance of exercising respect in order to be successful in her leadership role. She talked about the importance of respect and working with people of all levels she said, “doesn’t matter who they are, where they came from. If they’re rich or they’re poor, need to be able to work with them” and get the work done.” In other words,

she believes in treating people with respect regardless of their job positions or their cultural and socioeconomic background.

Mentoring. Women of color participants provided examples of the positive influence that mentors had in their success path towards higher-ranking administrative positions. They explained securing the support of encouraging individuals, mentors, and role models as an essential strategy for their success in their leadership roles.

Cultural mediators. Participants shared examples of individuals in the mainstream culture played in their career as administrators. The participants in this study specifically discussed how cultural mediators or individuals from the mainstream group (De Anda, 1984) were vital in their success, because they provided job opportunities for higher-ranking leadership positions and showed appreciation and understanding of participants' culture. Participants shared that cultural mediators first offered their support through their education and employment opportunities. Laura explained that the involvement of White individuals in the state and national government provided her the opportunity to attend college and complete her higher education credentials, which allowed her to apply for jobs in higher education administration. In addition, Laura said that her former supervisors, "they all hired me and if they hadn't given me a job I would not have been able to have achieved what I have now." She added, that

even after she completed her doctoral degree, her connections with the president of the university, led to a full-time position with him.

Similarly, Florence and Barbara stated that the cultural mediators supported their careers by offering them jobs. Barbara talked about the person who hired her as Executive Dean, a former position she held years ago. She stated, "If he had not given me that chance, I feel like I still would not be here today." All she needed was the opportunity to prove herself and this person offered her that opportunity. She further added, "he wanted people to get the job done and be productive, if he saw color, he didn't acted like." In other words, the supervisor hired her because of her skills and not due to her ethnicity. Florence had a similar experience with individuals in the mainstream culture, she added, "People who has helped me the most were Caucasians." These individuals offered employment opportunities, but they also demonstrated an appreciation of her culture and understanding the strengths that encompass her culture. She concluded, "Therefore, [cultural mediators] helped me to come to where I am today." Cultural mediators helped Florence and Barbara to achieve their higher-ranking administrative position by opening the door for them to work in such positions.

In addition to creating employment opportunities, some participants shared their connections to cultural mediators created avenues for advice and support. Linda talked about the positive role that individuals in the mainstream

played in her career as administrator, and she added, “When I ran into some complications, I could call her [White women administrator] up and say, ‘Oh, what have I got myself into?’” and the mentor would offer advice. Linda further added, “I liked her leadership style as administrator.” This is the reason she continued to turn to her resource during challenging situations. Linda said, “the person that hired me on here played an important role [in my professional success] and was my role model.” Florence also saw guidance by her cultural mediators, especially during difficult situations. She stated, “[My] supervisor [cultural mediator] is a person that I have always looked to give me proper guidance on things that I don’t feel I have guidance enough.” Florence has found on her cultural mediator a trusted colleague and this mediator gives her constructive feedback.

These participants’ experiences highlighted the important role of cultural mediators in the leadership pathways of women of color administrators. Cultural mediators often served as gatekeepers, providing employment opportunities in order for participants to begin their careers in community college leadership. Once participants in this study were employed, these individuals continued to offer support, but mainly served as gatekeepers to job opportunities.

Cultural translators. Participants talked about the role that cultural translators or individuals from their own minority culture (De Anda, 1984) played in their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions. These individuals

were essential for their success, because they provided the cultural connection, helping participants to stay optimistic during difficult times. They shared stories about feeling fortunate for having individuals of their own culture in their professional settings, because they guided them towards the pathway to success and encouraged them to strive for their professional goals. Cultural translators helped the participants by providing explicit steps for achieving leadership roles, and they also offered cultural support by instructing them how to operate in a bicultural environment.

For instance, Barbara talked about a mentor that she met when she began her career as administrator. This mentor was inspirational and guided her path by telling her what she needed to do in order to move forward in her career. She recalled what her cultural translator shared with her:

You come out of a certain culture environment, you may not be as cultured in the workplace, so you want to be able to mimic people who have made it as far as they have made it. Look at what they're doing, and then try to imitate that.

This cultural translator showed her the path to lead organizations at community colleges. Barbara's cultural translator taught her how to navigate a bicultural environment through imitating the mainstream culture. The cultural translator taught Barbara to assimilate to the campus culture and staying connected to her African American culture. In other words, the cultural translator

helped Barbara not to lose her African American identity. The lessons that Barbara received from her cultural translator were essential for her success in her leadership pathway and she attributes her success to listening to her cultural mediator's advice.

Laura offered a different view on her approach on mentors and how she functioned in a bicultural environment. She provided her observations on women in higher-ranking positions and how these women used to cut their hair really short. She recalled, "other women would comment on like oh, now that you are a dean or you're going to be a vice president, are you going to cut your hair." She further added "many women do end cutting their hair short because that's what is expected of a business women or someone in higher level leadership position." Like many Latinas, however, she liked her long hair, because it was part of her culture. She decided that she was not going to follow that path and kept her hair long.

As a result, Laura approached her mentorship role with aspiring leaders with the aim to promote successful bicultural navigation. She talked about the importance of showing young professionals that they have choices about living a bicultural world. She stated,

I think that some of us who are involved in helping younger professionals get ready for careers in higher education want young professionals to understand they don't have to change all about who they are and their

culture and what's important to them so that they can fit in and be able to be a vice president or a dean or a president.

Thus, contrary to Barbara, Laura sought to serve as a cultural mediator that validated leaders' cultural backgrounds. She wanted to create an environment in which diverse cultural practices were honored, rather than removed. Barbara and Laura, two successful vice presidents, provided two different views of successfully navigating their own culture and the mainstream culture when pursuing higher-ranking leadership roles in the community college system.

Ava had a similar experience regarding cultural translators offering advice of how to navigate the mainstream culture and her minority culture. She shared an experience when she was feeling sick and had to attend a meeting. Since she was sick, she did not look as joyful as she always looks, but she was attentive at the meeting and took notes. After the meeting was over, she was approached by her immediate supervisor [White women], and told her that some people at the meeting were very concerned about her and they wanted to know if she was unhappy. Ava was confused with the question, but told her supervisor that she had a headache. Ava stated,

If an Anglo counterpart were to come in here and not smile, would that conversation have been the same? I go back to my office, and my [cultural translator told me], understand this. If you were not smiling, people do not know what to do. I was like, are you saying I can't not feel well? I can't

have a bad day? She's was like, yes you can, as long as you keep it here in this office and no one see it.

As a result, Ava continues to practice the habit of smiling because she has noticed that if minorities are hired for higher ranking positions they have to portray that they are happy. She added "I practice smiling because apparently it is very important that it appear that I am overjoyed every day" because when she does not smile her colleagues believe that she is upset and wants to quit her job. Ava recognizes that the strategy of constantly having to be on guard regarding how the mainstream culture perceives her is what has helped her to be successful in her job.

Participants shared stories of the positive impact that cultural translators played in them adjusting to their higher-ranking administrative positions. These individuals showed them strategies to function in a bicultural socialization environment. Their guidance emphasized strategies that typically included women altering their appearances or behavior to perform their role in the mainstream culture.

Role models. Participants were asked about the role that the availability of role models or individuals of the minority culture that are different from their cultural background (De Anda, 1984), played in their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions. They expressed that the presence of role models was positive for them successfully traversing the leadership pipeline. These role

models served as providers of opportunities, support, and showed them a path of how to act in a professional setting. Essentially, these individuals served as foundation of how to interact in the professional arena and provided inspirational aspects serving as individuals these women of color could emulate.

Laura described her experience with individuals of the minority culture as positive by saying that “they [minority culture] played a wonderful role, people in my culture [and] both the Latinos, the African Americans, and Asian Americans.” The availability of role models was positive for Laura, because they showed Laura learning experiences that influenced her ideology of diversity. For example, Laura said that the learning experience that she obtained from her interactions with people who have lived in other countries were essential for her success in the understanding regarding a diverse of life styles, because these individuals had experiences and a view of the world that were different from Laura’s view.

Barbara, Elizabeth, and Ava talked about role models provided opportunities to connect to other cultures. These role models were inspirational for participants and served as role models that they could emulate and follow their success pathway. For example, in the case of Barbara, role models socialized her into leadership positions. More specifically, role models provided the foundation for what she should do, how she should act, and how she should respond in a professional setting. Barbara stated,

In many cases [role models showed me], how I should dress. Fashion is not my thing. Trying to put together the fashionable, professional dress so that it didn't look, for lack of a better term, ethnic, or way out of the norm.

Even those small details are important. For Barbara emulating role models was essential in her success on achieving higher-ranking administrative positions. In the case of Elizabeth role models also played a positive role in her pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions. She stated, "I can still connect with different cultures and different ethnicities, especially African American because there so many similarities with them being first generations." From this connection to other cultures she was able to learn, she added, "You can always learn from each other and encourage each other to cross that barrier." Ava had a similar experience with minorities, who are not African Americans. She said that the presence of role models has been positive because they [minorities] "see us [African Americans] as one." She added, "We are a minority group and we need to be supportive of one another." Such support is essential for their professional goal achievement.

Participants of this study shared their experiences with role models and the role that these models played in them successfully securing higher-ranking administrative positions. The availability of role models provided life-learning experiences to participants. The presence of role models served as providers of

opportunities of feeling connected to a culture that was similar to the culture of participants and as an example of someone to emulate.

Influence of culture in creating a pathway to success. Women of color in this study described their pathway to achieving success in their higher-ranking administrative positions through the positive role that the influence of their cultural background played in their professional careers. Participants on this study described the influence of their ancestors as a positive aspect to their pathway to their leadership roles. Moreover, these participants accredit their success in the leadership pathway to their ability to have a solid understanding of their cultural background. They provided examples of the different approaches that they drawn upon their culture during challenging situations in their professional lives.

Drawing upon culture towards a successful pathway. Participants described how they have drawn upon their culture in order to achieve success in their leadership positions. Participants provided examples of different aspects of their culture they have utilized in order to be successful while leading their organizations. In particular, family values and cultural background have made them stronger women and stronger leaders.

Ava and Linda shared stories about how their knowledge of the history of their slave ancestors gave them the strength to strive for success in their leadership roles. Linda provided examples of her early years growing up on Mississippi during the segregation period. She talked about her passion for

reading African American history and how these readings motivated her to accomplish her goals as leader. She stated,

My culture inspired me, even from those that were just out of slavery [ancestors], the accomplishments that they made, the fact that there were scientists, architects, business people, to go back and look at what they had available to them to use it and get a manner of success.

Linda found motivation on her ancestors, because they made great accomplishments in the science and other fields, despite the challenging conditions that they lived as slaves. Linda comes from a culture that stressed the impact of Christianity and this is where her strength comes from to move forward and when she feels that things are really against her she goes back and remembers her culture, she goes back to slavery, Jim Crow laws and she tells to herself that this is not happening again. She further added that coming from a culture that used to “eating at the back, coming in the back door, to eating at the same establishment that my Anglo counterparts could easily just walk in and have a seat,” has given her the resilience and tenacity to move forward in her goals as administrator.

Ava similarly shared her experience adding, “My culture as a whole has played a huge role in me achieving success because is allowed me to come to terms that this is the place that I live in, and yes, I can be successful,” regardless of having a lineage of ancestors who used to be slaves. She understands that

despite of the challenges that she experiences she knows in the long way she will accomplish her goals.

Barbara talked about connecting to her cultural background was important for her success in her path to leadership roles. She added “I really work to stay connected with them [people of my culture] in some shape, form, or fashion.” These connections drive her to identify and secure members of her culture to participate in her college activities. For example, they come to her campus as speakers (e.g., Black History Month) and for other professional luncheons.

Elizabeth and Laura, the two Hispanic participants, talked about the influence of their mother. Elizabeth stated that she comes from a family of strong Latina women where they are in charge of family. She stated,

I think I grew up around that and knowing—they were powerful women, even though they might stay in the house and didn’t work. I took their confidence and their strength and applied it just to me as a core inside.

Laura said that her mother embedded faith, the importance of having God as a central element in their lives, and the importance of a good value system. As part of a good value system she addressed that sometimes when women move up the ladder there are expectations of them changing the cultural value system. She further stated, “young professionals [need] to understand they don't have to change all about who they are” in order to fit the cultural values that it is expected while pursuing that higher-ranking leadership position.

Florence uses her expertise in Indian classical music as a way to succeed in her role as leader. She stated, “I was a professional singer in Bollywood, in India, and I also did a lot of the theater and drama, and all those types of things in India.” She explained that she uses that background to her favor, because when people know that she is more than a scientist is positive to the relationship with others at her college. She further stated “when people here know that I m more than a scientist it helps me in my professional success because they can look at me as not just a science person but also as an arts person.” People at her campus understand that she has more skills to offer than her math and science skills.

Participants in this study learned to embrace their culture and were able to use it as a positive strength to achieve success. The cultural values of what they obtained from their ancestors’ cultural background, has given them the strength to overcome obstacles during challenging situations. Their cultural background provided women of color the opportunity to show others that due to the assets of their culture they have more skills to offer to the institutions that they serve.

Obstacles and Opportunities for Women of Color Administrators

The second research question for this study investigated the obstacles and opportunities participants encountered as they navigated the leadership pipeline at the community college system. Participants expressed that the main obstacles that they experienced while navigating the community college system were balancing their personal and professional lives, acknowledging that higher-level

administration is a field dominated by man, and the additional burden of being one of the few women of color with higher-ranking administrative positions at their campuses. Participants also talked about the opportunities that prevailed in the community college system. The opportunities included, embracing their role as women of color and serving as mentors for future generations of women of color.

Obstacles for women of color administrators. The participants also shared the obstacles they encountered while navigating the leadership pipeline. Participants stated the main obstacles they encountered while pursuing higher-ranking administrative positions was balancing professional and personal lives, due to the expectations of their culture and gender. Another obstacle was learning and accepting that higher education administration is a field dominated by men. The third obstacle was managing feelings of isolation and the additional burden they attribute to being one of a few women of color in higher-ranking administrative position.

Balancing multiple responsibilities. Participants described difficulty they encountered balancing their home and work responsibilities. For instance, Linda felt women, in general, are at disadvantage because women are expected to prioritize family, and it is challenging to combine the responsibilities. She added, “for males is ok to work for long hours but for females is not, I think this

transcends ethnicity and color.” In other words, women have multiple responsibilities and it can be challenging to maneuver.

Laura also discussed how she and other women have struggled about deciding to get married, have children, or have a career. She said that if a woman of color wanted to have all three, they needed to be prepared for the challenges that come along. She shared her personal story and explained that she decided to have the marriage, children, and career, but it was not an easy path. She further stated, “I went back for my doctorate degree while working a full time job in administrative position at a community college and I had two small children.” For Laura, and other participants in this study, it was difficult to balance professional and personal life due to the multiple responsibilities that both worlds required.

For example, Barbara encountered difficulties when she began her career, because her two children were at a young ages. She explained, it was difficult “as an administrator in trying to navigate that with my family responsibilities or my community responsibilities.” She further added, “it was a lot of navigation to make sure that we all those balls that were floating in the air with them [children] and their activities.” It was challenging to meet family expectations and responsibilities and those activities she had to perform as part of her administrator role.

Ava shared similar experiences as woman in a leadership role. Even when she was offered the job as Executive Dean her first thought was to question her

ability. She recalled thinking, “I wasn’t ready, just knowing and seeing all of the work that goes into it.” Thus all-day and weekend meetings all day and weekend meetings coupled with her responsibility for her teenager son made her feel she was not ready to advance her career. She added,

I am going to have an opportunity to be the best parent I can be and also be the best employee I can be? I really didn’t think I could just because of the time commitment. My first thought was to pursue something in administration full time after my son was in his junior year of high school.

However, the opportunity to be an executive dean happened sooner than what she expected, and she decided to take the challenge. Elizabeth also talked about the obstacle of managing multiple responsibilities due to her role as mother, working full time, and getting her doctoral degree.

Participants shared stories about the challenge that represented for them having to manage multiple responsibilities that were centered on their gender and cultural background. Participants expressed that as women of color it was challenging to meet the expectations with family and those expectations at the work place. Such challenges came with the responsibility of holding a higher-ranking administrative position.

Administration dominated by males. The participants described that an obstacle that they encountered in their leadership roles was recognizing that higher education is a system dominated by men. Linda indicated that women in

higher-ranking positions have to always excel and have credentials beyond their male counterparts, because it is a male establishment. She provided an example of how the dean before her did not have a doctoral degree and nobody questioned his credentials. However after she was hired, her credentials became a popular topic of discussion. She said she knows past colleagues did not care about the qualifications of the former dean because he was a white male, but now that an African American female had the position, then she must have higher credentials than the person holding the position prior her. Linda stated, “All my predecessors only held master’s degrees except for [former Dean]. He was like me, all but dissertation.” She further added, “no one else that’s held this position had a doctorate. The only difference is that they were males, and they were Caucasian.”

Similarly, Florence provided examples of her experiences working in higher education and how she perceived bias from male colleagues. For example, she shared in previous institutions she learned that the hiring administrators (i.e. White males) had negative stereotypes regarding women leading organizations. She said these hiring administrators believed that “women don’t make good deans, and women don’t make good vice presidents.” Florence decided to strive for being successful in her professional goals and became an executive dean. However, in order for Florence to achieve her goals she had to move away from that institution that was predominated by White males who had negative views of women in leadership positions.

Laura received the same pushback particularly by men. She further added, “I have been misunderstood by them [men] because there is [*sic*] many males in higher education.” She said, “folks do not like strong women, is my experience.” She further added that women of color have to keep a positive attitude and to recognize that as women of color they have good ideas to bring to the leadership meetings, but they need to be strategic about how to talk about their ideas. She further added, “Females, you’ve got to stand your ground, so to speak.” From Laura’s perspective, female leaders need to be outspoken, but there is not need to be aggressive, instead these women have to be assertive in higher education.

Elizabeth is aware that women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions will encounter departments that are majority male, but has never experienced biased. She revealed the prevalence of males is an ongoing challenge for female administrators. She said, “There’s always gonna be challenges just being a woman, I think. It’s still a man’s world.” She further added, “There might be some biases by white man or white females that are above me.” But, in her experience, these individuals did not overtly show her such biases or treat her any different. Elizabeth accepted this reality and potential obstacle as pervasive and persistent, and she focused on completing her responsibilities nonetheless.

Participants talked about the challenges of embracing that higher education continues to be a field dominated by males. Some of the participants perceived the bias of their White male counterparts limited their opportunities or

questioned their ability to fulfill their job responsibilities. In order to continue on their leadership pathway, participants switched institutions or accepted their working environment and remained steadfast on achieving their goals.

Fatigue and isolation in leadership roles. Participants in this study talked about the challenge that they encountered while navigating the community college system was carrying the additional burden of fighting their personal battles for their own survival, but they also had to fight battles for underrepresented individuals at their campuses. These participants expressed that being one of the few women of color on campus can be exhausting and also carries a feeling of tokenism.

For example, Laura talked about how overwhelming it was for her to be one of the few women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions, because she felt it was her obligation to bring up issues related to the underrepresented at her campus. She said it was exhausting to be the only person who fights for the issues of the underrepresented. She stated, “It can be very wearing and tearing because you constantly are in that role. It is a challenge to do that and to be seen as people who support those kinds of efforts.” However, “it feels good when you can be successful and actually make a difference.” Linda expressed a similar sentiment regarding the extra burden that represents to be one of the few women of color holding a higher-ranking administrative role. She stated,

Unfortunately or fortunately individuals of under-represented groups in administration carry some additional burden. Not only must you excel at what you do, but there's the additional burden that you're representing your whole ethnic group or race.

She further added, "It's a burden that is heavy sometimes to carry." and this is an example of how ethnicity influences on individuals. For Linda it was a heavy burden because she had to excel as administrator, but also had to represent her African American culture.

In the case of Ava and Elizabeth the extra burden that they experienced as women of color was the constant burden of been seen as "tokens" of the organization. For instance, Ava, talked about having this personal fight to been seen differently. She stated, "Sometimes, I feel and hopefully this not offensive to you. I feel like the token Negro." She expressed that it can be exhausting to be one of the few women of color with higher-ranking administrative positions. In the case of Elizabeth, she expressed,

My actions speak louder than my voice and [me] getting promoted. I think they [White males] just watched me and thought "okay. She must know what she's doing," so I got respected from the very beginning.

However, after many promotions she became the dean and was the supervisor of many of the people who promoted her. She further added, "I might've been the token Hispanic female. That might have been very well the way they interpreted.

” Nevertheless, Elizabeth knows that she worked from the bottom up and she worked for that position.

Participants in this study shared stories of how difficult it was for them to carry the burden of being the few women of color on their campuses. Another burden was to feel like they were the “tokens” at their institution. For these women of color was exhausting to be one of the few leaders of color who could fight for issues of the underrepresented, because there are so many issues and very few leaders of color in higher-ranking administrative positions.

Opportunities for women of color administrators. Participants talked about the opportunities that they encountered as they traversed the leadership pipeline. Participants talked about their ability to embrace the diversity they shared to community colleges and this is a positive element for the success in their leadership roles and the success of their institutions. Lastly, participants shared about the opportunity they currently have to serve as mentors to future generation of leaders.

Participants shared their story of how they traversed the leadership pipeline and secure leadership positions. These leaders talked about the great cultural asset their presence means to the leadership pipeline at their campuses. Participants shared their desire to mentor future generations of women of color pursuing leadership positions.

Women of color bring cultural assets. Participants in the study emphasized the significance of their culture in promoting diversity to their campuses. Ava provided the example of how her African American background has given her the opportunity to view situations from a diverse perspective and this has been helpful in her role as executive dean. She added that the circumstances she has previously experienced give her the opportunity to be more compassionate manner with her colleagues. She expressed,

You go through a lot as a minority that other people don't seem to go through, and that changes not only how you view other people, but how you view situations and circumstances.

Having experienced similar situations gives Ava the opportunity to empathize with the people that she leads in the organization. In this aspect, Ava brings diversity to the leadership meetings by using her cultural experiences as a framework to lead the individuals that she supervises.

Linda similarly expressed how she uses her cultural background in order to empathize with people at her campus. She stated, "I think with the employees from different religions, from different countries, are very comfortable with me. My parents thought me to respect cultures even if it's different from yours." In Linda's experience, being women of color has given her the opportunity to understand other minorities. In return these minorities feel comfortable with her, because they know she understands them, due to her cultural background. Laura

expressed she brings cultural assets to the leadership pipeline at her campus, because she has a similar background. She stated,

Many of us [women of color], and we can perhaps better understand what students are going through the challenges that they have” and perhaps offer a solution to such needs and provide services and programs that are gonna really reach these students and help them succeed.

For Laura being able to understand students by empathizing with them and offering them opportunities is a great contribution.

Florence expressed that the benefit of being women of color is the opportunity of bringing diversity to the leadership meetings at her campus. She stated, “I do bring diversity and opinions and ideas and notions that may be somewhat different than the norm.” She stated that in her position as Executive Dean it is required to have creativity when working on projects and her cultural background gives her the opportunity to bring new ideas to the leadership table.

Participants talked about how being women of color afford them the opportunity to bring cultural assets to their community colleges. These participants expressed that due to their background as women of color many people at their campuses identified with them and were able to provide empathy and understanding. These women stated that being women of color allowed them the opportunity to bring diversity in ideas and also in the decision-making.

Mentor future generation of leaders. Participants expressed the great

opportunity—and responsibility—they have in their leadership role. This opportunity was not for personal gains, but was to cultivate a new generation of women of color administrators. For instance, Linda said,

Specially women of color and especially those that are interested in sciences because they really don't see that many in the classroom and in administrative. It's more as a role model for students.

For Linda is important to mentor women of color who want to pursue a career in administration (e.g. executive dean), specially the science division, because it is there where she has seen less representation. Linda discussed the underrepresentation of women students in the science field and she wants to contribute to this lack of representation by mentoring them.

Elizabeth expressed that she felt “very fortunate” to be a Hispanic female and working in the leadership position that she holds. She stated, “It's the perfect place to be working within our campuses. ” The reason why it is the perfect place is because her campus's population is majority Hispanic, mainly Hispanic females. She expressed the importance of supporting other women, especially Hispanic women. For example, she serves as mentor to young Hispanic and African American students and administrators who are interested in pursuing a career in leadership.

Laura similarly expressed that there are very few women in higher education leadership roles and even fewer women of color. “I believe that we

have a great deal to contribute because we can empathize with underrepresented students” and serve as mentors to future generations of leaders. Laura talked about organizations that she has supported that focus on the development of Hispanic and African Americans. She also added that one way that she supports future generations is by allowing herself to be part of studies from doctoral students. She said that the reason why she accepted to participate in this study was because of her commitment to help future generation of Hispanic women pursuing leadership positions.

Barbara wanted to serve as a role model for other generation of women of color pursuing a career in administration. She added,

I hope to conduct myself, so that the next woman of color who follows me, hopefully, will have an opportunity. That it wont stop with me. It won't stop because of the way I have acted or the way I have conducted myself.

She wanted to set the standard for other women of color not to be judged or portrayed in a negative manner, due to her lack of leadership.

Ava had a similar way of role modeling for other women of color. She expressed her desire to serve as mentor through having conversations with people who are interested in higher education leadership. She stated,

[Talking to people] who are wanting to become leaders, or just even the ones who I think would be great leaders and might not have even thought

about it, or don't feel that confidence to be able to encourage them is something that I try to do on a frequent basis.

She expressed that when she talks or mentors other females about the importance of becoming leaders, they eagerness motivates her to continue striving in her role as leader at her campus. Ava said that she enjoys talking to people about their goals, because by listening to their goals gives her encouragement to continue working on completing her professional goals.

Participants shared how their current role provided an opportunity for them to create pathways for other women of color who are pursuing a career in administration. They support aspiring leaders through mentorship and role modeling. Participants shared their desired to create a good reputation as leaders in that way other women of color who apply for higher-ranking administrative positions are not depicted in a negative manner, due to their lack of leadership.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter provided an in-depth description of the experiences of women of color who successfully navigated the leadership pipeline at community colleges. The chapter answered the two-research question for the study providing findings such as (1) the strategies that women of color utilized in order to achieve success in their leadership, (2) obstacles and opportunities for women of color encounter while navigating the leadership pipeline at community colleges. Participants provided their work and life experiences to illustrate how

they successfully work in two cultures.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

Women of color are underrepresented in higher-ranking administrative positions, despite reports that suggest that colleges would benefit from a diverse cadre of higher-ranking administrators who mirror the student body of the institution (Gonzalez & Young, 2005; Sagaria, 2002). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reported that 79 percent of college presidents are White, compared to 6% African American, and 3% Hispanic (2012). When disaggregated by gender, the AACC (2012) reported that 72% of college presidents are men, compared to 28% of women. Of the 28% female community college presidents, 71% are White, compared to 7% African American, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Asian American (AACC). These data demonstrate women, particularly women of color, remain underrepresented in higher-ranking administrative positions in community colleges (AACC, 2012). Given this demographic reality, it was important to understand how women of color navigated the community college leadership pipeline and successfully secured higher-ranking administrative positions.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth understanding of how women of color described their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions. The secondary purpose was to learn how women of color described their obstacles and opportunities while navigating the leadership

pipeline at community colleges. This chapter outlines the study overview. It also provides three major key findings of this study. Finally, it provides a reflection of the study such as implications for research, policy, and practice, and concluding thoughts of the researcher.

Study Overview

The student demographics in the state of Texas has marked an increase of students of color in Texan community colleges. In 2007 the student demographics of community colleges in Texas included, 46% Whites, compared to 33% Hispanics, 12% African Americans, and 9% classified as Other (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB], 2008). The most current research of student demographics in Texan community colleges include, African Americans (14.2%), Hispanics (39.8%), Whites (35.8%), and (8.5%) classified as Other (THECB, 2015). Even with an increase in the enrollment of students of color in Texan community colleges, the representation of higher ranking- administrators does not reflect the student ratio. Despite reports that suggest that individuals who mirror student body are important in the success of students, because these individuals can serve as role models, mentors, and coaches to students and the employees they supervise (Gonzalez & Young, 2005; Sagaria, 2002).

The inequity that predominates among men and women in leadership positions maintains its prevalence in leadership journals and conversations (Northouse, 2013). Historically, leadership has been studied from the perspective

of White men, such studies focused on researching their leadership traits, skills, and styles (Northouse, 2013). Women's experiences in leadership were included in leadership research until the 1970s (Chemers, 1997). Since then, leadership development for women has found a lack of representation of women in leadership roles, due to the specific gendered challenges such as child-rearing expectation, child-care responsibilities, and household chores (Northouse, 2013).

In recent years, the topics regarding leadership from the perspective of women has increased, due to the rise of women in leadership positions (Northouse, 2013). However, more research is needed to understand the unique experiences of women of color in leadership roles. More specifically, this population should be examined in leadership roles at community colleges, because these leaders have the potential to positively influence community college campuses, through their relationships with students and subordinates (Gnage & Drumm, 2010). Therefore, this study focused on exploring how this subpopulation traversed the leadership pipeline at community colleges and achieved success by obtaining higher-ranking administrative positions. Studying the experiences of women of color who have been effective in achieving success, because research shows that women of color in higher-ranking leadership positions administration who are able to understand their own culture and the implications of being a minority, can help other women of color who want to pursue a career in administration (Sagaria, 2002). Thus, the guiding research questions for this study were:

1. How did successful women of color describe their pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions?
2. What obstacles and opportunities, if any, did women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions encounter and overcome?

Participant and site selection. The participants were selected using purposely sampling because this method purposefully informed and provided an understanding of the study's research problem (Creswell, 2013). Once I obtained the e-mail addresses of the sixteen women who were female presidents, vice presidents of instruction, vice president of student services, and academic deans, I sent the recruitment e-mail to the women. The e-mail asked prospective participants if they self-identified as (1) female African American, Hispanic, Asian American, or Native American (2) currently hold higher-ranking administrative positions, and (3) have been the position for more than one year. Women were selected if they met the criteria and demonstrated an interest in participating in my study. In total six participants were selected.

This case study included six women of color who hold higher-ranking administrative roles at a community college district in North Texas. Three of the participants identified as African American, two participants identified as Hispanic and one participant identified as Asian American. Three participants were Vice Presidents and three participants were Academic Deans.

The study took place at a community college district in North Texas. The sites were selected using purposeful sampling and the goal was to select sites that provided the richest and most detailed information in order to help answer the research questions (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegthe, 2010). Once the campuses were identified, I selected the campuses that met the participants' recruitment criteria and began the data collection.

Data collection and analysis. Data collection began in fall 2016 and ended in spring 2017. Yin (2014) recommends six key sources of data such as documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. The data collection for this study included; two interviews, three campus observations, document analysis (i.e. organization charts, curriculum vitae or resume, leadership philosophy, and meeting agendas), and analytic memos. Data were collected at participants' home campus, but some participants opted to meet off campus.

The first step for data analysis was Within-case analysis (Creswell, 2013). I separated paperwork for each case in an electronic folder (i.e., interview transcripts, analytic memos, campus observations' notes, and documents). Then, I examined each data source (e.g. interview transcripts, analytic memos, etc..) individually and looked for insightful text passages within each case. Such insightful passages arise from the research questions and theoretical framework.

The second step was a cross-case synthesis approach developed the findings for the study by first treating each individual case as a separate case study, and then aggregating across the series of individual studies (Yin, 2014). After reading transcripts of interviews, notes from campus observations, analytic memos, and document analysis for several times, themes began to emerge. Once the themes were completed, subthemes were gathered and placed under the corresponding theme. The theoretical framework and research questions guided my analysis.

Key Findings

The findings from this study involved the perceptions of women of color leaders who have achieved success in the leadership pipeline by obtaining higher-ranking administrative positions. De Anda Bicultural Socialization Theory (1984) was used in this study and it was essential for the development of themes and consequently answered the two research questions for the study. The theory describes how people of color have to learn to function in two environments, the environment of their own culture and the environment of the mainstream culture. The key findings are organized in three major findings, (1) strategies for success, (2) obstacles for women of color administrators, and (3) opportunities for women of color administrators.

Major Finding 1: Strategies for Success

Research on women of color continues to focus on finding a pathway for resilience and a pathway to overcome barriers that women of color face while working at higher education institutions (ASHE, 2009). Participants highlighted four strategies that helped them to achieve success in securing higher-ranking administrative positions in their community colleges. The first strategy was their ability to persevere challenging moments and withstanding circumstances that centered on their cultural background and gender. Participants persevered the constant questioning or feeling the need to prove to others that they had the credentials and experience to hold the higher-ranking administrative position that they earned. They showed perseverance by demonstrating they had earned their positions. One of the participants underlined her frustration of having to compete with less qualified candidates for positions. Despite the inequity, she remained focused on her goal and persevered to secure a higher-ranking administrative position. This study is in line with previous research that has demonstrated women of color must work diligently to demonstrate their credibility and qualifications for leadership roles (Gerdes, 2003).

The second strategy was their ability to show respect towards other people was essential for them successfully navigating the mainstream culture. Their ability to understand the concept of respect and equal treatment to others regardless of their status in the employment hierarchy at their campus enabled

these women of color the opportunity to be successful in their leadership roles. This finding aligns with the literature regarding the leadership style of women. Kezar (2012) found that people of color have the tendency to describe their leadership style as collective, empower based and in equal relationship of powers. Similarly, Eagly and Johnson (1990) addressed the factor that females often lead organizations in a cooperative manner giving followers the opportunity to gain empowerment.

The third strategy for success was developing an extensive support network. They took advantage of the availability of mentors by using them as a resource for success. This study aligns with previous studies about the importance of women to develop mentoring influences in order to achieve success (Dindoffer, Reid, & Freed, 2011). In order to achieve success, the participants relied upon cultural translators (individuals of own minority group), cultural mediators (individuals of the mainstream group), and role models (individuals from a minority group). Cultural mediators serve as provides of information, guides or informal agents of socialization to individuals of the minority culture (De Anda, 1984). Although De Anda (1984) proposed cultural mediators to offer insight into the norms and behaviors of the mainstream culture, the findings from this study suggest cultural mediators may only serve as gatekeepers to job opportunities. The participants in this study shared cultural mediators offered their support

through their education and created avenues for success by offering them higher leadership positions at the institution.

Cultural translators provided explicit steps for achieving leadership roles and also offered cultural support by instructing participants how to develop the ability to operate in a bicultural environment. The cultural translators shared how women of color administrators should perform their duties. This study is in line from other studies on cultural performance or related work, because cultural translators serve as promoters of dual socialization by sharing their own experiences and facilitating the understanding of the values and perceptions of the mainstream culture (De Anda, 1984).

The role models served as providers of opportunities, support, and individuals that they could emulate and follow their success pathway. Similarly, the literature highlights mentoring as factor of achievement among individuals pursuing higher administrative positions, because these mentors provided support, training, and guidance (Dindoffer, Reid, Freed, 2011). Giddis (2003) also concluded that the availability of mentors was important for the success of women in higher education. Moreton (2001), Dunbar and Kinnerskey (2011) further emphasized the view of the positive role that mentors have in the success of women's career advancement and promotion.

Finally, participants drew upon their culture knowledge, assets, and strengths in order to achieve success in their leadership positions. They attributed

their professional success to a solid understanding of their cultural background. Participants used their ancestors' background (i.e. slavery, faith, family values) as inspiration and strength force to continue striving for their goals in difficult situations. Participants highlighted the importance of staying connected with individuals of their own cultural background in order to be successful in their leadership positions it was important for them to connect. The use of family values and cultural background made the participants stronger leaders at their institutions. Similarly, the literature found that women of color (i.e. Hispanics and African Americans) needed to have a shared value system with the mainstream group in order to survive the academe, therefore, requiring high levels of ethnic identity and acculturation (Montas-Hunter, 2012; Sagaria, 2002).

Major Finding 2: Obstacles for Women of Color Administrators

Participants in this study highlighted three major obstacles that they experienced while navigating the leadership pipeline. Such obstacles include the challenge that implicates balancing multiple responsibilities that are centered on their personal and professional lives. Participants highlighted the difficulty that they experienced navigating the male dominated field of administration. Lastly, participants addressed the additional burden that represents to be one of the few women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions.

First, women of color pursuing success in their leadership positions must successfully balance multiple work and home responsibilities (Northouse, 2013).

These responsibilities are often the result of gendered norms and cultural background values (Northouse, 2013). Northouse (2013) explained women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, despite increasing enrollment in higher education. Domestic responsibilities and child-rearing generate challenges on women aspiring to climb the leadership ladder and obtain higher-ranking administrative positions (Northouse, 2013). Participants in this study similarly found it difficult to manage the multiple familial activities as well as the daily duties as higher-ranking administrators. Thus, their first key obstacle was strategically managing home and work responsibilities.

Second, participants found it challenging to navigate a male-dominated field of administration. These women stressed the push back that they received from men, especially those who were in charge of hiring committees. Participants recalled, how females do not make good deans or vice presidents or were unqualified for their leadership position. Therefore, the advice for women of color is to speak up for issues related to minorities and to be assertive on their positions and comments at leadership meetings. Similarly, the literature addressed that leadership is a man-dominated field and women are in disadvantage due to the gender, prejudice and stereotypes (Northouse, 2013). Gerdes (2003) also suggested that it was important for women of color to accept the necessity for women of color to work harder, do more or better, than men in order to achieve success, because is a fact of life for women in higher education.

Third, participants found it isolating to be only one of the few women of color with a higher-ranking administrative position. Participants shared the battle fatigue of being the only person who represents an entire ethnic group or race. Participants expressed the constant burden of been seen as “token” of the organization and not as persons who have worked from the bottom up in their positions. Similarly, prior research has demonstrated female leaders experience feelings of isolation, loneliness, and racially-motivated victimization (Crawford & Smith, 2005). Similar to this study, Lewis (2016) addressed the concept of tokenism among underrepresented individuals and how tokenism influences the pattern of their career advancement, placing these individuals in positions with no power or lower level positions.

Major Finding 3: Opportunities for Women of Color Administrators

Participants highlighted two opportunities they encountered in their leadership role. First, participants bring diversity to their institutions due to their cultural background and gender. Participants have cultural assets, because they bring diversity of ideas and decision making to the community colleges that they serve. Some participants used the experiences lived as minority in order to understand other employees. Their cultural background and gender gives employees and colleagues a sense of comfort, since they have an approach of sincerity and people likes talking to them. This finding aligns with the literature that is currently available regarding diversity. For example, Sagaria (2002) stated

that women of color who are able to understand their own culture and the implication of being a minority can help other individuals of color to achieve success in their administrative pursuits.

Second, participants are providers of opportunities to other women of color pursuing careers in administration by opening the doors of the leadership pipeline for them. Participants serve as mentors to future women by talking to them directly, one-on one mentoring, and serving as role models that other women of color can emulate and achieve success in their leadership careers.

Similar findings regarding the importance of social models in leadership development, since individuals with the opportunity of seeing similar people in positions who strived for and will recognize the similar capabilities needed for successful progression into leadership positions (Montas-Hunter, 2012). Tedrow and Rhoadas (1999) indicated that women administrators at community colleges built their leadership style as a result of the expectations of the community college and the norms of the established males. Therefore, this will aid the opportunities to fill anticipated vacancies with women of color, due to the exodus of employees that the community colleges are experiencing (NCES, 2010).

Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

The results of this study underlined strategies that women of color used in order to successfully secure higher-ranking administrative positions at their community colleges. The study highlighted the obstacles and opportunities that

women of color in higher-ranking administrative positions have to experience while navigating the community college leadership pipeline. The study highlighted the potential benefits that women of color with higher-ranking administrative positions provide to community colleges, specifically to future generation of women of color pursuing higher-ranking administrative positions and to the diversity pipeline of these institutions of higher education. As a result, the findings of this study provide significant implications for research, policy, and practice.

Research

This study highlighted the role that culture in the leadership pathways of women of color in community colleges. Although this study highlighted the common experiences of African American, Hispanic, and Asian American women, additional research investigating specific racial or ethnic groups is needed. Therefore, the recommendations for future research are to focus a study in one ethnicity. Future studies can provide a more nuanced perspective of the specific experiences of each ethnic group.

Furthermore, this study focused on one community college district in Texas. Additional research can examine community colleges in different areas of the state or country to build upon this line of inquiry. Since community colleges were design to serve and educate their local residents, leaders who identify as women or women of color may have different experiences at their institutions.

Finally, this study offered a qualitative approach to understanding the leadership pathways of women of color administrators. Future scholarly work can attempt to explore this population through a quantitative means. A broad, large-scale study could provide insight into other trends influencing and affecting the access and retention of women of color community college administrators.

Policy

Implications for policy are reflected on the hiring process that community college districts implement. For instance, women of color in this study stated to feel excluded from promotion or hiring due to their gender and cultural background. This study highlighted the diversity of ideas that women of color bring to the leadership meetings. Therefore, it is important to carefully review and modify, if needed, leadership hiring practices to ensure representation of diverse candidate pools and to include qualified women of color to higher-ranking administrative positions. These promotions would help to increase the equity pipeline in leadership.

To support administrators balance multiple work and home responsibilities, community colleges may consider a campus-wide policy that allows for free or reduced childcare. Community college districts may consider the implementation of extended maternity leave or family leave for partners to support the care for a new child. The state level may consider improving the

health care insurance to support new parents and consider offering paid family leave when they have a newborn.

Practice

The results of this study concluded that women of color benefit from and want to serve as mentors to the future generation of women of color pursuing careers in administration. Therefore, community colleges may consider initiating training programs that benefit women of color who want to pursue higher-ranking leadership positions. This can be achieved at a campus level. However, special attention must be provided to these mentorship programs and opportunities.

Women of color administrators are often over represented in service opportunities, so community colleges must be cognizant of giving these women additional responsibilities without support.

Another opportunity is to collaborate with professional development and provide internships for women of color interested in leadership positions in order to cultivate pipeline for upcoming, aspiring leaders. For example, community colleges could identify or ask individuals to self identify as potential female leaders and create a leadership curriculum or practicum for these individuals to complete. This professional development will expose young leaders to the responsibilities of obtaining higher-ranking leadership positions. This type of program could include a stipend to incentive participation or academic preparation to promote graduate programs.

Lastly, it is important to support the women who are already underrepresented in leadership roles at community colleges. One potential strategy for offering encouragement would be the development of a support group or sister circle. The purpose of this group would be for higher-ranking leaders to sharing strategies for success in the leadership pipeline. Successful women of color can serve as inspirational leaders to other women pursuing leadership roles. They can also serve as career advisors by offering them advice of potential graduate programs aligned with specific administrative pathways.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how women of color navigated the community college system and were able to achieve success in acquiring higher-ranking administrative positions. The study revealed that in order for women of color to successfully navigate the leadership pipeline they used strategies that includes; their ability to persevere, the ability to use mentors for their professional success, and provided a description of how they have drawn upon their culture in order to achieve success in their higher-ranking administrative positions.

This study expands the literature about the obstacles and opportunities that women of color have to experience while navigating the leadership pipeline. This study showed that the main obstacles that women of color administrators face is the difficulty of balancing multiple responsibilities that are required by their

personal responsibilities at home and those responsibilities that their higher-ranking administrative jobs required. Another obstacle for these women of color was to accept that leadership is a male dominated field and therefore they have to understand the challenges that this implies. The third obstacle that these women of color experienced was the additional burden that signifies to be one of the few women of color who hold a higher-ranking administrative position because they have to represent an entire ethnicity and therefore creating feelings of isolation and tokenism among these women of color.

Regarding the opportunities that being women of color represent to community college system is the importance of approaching others with respect in order to successfully navigate the mainstream culture. These women of color bring cultural assets providing a diversity of ideas and a broader spectrum to the leadership meetings. Lastly these women of color will serve as mentors of future generation of leaders cultivating the diversity leadership pipeline.

This study provided insight for hiring practices that community colleges in need could review and modify, in order to diversify their higher-ranking administrators and incorporate qualified women of color. The study also offered an expansion to the current literature of the influence that bicultural socialization plays on the success of women of color leading community colleges. Finally, this study provided a pathway to higher-ranking administrative positions for women of color who are pursuing careers in this leadership pipeline.

Appendices

Appendix A
Recruitment E-mail

Good Afternoon Dr./Ms. _____,

I am Maria Yareli Delgado a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Texas at Arlington. I am working on a qualitative study regarding African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American women leading community colleges. The purpose of my study is to find a path of success for African American and Hispanic women who want to pursue a career in leadership at community colleges. Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in two interview sessions. Each interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and the data obtained will be used to complete my dissertation.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in my study at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,

María Yareli Delgado
Ph.D. Candidate
The University of Texas at Arlington
College Of Education and Health Professions
Department of Education Leadership And Policy Studies
(972) 951-8240
maria.delgado@mavs.uta.edu

Appendix B

Follow up Recruitment E-mail

Good Afternoon Dr./Ms. _____,

I am Maria Yareli Delgado a doctoral candidate in the Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Texas at Arlington. I am writing to follow up on my previous email regarding my research. The purpose of my study is to find a path of success for African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American women who want to pursue a career in leadership at community colleges. Therefore, I would like to invite you to participate in two interview sessions. Each interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and the data obtained will be used to complete my dissertation.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in my study at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,

María Yareli Delgado
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Appendix C

Consent Form

**University of Texas at Arlington
Informed Consent Document**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Maria Yareli Delgado
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Taryn Allen-Ozuna, PhD
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College of Health and Education Professions
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TITLE OF PROJECT

Women of Color Leading Community Colleges

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study regarding the experiences that African American and Hispanic women have to experience in order to achieve higher-level administrative roles at community colleges. Your participation is voluntary and any refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty for you. If during the interview process you have any questions please feel free to ask your questions at any time.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to find the success path of women of color in community colleges through the experiences of current women of color who are successful in their higher-ranking leadership roles at community colleges.

This study will focus on interviewing 5 women of color who currently hold high-ranking administrative positions at Tarrant County College District. Based on the information that will be provided by TCC Leaders, I hope to provide a framework to current community college leaders about how to attract and retain African American and Hispanic women in their institutions. I hope to contribute to the needed literature that focuses on the success path of women of color who hold higher-ranking administrative positions at community colleges.

DURATION

You will be asked to participate in two interviews that will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

5 participants

PROCEDURES

The interview will entail open-ended responses to a series of questions posed by the researcher. The interview will be audio recorded and recordings will be transcribed, which means that the researcher will type exactly as questions were recorded, word-for-word. Participant's comments will not be identified by name in the transcription. Each participant will be assigned a number for transcription purposes. The interview tape will be kept with the transcription so that accuracy of the transcription can be checked at any time. The tape and transcription will not be used for any future research purposes not described here.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There are no foreseeable benefits associated with this study.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no perceived risks or discomforts for participating in this research study.

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation associated with this study.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. You can decide to not to participate in the study and no consequences will be applied.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequence.

If you choose not to complete all study procedures, your data may or may not be used as decided per your request.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of this signed consent form and all data collected (including transcriptions/tapes if applicable) from this study will be stored for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; it will be anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA Institutional Review Board (IRB), and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

Questions about this research study may be directed to Maria Yareli Delgado at maria.delgado@mavs.uta.edu or Taryn Allen-Ozuna, Ph.D., tozuna@uta.edu.

Any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant or a research-related injury may be directed to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services at 817-272-2105 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu.

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Maria Yareli Delgado

Date

CONSENT

By signing below, you confirm that you are 18 years of age or older and have read or had this document read to you. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of

this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

NAME OF VOLUNTEER

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

Appendix D

Interview Protocol #1

1. Can you tell me about your story growing up?
Probe 1: What role your parents or family members played in you pursuing a career in administration? If any.

Probe 2: What is the role that you family played in your career success? if any.
2. What is your current position at TCC?
Probe 1: How many years do you have working in this position?

Probe 2: What prior experiences that you had before this job?

Probe 3: What are your education credentials?
3. Why did you decide to work in administration?
Probe 1: Who has influenced you to pursue a career in administration?

Probe 2: When you encountered obstacles, to whom did you turn for support?
4. Are you the first in your family to pursue a career in administration? If so,
Probe 1: What are the challenges of being the first in your family to pursue a career in administration?, If any.

Probe 2: What are the benefits of being the first in your family to pursue a career in administration?, If any?
5. One of the selection criteria for my study was for participants to identify as African American or Hispanic. What is your ethnic identity?
Probe 1: What role does your ethnic background play in your job as administrator, if at all?

Probe 2: How does your ethnic background has any influence on the success of your students, if at all? On the relationships you have with students?

Probe 3: How does your ethnic background has any influence on your employees, if at all? On your employees of color in your institution? On your relationships with employees?

6. How does being a woman of color administrator on this campus influence your leadership style, if at all?

Probe: How do you feel about being a woman of color and holding a position of higher level in administration in your college?

Probe 1: Given your gender and ethnicity, have you ever felt your approach to leadership differed from your majority counterparts? If yes, in what ways?

7. Can you describe any strategies that helped you to achieve success in your role as administrator?

Probe: What leadership lessons have you learned from your success? From your failures?

8. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix E

Interview Protocol #2

1. What do you think are the benefits of being women of color and being in the position that you are?
2. What do you think are the challenges of being women of color and the position that you hold?
3. What did you have to endure in order to achieve success in your current leadership position?
4. Can you name an obstacle (s) that you had to experience in order to achieve your higher-ranking administrative position? If any.
5. What is the role that individuals from your culture played in your career as administrator? If any.
6. What is the role that individuals in the mainstream culture played in your role as administrators? If any.
 Probe 2: What is the role that individuals in the minority culture played in your role as administrator? If any.
7. How would you describe the mainstream culture at TCCD (or in community colleges)?
 Probe 2: How have you learned to navigate the mainstream culture in order to achieve professional success?
8. What role has your culture played, if any, in you achieving professional success?
 Probe 1: How have you drawn upon your culture in order to achieve professional success?
9. What is your experience working with white males who hold the same position as yours?
 Probe 1: When you consider yourself in your relation to peer administrators, how do you compare the way you are treated by supervisors? Peers? Subordinates?

 Probe 2: Do you believe you've ever been treated differently because of your gender or ethnicity? If yes, can you provide an example.
10. How do you view your role in mentoring emerging leaders? Emerging women of color leaders?
 Probe: Do you employ any specific mentorship strategies? If yes, can you provide an example?

Probe: What obstacles do you see women of color confront in their pathway to administrator roles? How do they overcome those challenges?

11. What piece of advice would you provide to women of color who want to pursue the administrative position that you currently hold?
12. Do you have any questions for me?

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Maria Yareli Delgado was born in Los Tanques, Valparaizo, Zacatecas. She moved to Texas, during her sophomore year in High School. She started in the English as a Second Language program at Nimitz High School, South Irving. In her free time she likes to watch movies and read Spanish Literature. She loves to travel and spending time with her family.

Maria believes in the mission of the community college and her ideology of leadership equates to service. The role of leaders of higher education institutions is to be faithful servants of students and community that they serve.

Maria serves as the Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction at Tarrant County College. She has the honor of serving as the sponsor of the Organization of Latin Americans. Previously, she served as the Coordinator of Academic Programs, Instructional Specialist, and TRiO Student Support Services Tutor Coordinator.

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Maria Delgado holds a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas at Arlington (2017). She received her Master of Education in Higher Education from the University of North Texas (2010), a Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Texas at Arlington (2008), and an Associate of Arts in Teaching Degree from North Lake Community College (2007).