THE HIDDEN OBSTACLES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS: A STUDY OF LATINA
ADMINISTRATORS IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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A Dissertation

by

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I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. Without their unconditional support and understanding, I would have not been able to accomplish my life's dream. It is because of our village I was able to complete this degree. Mom, Robert, Michelle, Eddie, and Robin, thank you for being there for us and for always believing in me.

To my husband Rodney, thank you for being my rock. I appreciate your patience and understanding throughout this journey. Your sacrifices and support are invaluable to me, and I will forever be grateful that you assisted me in showing our children to never give up on your dreams. To my son Quenton and daughter Graciela, thank you for being my inspiration. Remember that the world is yours, and it will be what you want it to be.

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Abstract

of

THE HIDDEN OBSTACLES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS: A STUDY OF LATINA
ADMINISTRATORS IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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The purpose of this qualitative study is to shed light on the experiences of six Latina
California Community Colleges (CCC) administrators and the factors that contributed
to their success. More specifically, the study examines how the elements of overt
discrimination and covert discrimination (microaggressions) in the administrators'
work environment impacted their leadership development and career advancement. It
also looks at the strategies of resilience that help Latina administrators succeed in their
leadership positions despite their underrepresentation.

The qualitative research design for this study captured the women's stories and
descriptions of racial microaggressions in their work environment. This study used a
phenomenological approach because it focuses on "how people describe things and
experience them through their senses" (Patton, 2002, p. 105). This particular approach
helped describe the meaning behind research participants' lived experiences of a
phenomenon (Creswell, 2005).

The researcher used critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical race theory
(LatCrit) as frameworks to analyze the impact of microaggressions on the Latina

California community college administrators. Narratives were used as the primary method to gather data that address the relationship between racial microaggressions and work environment climate.

A narrative is a methodological tool used to give a voice to a subordinate group (Aguirre, 2000). Research participants were given the opportunity to discuss their lived experiences by telling the stories of the subtle forms of racism or discrimination they experience.

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INTRODUCTION

"We must never forget that all Americans have the right to pursue the American Dream; we must never forget that the community college represents the only hope millions of Americans have of achieving that Dream" (Vaughan, 1989 p.87).

There have been significant changes in the demographics of California. Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic group in the state and are projected to become the largest ethnic group in the state by 2020 and the majority by 2050 (Schwarm, 2014). Latina women represent an important segment of the population in California. Over 6 million Latinas live and work in California today, representing 17% of California's total population. Of these 6 million Latinas, 12% have at least a bachelor's degree, and 68% make under $50,000 a year (State of California, Department of Finance, 2007).

While the Latina population is growing, academically they are seriously falling behind in college attainment rates. Latinas have a 24% college attendance rate in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, which is the largest public higher education system in the United States (State of California, College Going Rates, 2009). California community colleges serve a crucial role in helping underrepresented students obtain a higher education degree (Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). Compared to most other higher education institutions, the CCC system is diverse and highly representative of the general California population (Mellow & Heelan, 2014).

As a result, the CCC system is positioned to advance the educational attainment rates of underrepresented students (Johnson & Sengupta, 2009). With the opportunity to promote social equity, the growing number of CCC educational leaders could, in theory,

enhance the upward mobility of historically marginalized communities by creating a culture that focuses on improving community colleges' educational outcomes (Wallin, 2010).

A key component to an institution's success is undoubtedly the quality of its administrative and educational leaders—they are vital to the community college atmosphere, culture, and curriculum development (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002). These individuals are administrators who are typically chancellors, presidents, in other supervisory roles/positions, or management team members. They tend to oversee the supervision and operation of program policies that aim to foster student success and also transform institutions.

Leadership Retirements

According to Campbell, Syed, and Morris (2010), the end of the twentieth century heralded a period of anxiety among community college trustees and leaders over impending shortfalls in leadership positions" (p. 33). Within the next decade, community colleges nationwide will experience tremendous attrition in leadership due to retirements (Milliron & De Los Santos, 2004). The CCC system leadership in CCCS "predominantly consists of older members, and retirement is projected to rise within the next decade. In fact, the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) data reveal that 47% of the current educational administrators are 55 years of age or older. As illustrated in Figure 1, 25% or 506 out of 2,052 administrator positions could become vacant at any moment.

This circumstance clearly affects the CCC system, and due to the impending retirement of CCC educational leaders, the state must strategically plan to fill the foreseen void of such leaders.

Figure 1
California Community College Educational Administrators: Age Demographics
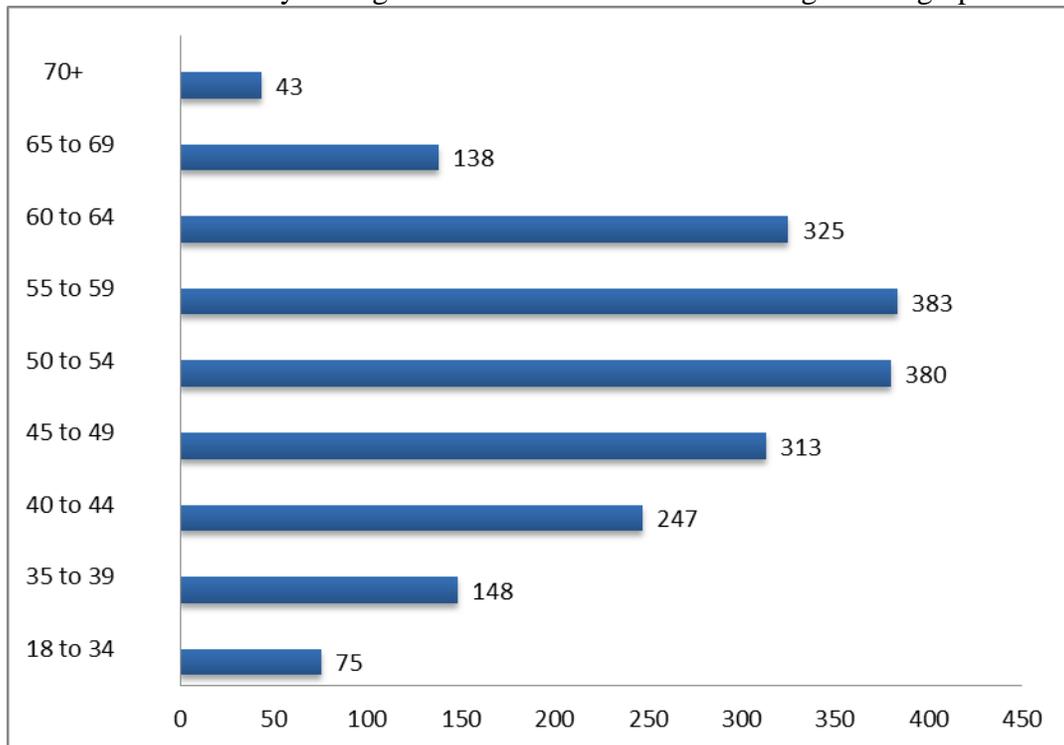
The nationwide concern is that the community college system will be losing a substantial number of its leaders as they retire out of the system (Campbell, 2002). This will require CCCCO to replace these administrators. Therefore, it is essential to encourage and mentor underrepresented women to move into leadership roles.

Only 10% of the California Community Colleges System's educational administrators are identified as Latina. The total population of educational administrators has increased by 126 over the past five years (2012-2016); in the same time period, there

has been an increase of 44 Latina administrators, i.e., a 35% increase of Latina women in administration. Table 2 represents distribution data according to the gender and race of administrators from 2012-2016. The CCCCO compiled the data.

Table 1

Historical Distribution (Race/Gender) of Educational Administrators

	Fall 2012		Fall 2013		Fall 2014		Fall 2015		Fall 2016	
Total	1,926		1,892		1,917		2,025		2,052	
Ethnicity	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
African-American	110	80	117	76	117	77	128	88	135	90
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5	9	4	8	6	10	6	9	8	9
Asian	99	70	89	84	97	76	97	77	100	79
Latino/a	155	150	160	150	171	143	189	159	199	170
Multi-Ethnicity	10	5	10	8	8	6	11	8	15	7
Pacific Islander	4	6	4	4	3	4	7	7	3	6
Unknown	54	59	48	51	63	70	67	62	76	59
White Non-Hispanic	583	527	565	514	562	501	575	535	575	521

The primary focus of this dissertation is to examine the experience of CCC administrators who are Latina and the factors that contribute to their success. More specifically, I will examine the element of discrimination in their work environment and assess strategies of resilience that have helped Latina administrators succeed in their leadership positions due to their underrepresentation.

This study seeks to shed light on how racial microaggressions in the work environment influence Latina administrator's leadership development and job promotion. As Sue (2010) explained, "Racial microaggressions are the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned people who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated" (p. 25).

Background

Latina students' educational under attainment of a bachelor's degree has contributed to the underrepresentation of Latinas in professional and graduate schools. It is therefore imperative that California ensures that the K-20 educational systems address the educational necessities to improve Latino students' educational outcomes.

Exacerbating the problem of a partially obstructed educational pipeline, researchers have found that the number of Latinas serving in higher education administration is disproportionately small compared to White counterparts (Munoz, 2009). The lack of role models and administrators who are knowledgeable of, responsible for, sensitive to the experiences of their student population significantly impedes the transformation needed to promote academic success and upward mobility for this population.

Specifically, in 2012, the California Community College system had 2.29 million students enrolled; this figure contains 38% of the nation's Latina/o student population (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015). The California community college degree and transfer attainment rates demonstrate Latina/o students are less likely to attain their educational goals. According to a longitude study conducted by the

CCCCO office, only 38% of the 2008-2009 Latina/o student cohorts earned a certificate, associate's degree, or transferred within a six year timeframe (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2013).

The unsuccessful Latina/o students in the CCC system add to the overall low bachelor's degree attainment rates. According to United States Census, bachelor's degree attainment rates for Latinos are 50% lower compared to the rates of White students (Bureau, 2014). Substantial research elucidates the benefits of having ethnically concordant role models in all levels of education (Burke, 2013). Culturally competent institutions can cultivate climates that support diversity leadership, institutional diversity planning, and multicultural education (Burke, 2013).

Given the increasing need for future CCC administrators, particularly those who are representative of the student population, this study aims to characterize the specific, perceived barriers that Latina CCC leaders experience during their tenure in the CCC system. In this study, I add to the literature by specifically focusing on the wide range of experiences that include overt as well as subtle forms of discrimination, also known as microaggressions that senior executive-level Latina CCC leaders experience in their everyday work environment.

Problem Statement

A comparison of the data revealed that there are substantial ethnic disparities among the student population and educational administrators in the CCC system. Educational administrators are leaders who supervise the daily operations of programs or institutions, and they also have direct influence in policy reform (California Community

College Chancellor's Office, 2013). Latina administrators are underrepresented in the California Community Colleges system. For instance, Latinas make up 10% of the total academic administrator population of the 2,052 administrators in the CCS system (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2016). There are 190 Latina administrators compared to 64,661 Latina students. Based on the state's ethnic shift, it is crucial that the CCC reflect the demographic reality of Latinos through their representation in educationally administrative roles.

Figure 2
California Community College Student Administrator Ratio by Ethnicity
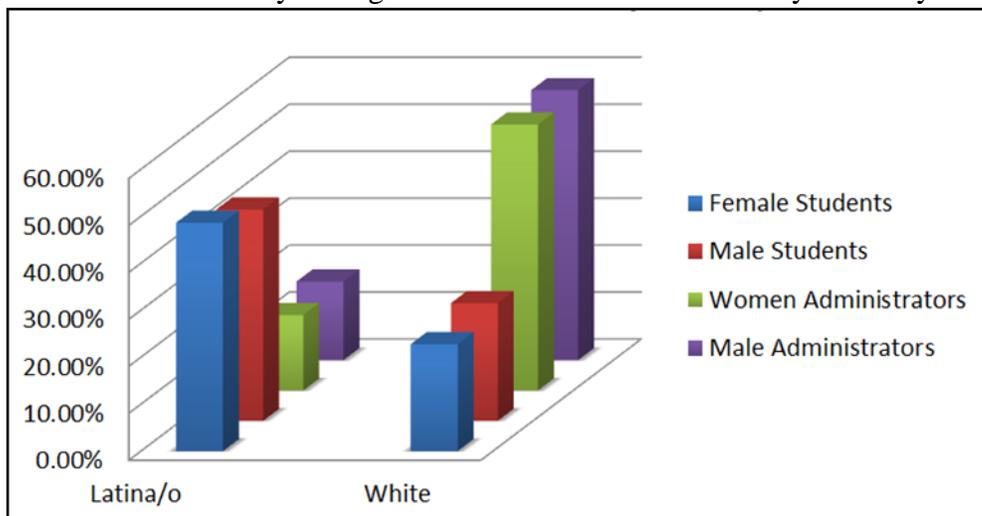
As shown in Figure 2, there is a severe underrepresentation of Latina educational administrators in leadership roles in the CCC system. Additionally, the majority of Latina students in California are first generation college students. The high enrollment rates of this population within our community colleges speak to the need for Latina role models to provide academic motivation and persistence in the community college environment (Castellanos & Jones, 2003).

The CCC system consists of 113 colleges and serves as a crucial resource for the education, training, and development of over 2 million students. However, the California Community College Chancellor's Office has failed to address the much needed CCC leadership reform (Munoz, 2009). As Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate, over 57% of the CCC education administrators are White and 47% of students are Latina women. This overt contrast demonstrates that the administrators are not representative of their student population.

Figure 3
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Administrator Ethnic Demographics
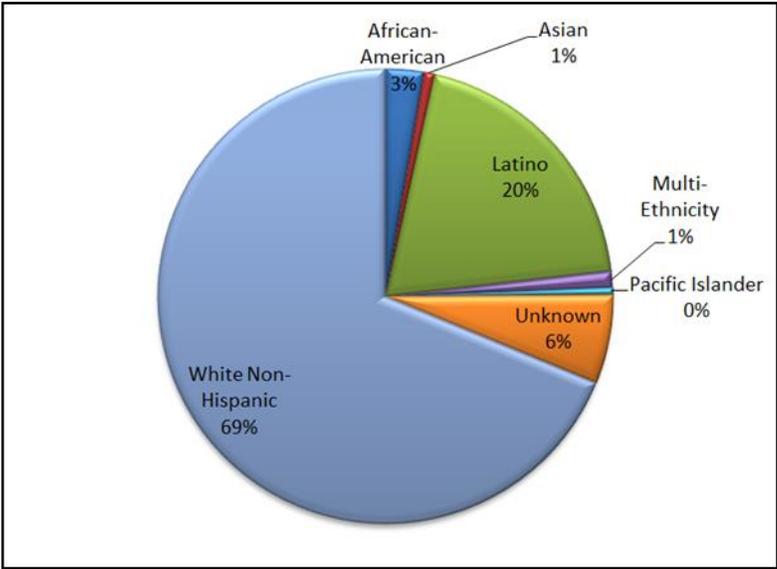
There is strong evidence that indicates the critical need for Latina/o students to be connected to mentors and role models to ensure students are motivated and complete their educational journey (Tinto, 2010). Safeguarding Latina/o students' academic success will also require an institutional climate analysis to review policies and practices that hinder the success of underrepresented students. Subsequently, the absence of Latina/o administrators can hinder the educational reform efforts of the California

community college system. Proactively providing role models and mentors to Latina students can increase their social capital and provide opportunities to enhance the retention of community college Latino students.

This study contributes to the limited literature that addresses the development and retaining of Latina administrators in higher education. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate the characteristics of Latina CCC administrators and their wide range of experience that include overt as well as subtle forms of discrimination in their work environment. More specifically, I examine how microaggressions in the work environment influence their leadership development and job promotion opportunities. The purpose of this study is to provide qualitative data that will encourage postsecondary institutions and legislation to create policies that will foster diversity among CCC education leadership.

Nature of the Study

The research objective of the study is to contribute to the limited research on Latina community college administrators and their experience with discrimination in their work environment. This study provides a professional platform from which to examine how microaggressions in the work environment influence Latina administrators in their leadership development and job promotion and, more importantly, what characteristics contribute to their resilience in overcoming microaggressions within the work environment.

Incidences of racial discrimination have the potential to negatively inform the experience of Latina professionals and can occur at various levels. The low number of

Latina administrators in administration in the CCC points to a few individuals attempting to break the glass ceiling of administration and leadership roles. The experience of research participants sheds light on the various challenges they face, such as a lack of social capital within the administrative ranks, a lack of guidance in regard to the administration promotional ladder, and the subsequent absence of mentoring opportunities, which in turn affect the retention of Latina administrators.

These elements were studied, guided, and correlated with critical race theory (CTR) and Latino critical race theory (LatCrit). The theoretical framework of CTR identified issues of race, racism, and sexism, which are often muted (Alemán Jr, 2009; Rivera, Forquer, & Rangel, 2010). Through a phenomenology research design, I was able to gain a deeper understating of the perceived barriers that Latina CCC administrators experience given their underrepresentation in the CCC system. The phenomenological approach of the study demonstrated that executive-level Latina leaders' voices can serve as a powerful influence for policy reform. More details of the research methodology will be provided in Chapter 3.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide this study:

RQ1: How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina California Community Colleges system administrators?

RQ2: How do microaggressions impact the promotion of Latina CCC administrators?

RQ3: What factors contribute to the resiliency and retention of Latina CCC

administrators?

The research design and data collection process will be described in Chapter 3.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher used critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical race theory

(LatCrit) as frameworks to analyze the impact of microaggressions for the Latina

California Community College (CCC) administrators. Narratives were used as the

primary method to gather data that address the relationship between racial

microaggressions and the work environment climate.

A narrative is a methodological tool used to give a voice to a subordinate group

(Aguirre, 2000). In this study, research participants were given the opportunity to

introduce their lived experiences—specifically, subtle forms of racism or

discrimination—through the sharing of stories.

This method allows other underrepresented Latina administrators to realize that

they are not alone with their experience of racial microaggressions. The storytelling

enabled participants to share suppressed experiences in meaningful episodes (Richardson,

1990). It is "a means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate

racial stereotypes" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27). By employing storytelling, the

researcher was able to examine how microaggressions in the work environment influence

Latina CCC administrators' leadership development and job promotion opportunities.

LatCrit was also used to better articulate the experiences of Latinas administrators

in the California community colleges system. According to Solorzano and Delgado

Bernal (2002), "LatCrit compliments CRT by putting the needs and perspectives of

Latinos at the center of its theory and practice in a way that ask questions and produces

knowledge not often discussed in CRT" (p. 125). Specifically, LatCrit provided the

researcher with the opportunity to focus on the oppression of Latina women (Solorzano

& Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Operational Definitions

This section provides the definitions and terms of the study:

California Community Colleges: Consists of 113 community colleges in 72

community college districts in the state of California. Created by legislation in 1967, it is

the largest system of higher education in the world, serving more than 2.4 million

students with a wide variety of educational and career goals.

Critical Race Theory (CRT): Posits that racism is endemic to educational

institutions and focuses on racial structural inequalities and the way racism is reproduced

with the goal of transforming racist institutions. CRT values the personal experiences and

testimonies of oppressed groups (Delgado, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995).

Educational Administrator: Administrator who is employed in an academic

position designated by the governing board of the district as having direct responsibility

for supervising the operation of or formulating policy regarding the instructional or

student services program of the college or district. Educational administrators include,

but are not limited to, chancellors, presidents, and other supervisory or management

employees designated by the governing board as educational administrators.

Glass Ceiling Theory: The Glass Ceiling Theory is defined as "artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevents qualified individuals from advancing within their organization and reaching their full potential" (Wickwire & Kruper, p. 32).

Latina: This term identifies women of Latin American heritage to include those from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America (Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987).

Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit): LatCrit is the theoretical framework serving as an extension of CRT. It examines the numerous dimensions of subordination and oppression Latinos/as face in higher education institutions such as gender, class, number of generations in residence in the United States, English language acquisition, and immigration status (Alemán Jr, 2009).

Microaggressions: "Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults. They are modern forms of subtle exclusion and oppression that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p.140).

Mentor: An experienced individual in a particular field who guides and counsels a new or aspiring individual in that particular field to aid in the individual's growth and development.

Phenomenology: A qualitative research designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as self-perceived by the people who have participated in it (Creswell & Garrett, 2008).

Race: A socially constructed category (Haney-López, 2000; Omi & Winant, 1994; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Racial Microaggressions (RM): Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color (Sue & Constantine, 2007).

Social Capital: From community culture wealth, this form of capital comprises the community resources and networks of people as they overlap and are shared in a local context. Social networks assist people of color with the movement through social institutions and provide emotional support (Yosso, 2005).

Counter-story: "[A] method of telling the stories of people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society)" (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002, p. 30).

Transformational Leadership: A leadership model where leaders and followers collaborate to transform an institution through positive change. In this model, "followers" become leaders themselves and take ownership (Stewart, 2006).

Limitations and Assumptions

This study has several limitations to consider. This study focused on the characteristics of Latina CCC administrators and their experience with microaggressions

in the work environment. The research participants provided self-reported perceptions

and offered detailed accounts of how microaggressions influence their leadership

development, job promotion, and resilience. Hence, this study will have the following

limitations:

1. This study will focus on Latina community college administrators and will not

   be generalized to other racial-ethic groups or male administrators.

2. The study is limited to Latinas in leadership positions in the California

   community colleges system and cannot be generalized to other post-secondary

   institutions.

3. The sample of this study is too small to apply to the general population.

This research has the following assumptions, which will guide the study:

1. This study has made an assumption that Latina administrators have

   experienced microaggressions.

2. The Latino population in California and the number of Latino students

   entering community colleges will continue to grow.

3. The underrepresentation of Latina administrators is especially alarming, as it

   is disproportionate to the number of Latina students.

Significance

This study adds to the limited research on Latina women in leadership roles in

California community colleges. More specifically, this study addresses a very real and

pervasive form of modern discrimination that is often ignored in leadership studies—

microaggressions. The qualitative data adds to the effort to create targeted leadership

development programs to diversify the executive leadership roles in the CCC. In addition, the study's findings can assist in the recruitment and retention of Latina administrators.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the California community college system. It also included student and administrator data that demonstrated ethnic disparity among the educational administrators. Further, it addressed the importance of having Latina role models to increase student success in the California community college system. Chapter 2 presents the literature review and will more thoroughly address the leadership development of Latina women in higher education. Chapter 3 will detail the methodology of the study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to the experiences that impact the upward mobility of Latina administrators in higher education. More specifically, I will review the literature that examines the factors that lead California Community College (CCC) Latina administrators to succeed in leadership roles, including (i) Latinas (ii) an overview of California's Community Colleges, (iii) Latina educational experience and degree attainment rates, (iv) leadership development, (vi) microaggressions and California polices, and (vii) theoretical framework.

Latinas

Latinas refers to women who identify with people of Latin American heritage to include Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America (Ramirez, 2014). Latina women are culturally and racially diverse. Their personal experiences vary due to the diversity in race, religion, family, culture, English language, and historical experiences (Trueba, 1999). California's largest population of Latinos are of Mexican descent; 27% of California Latinos are native-born and 37% of Latinos are foreign-born (PewResearchCenter, 2011).

Latinas are a visible population in California and throughout the United States. According to Gándara (2015), "One in five women in the United States is a Latina and it is projected that by 2060, Latinas will form nearly a third of the female population of the nation " (Gándara, 2015, p.2). Ensuring that Latinas are supported and encouraged to succeed is essential for the economic success of California and the United States.

Educational Journeys

The California K-12 public school system has a 22 % English learning student population, and 83% of those students are Spanish speaking students (Education, 2014). Gándara (2015) noted the following in his research:

> That many K-12 schools do not recognize Latina students native language skills as an asset to build on, schools often place Latina students in remedial programs that track them into lower level curricula and slow their academic progress. While other children are learning the regular curriculum, many young Latinas who are still learning English must simultaneously overcome the initial disadvantages of poverty, lack of preschool, and the challenge of learning a new language and culture, while simultaneously trying to catch up with their native English-speaking peers (p. 9).

The experience of racial discrimination is common for English learners. Institutional barriers also create settings in which English leaner students proactively seek the social acceptance of their teachers who have a directly impact on their self-esteem. Teachers who are not trained to integrate students into their classrooms can hurt and impact the students' emotional wellbeing (García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Moreover, Soto (1997) research showed that English learners often experience a hostile educational and community setting.

Latinas are currently undergoing educational challenges. For instance, the California Latina high school graduation rates are gradually declining. Between 2002 and 2008, the United States Department of Education reported a 4% decline in Latinas' high

school graduation rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2008-2009). Unfortunately, poverty is one of the leading factors that limit Latinas' educational advancement.

Many high poverty neighborhoods are filled with crime, drugs, and gangs. These factors are unquestionably associated with dropout rates. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education found that 33 % of Latina high school students dropped-out of high school during the 2008-2009 academic year. The majority of Latina students drop-out of high school due to economic hardship and family responsibilities (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). Families that live in poverty have less access to affluent schools, extracurricular activities, and qualified teachers. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) study found that low-income and minority students often encounter high teacher turnover and are taught by inexperienced teachers. For these reasons, low-income students have low academic achievement rates.

Students who fail to earn a high school diploma hold a disadvantage and are likely to become unemployed or have limited access to career advancement and postsecondary education opportunities (Stearns & Glennie, 2006). The development of a new generation of leaders is crucial to the success of community colleges and student outcomes (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Ream & Rumberger, 2008). Increasing the educational attainment rates of Latina students is also critical. The obstacles these students face in the CCC system will be further discussed below.

California Community Colleges

In 1967, after an upsurge in the number of universities across California and throughout the United States, California legislation created the California Educational Master Plan to develop the CCC system. The underlying philosophy behind creating this educational system was simple: Californians should have access to an affordable—i.e., free to low-cost—high quality education (Chapa & Schink, 2006). The CCC system has therefore been referred to as the "people's college" (Cohen, 1990).

These educational opportunities set forth by the CCC system have grown exponentially to include courses beyond basic skills in English, Math and English as Second Language courses (ESL). Certificate programs, transfer pathways to four-year universities, vocational education and associate's degrees are also currently available (Commission, 2007). The CCC educational system has consequently created the largest community college system of higher education in the nation, with 2.3 million students attending a CCC (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015a).

The open access philosophy as well as its general low cost compared to most four-year colleges lends itself to attracting and enrolling a highly diverse student population that, in general, is also reflective of California's racial and ethnic group composition. For example, between 2002 and 2003, over 40% of enrolled CCC students were White non-Hispanic, followed by Latino (27%), Asian (12%), and African American students (8%). As of 2013, however, there now appears to be a disproportionately higher rate of Latino students in the CCC system. A total of 46% of Latino high school graduates are enrolled into the CCC system (Balassone, 2013),

followed by White non-Hispanic (30%), Asian, and African American students (12% and 7%, respectively) (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015a). In regard to the Latino enrollees, a disproportionately higher percentage of these continued enrollees are Latina (39% of those enrolled in CCC system), and there has been a 12% increase since 2003 (ibid).

The CCC Latina enrollment trend demonstrates that Latina students have fallen behind the CCC transfer or degree attainment rates of middle class White students (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015a). The California Educational Master Plan three-tier university system, which is meant to provide equitable access to higher education for students across the state, has not adequately fostered the appropriate educational pipeline for community college students to attain their educational goals at four-year institutions (Rivas, Pérez, Alvarez, & Solorzano, 2007). Latina students, for example, are underrepresented in bachelor degree attainment rates compared to their male non-White counterparts (Chapa & Schink, 2006). As of 2009, only 40% of Latina students managed to transfer to a four-year institution within a six-year period, compared to 53% and 66% of their White and Asian female counterparts, respectively (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015b).

Educational Experience and Degree Attainment Rates

Latina students face several unique barriers in their pursuit of a higher education degree (Crisp & Nora, 2010; Rodriguez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, & Talbot, 2000; Zell, 2010). Literature has revealed that Latina adolescents are less likely to enroll in four-year colleges after high school due to their socioeconomic status, prior academic

achievement, and traditional cultural values. First generation Latinas are adapted to prioritizing their family needs before personal goals. As Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, and Perez-Stable (1987) noted, "Familism is a cultural value that emphasizes family closeness and loyalty. It is recognized as a core value for Latino families which often generates feelings of guilt, and disloyalty when Latinas are pursuing their educational goals" (p.398).

This cultural element is in contrast to the independent and individual culture of the United States. As a result, researchers have often cited that Latina students frequently encounter conflicting roles and expectations from different venues, including their family, the local community, and college (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Zalaquett, 2006; Zwerling & London, 1992). These conflicting roles are often attributed to the student's fluidity in her bicultural identity. In other words, the more bicultural a Latina student is, or the better her cultural fit, the easier it will be for her to navigate between her college and family expectations (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton,(1993). This aspect, in turn, increases the likelihood of Latina students succeeding in their academic pursuits and maintaining their mental health (ibid).

Many first generation Latina students also have an educational disadvantage that is directly associated with family economic disadvantages as well as social capital restrictions that limit their post-secondary planning (Perez & McDonough, 2008; Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002). Low-income students, for example, often have to divide their time between financially supporting their families and managing their college responsibilities (Mitchell, 1997; Paulsen & St John, 2002; Sy, 2006). Frequently, family

financial commitments take priority and require first generation students to work more hours and reduce their time spent on academic responsibilities (Sy & Romero, 2008). First generation and low-income students therefore often struggle to handle their financial responsibilities while trying to build their social capital to succeed in college.

Strayhorn conducted a study involving 289 Latino students and 300 White students. The students were asked to participate in a survey that was designed to measure the quantity and quality of student involvement in college campus activities and their use of facilities. The study found that Latino students who excel academically spend more time studying and felt more connected to their campus. As a result, the students that were connected to the campus learned how to transition into college and build their social capital, and they were more likely to complete their college degree (Coleman, 1998).

Leadership Development

It is important to focus on the challenges Latina women face in navigating leadership positions within the community colleges administration. As Gutierrez, Castañeda, & Katsinas (2002) stated, "The fact that most presidencies, vice presidencies, and deanships require or strongly prefer, that holders possess the earned doctorate merits special focus"(Gutierrez, Castañeda, & Katsinas, 2002, p. 301). As noted above, although there has been gradual improvement, there is still a dearth of Latinas who are successfully transferring from CCCs to four-year institutions and beyond. As a result, there is an underrepresentation of Latina women in professional and graduate schools, let alone Latinas in high level leadership positions (Fry, 2002). Hence, "much remains to be done to expand the pool of prepared Latinos for leadership positions in community

colleges" (Gutierrez et al., 2002, p. 297). The number of Latinas earning a doctorate degree within a ten-year span has risen 38%, but this is a disproportionate rate compared to the general Latina population increase (Hoffer et al., 2014). Latinas with doctorate degrees also continue to remain much less represented than their White, Black, and Asian counterparts (Hoffer et al., 2014).

Latina women are unable to obtain equitable and representation in CCC administrative positions. Although they make up the greater percentage of student enrollment in CCC (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2015a). This awareness is important note because of the underrepresentation of women in the community college administrative ranks. Historically women of color and minority groups have limited access to top level leadership positions across academia (Longman, & Lafreniere, 2012). Of the few Latinas who have the credentials that qualify for CCC leadership positions, the majority are in middle management or administrative positions (Garza Mitchell & Eddy, 2008; Savala, 2014). It is important to acknowledge Latinas in middle management positions have broken through the glass ceiling to advance into their administrative roles. The glass ceiling theory describes barriers and experiences women or minority groups have had to overcome to enter an exclusive group (Williams, 2014). As of 2007, "of the 180 Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the continental United States that were members of HACU, only 56, or 31%, had Latina/o CEOs" (Alfredo & Vega, 2008, p. 156). This statistic demonstrates the striking inequity in the representation of Latina women in the highest administrative ranks within the community college system (Munoz, 2009).

Another important element about leadership is that "women's leadership has traditionally been classified as more of a nurturing approach or, better yet, the spider web metaphor - wherein networking and a horizontal structure predominate - in lieu of the pyramid" (Suarez-McCrink, 2002, p. 247). Suarez-McCrink (2002) found that "a minority woman must walk between two worlds - the one framed by the stereotypical traditions of the White dominant culture and the one in which her ethnicity is rooted as part of an all-encompassing ethos" (p. 240). The suggestion is that underrepresented women must confront gender, racial, and cultural barriers. The challenges to fit in an organization structure were organizational culture are not supportive of women or minorities can cause women to leave a well-paying job since the work structure was designed to reflect the realities of all-male work-force" (Helgesen and Johnson, 2010, p.58).

Once in leadership positions, however, there are numerous obstacles unique to Latinas that hinder their continued progress and success (Esquibel, 1977; Munoz, 2009; Robison, Sugar, & Miller, 2010; Wallin, 2010). This literature is still steadily growing, more obstacles are being considered in contemporary research, with the exception of microaggressions, which still require further research. For example, scholars suggest that Latina leaders need to obtain leadership mentors, develop cross-cultural competency to assist with campus politics navigation, and "develop their personality styles, modes of thinking and behaviors and in order to expand on these elements, it is important to know their own personality traits" (Bettis, Mills,Williams, & Nolan, 2005, p. 40). The lack of role models in higher education administration presents another challenge for Latinas.

Latinas and other women of color "experience multiple marginality" and are often presented with additional layers of complexity in their day-to-day professional lives (Turner, 2002, p. 76). According to Turner, women of color are more visible and on display. Latina women often feel pressured to conform and become socially invisible by being more isolated and excluded from informal networks. The limited sources of power through alliances and fewer opportunities to be sponsored also contribute to misperceptions of their identities and roles in the organization.

Furthermore, "aspiring leaders have the responsibility to plan their own leadership preparation through engagement, planning, credentialing, and emulating throughout the entire process. It is clear that opportunities await those willing to be change leaders and accept the challenges of leadership in today's community colleges" (Ebbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010, p. 63). It is clear that an aspiring Latina leader will need to proactively engage in her leadership development to enter the pathway of executive administration. However, many of these suggestions are the result of studies that have examined structural, cultural, and political factors that inhibit the mobility of Latina leaders through lenses that fail to capture more subtle forms of institutional bias and discrimination—e.g., microaggressions. This study will add to the literature by applying the additional theoretical framework of microaggression to the study of Latina leadership mobility in the CCC system.

Microaggressions

In reviewing the literature on subtle and contemporary forms of racism, it was found that racial microaggressions were described as a phenomenon that occurs on a daily basis. According to Sue (2010)., *racial microaggressions* are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group" (Sue, 2010, p. 5). Sue, Capodilupo, and Torino (2007) offered a classification of racial microaggressions that includes microinvalidation (verbal or nonverbal behavior that invalidates the experience of being a person of color), microinsults (rude, inappropriate, demeaning nonverbal or verbal behavior), and microassaults (explicit, racial derogatory verbal or nonverbal attack). For instance, a White person might express to a new Latina administrator that he or she believes "the most qualified person should get the job" or that "You (i.e., the Latina administrator) speak good English." The hidden messages in these statements are 1) that the Latina administrator was given unfair benefits because of her race and 2) that she is not American. The experience of racial reality differs for Latina and White Americans.

Racial microaggressions have been found to create or contribute to an unreceptive work environment (Solórzano et al., 2000). When microaggressions occur, the victims are frequently uncertain about the actions to take due to the subtlety (of the microaggressions). Typically, the victim experiences feelings of anger and resentment and must decide what to do about the other person's actions. These experiences have been found to be difficult to report due to their connection to race:

Thus, when topics of race arise, many Whites become guarded and concerned

that, in mixed company, whatever they say or do may appear racist. In social

situations, for example, the "politeness protocol" discourages people from openly

and honestly sharing their perspectives (Sue & Constantine, 2007, p. 139)

Often, the victim internalizes the anger and becomes fearful of the consequences if he or

she takes actions.

As previously mentioned, Latinas only make up 10% of the total academic

administrator population of 2,052 administrators in the California community colleges

system (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2016). There is an increasing

recognition that Latina administrators are underrepresented in the California community

colleges system. To study Latina administrators in leadership roles, it is important to

understand the experience of being an underrepresented woman of color in academia.

Turner (2002) conducted a qualitative study with 64 underrepresented faculty

members to recognize the consequences of being underrepresented in academia. The

study found that underrepresented faculty often experience the following: "(1) feeling

isolated and under respected; (2) salience of race over gender; (3) being underemployed

and overused by departments and/or institutions; (4) being torn between family,

community, and career; and (5) being challenged" (p. 86).

Latinas' faculties often have different experiences than their White male

counterparts, due to their gender and race (Garcia, 2009). In addition, Glazer-Raymo

(1999) argued that underrepresented faculty often has undesirable experiences in non-

tenure track positions, which can also impact their decision to continue working in

academia. These experiences can include long hours, extreme politics, inequitable workloads, no input in the timeframe for teaching courses, near-poverty level wages, and no benefits (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; August & Waltman, 2004).

Studies have also found that faculty of color often experience disrespect from their students and colleagues. Also, faculty of color are often tokenized and expected to represent and work in diversity or equity matters. In Turner's (2003) study, a female American Indian tenured social sciences faculty member stated the following:

> Issues of pedagogy and cultural diversity and gender are not the province of just women or just faculty of color. I think that happens too often and that puts the faculty of color person or woman on the spot, to kind of convince or persuade-be this change agent.... The faculty members feel the added pressure, but are caught in a "Catch-22" because minority issues are also important to them (p. 12).

Microaggressions toward Mental Health

Microaggressions have started to receive more attention in the research literature in counseling psychology (e.g.,Sue, al., 2007; Sue, et al., 2008). Many existing studies have investigated the influence of racist events, racism, and race-related life stressors on psychological wellbeing defined in terms of self-esteem and depression. The impacts of racial microaggression on mental health have shown to create negative outcomes for microaggression recipients (Whitbeck, McMorris, Hoyt, Stubben, & LaFromboise, 2002). Studies have found that racial microaggressions can lead to depression, anxiety, and loss of self-esteem (Sue, Capodilupo, & Torino, 2007). Salgado de Snyder (1987) performed a study involving 140 immigrant Mexican women and found that research participants that

reported experiencing discrimination exhibited more depressive symptoms than those who reported not experiencing discrimination.

Feagin and Eckberg (1980) defined *discrimination* as "actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups" (pp. 1-2). Historically, Latinos have been an inferior race in the United States. Several discrimination studies have found that Latinos experience discrimination based on their ethnic and language status, which in turn creates discriminatory stressors. Psychosocial stressors have been linked to discrimination, which has psychological and physical effects on victims. Krieger and Sidney (1996) reported that Black adults who experience constant encounters with discrimination had higher blood pressure than other adults in the study.

California Policies

In 1996, Californians passed Propositions 209, which "amended the state constitution to forbid consideration of race or gender in public employment, state and local contracting, and admission to higher education" (Valenty & Sylvia, 2004, p. 1). The passage of Proposition 209 altered the state's hiring practices and required all human resources (HR) departments to rely on the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) framework. The EEO policy prohibits discrimination and mandates HR to blindly screen applicants (Burstein, 1998).

In today's workforce environment, it is important to be colorblind in order to avoid issues of race (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012). As Apfelbaum et al. (2012) stated, "Color blindness is rooted in the belief that racial group membership and race-

based differences should not be taken into account when decisions are made, impressions are formed, and behaviors are enacted" (Apfelbaum et al., 2012, p. 205). However, organizational colorblindness has created obstacles for "recruiting and managing an increasingly diverse workforce" (Apfelbaum et al., 2012, p. 206). The importance of increasing Latina executive administrators in the CCC is vital to the success of Latina students.

With the expected California ethnic demographic shift, it is important to create an inclusive environment for CCC (Sue, 2010). According to Brown (2005), "Academic leadership should reflect the diversity of the students, faculty, staff and administration in the higher education institutions they serve" (Brown, 2005, p. 664). Diversifying all aspects of the CCC system and generating a culturally responsive leadership team can create positive student outcomes. A culturally responsive leader can directly influence curriculum to enhance and establish a culturally respectful pedagogy that can also increase the CCC student outcomes (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009).

Studies (Banks, Singleton, & Kohn-Wood, 2008; Hall, Everett, & Hamilton-Mason, 2011; McCabe, 2009) have also shown that Proposition 209 has directly affected the educational attainment rates of Latina students. For example, Contreras research found a 5% decline in admittance for Latino and Chicano/Mexican students at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1999 (Contreras, 2005).

Proposition 227 was passed by California voters, and it severely limits the use of languages other than English for the instruction of English learners. Chronic experiences

of discrimination accumulate over time and directly impact the self-esteem and mental health of individuals.

Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) provides a theoretical perspective to study the influence of power and privilege as well as how discriminatory treatment affects members of underrepresented groups (Creswell, 2007; Yosso & Solorzano, 2005). The civil rights movement influenced the conception of CRT. It was established to bring attention to issues of race, racism, and power (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The CRT literature has been widely used in fields of law, education, social sciences, humanities, and ethnic and women's studies.

CRT enables scholars to study the relationship of race, racism, and power. It gives educational settings the opportunity to examine how policies and practices oppress ethnic groups (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT addresses three basic concepts when learning about underrepresented groups. The first concept is that racism is ordinary; it is a common, everyday experience for people of color. The second concept is equality, i.e., that everyone gets treated the same. It is also referred to as colorblindness and relates to multi-intersectionality. The third concept of CRT is "social construction"—the belief that races are products of social thoughts and relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical race theorists have also applied legal storytelling and narrative analysis and have drawn from history to advance the perspectives of underrepresented populations. Storytelling also provides victims of discrimination an opportunity to voice their experiences.

Latino critical theory (LatCrit) is an extension of CRT. The LatCrit lens gives the researcher the opportunity to add aspects that CRT does not cover, such as identity, language, and immigration (Davila & de Bradley, 2010). The LatCrit lens focuses on Latinos experiences of social isolation, oppression, and cultural alienation. Both theories, CRT and LatCrit, emphasize the importance of eliminating racial oppression, sexism, and poverty (Tate, 1997) and aim to empower underrepresented groups and achieve racial justice (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Both CRT and LatCrit will help to determine the institutional barriers, policies and practices that hinder Latina CCC administrators' access to the promotional ladder.

To understand the experiences of Latina educational leaders, the CRT framework provides a safe space to analyze barriers, structural racism, and discrimination (Chapa & Schink, 2006; Solorzano, & Yosso, 2000). CRT will offer a context to study the effects of microaggressions, the CCC racial climate, and leadership development.

Summary

The literature demonstrates that racism persists in America, and systems, institutions, and personal attitudes perpetuate it through laws, policies, processes, and personal value systems. Racism occurs as part of the privilege and oppression present in the web of national systems. It integrates into social norms through a person's cultural socialization and contributes to a person's worldview (Miller & Garran, 2007; Sue, 2010; Cunningham, 2003). This chapter provided an overview of the literature that is relevant to the experiences that impact the educational attainment and upward mobility of Latina administrators in higher education. The literature review emphasized the diversity among

California Latinas; it also provided an overview of California's community colleges and Latinas' educational experiences concerning degree completion. Leadership development, California polices, and theoretical frameworks were reviewed as part of a thorough examination of microaggressions.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design and offers an explanation of the

research study. The research method was selected to investigate the relationship between

microaggressions, leadership development and career advancement of Latina CCC

administrators. This chapter correspondingly reviews the role of the researcher and the

research questions; it also includes a discussion of the research population and sample as

well as the data collection methods and analysis processes. Lastly, the chapter will

conclude with a consideration of the limitations and an overview of the measures used to

protect the participants in this study.

Research Design

A qualitative research design steered this study; the researcher studied the

participants' experiences with microaggressions (Merriam, 2009). The qualitative

research design allowed the researcher to work directly with the participants. Therefore,

this study was designed to identify themes and patterns for an in-depth analysis and for

an understanding of individuals' personalize experiences (Creswell, 2005). This approach

acknowledges that critical information lies within the data collected and specifically in

the details of study participants' shared experiences.

Using a phenomenology research design, the researcher gained an understanding

of the perceived barriers that Latina administrators experience given their

underrepresentation in the CCC system. A purposeful sample of research participants was

selected for the study. These participants were carefully selected based on their race and

professional experience as administrators in the California Community Colleges system. The participants were recruited through email distribution via professional organizations. The email request included a demographic survey that solicited research volunteers. The survey consisted of 13 questions, and it was utilized to gain insight into the participants' leadership development and their personal and educational backgrounds.

All research participants who volunteered and submitted the demographic survey were invited to participate in the interviews. Creswell (2005) recommended for qualitative researchers to record participants' responses; therefore, all interviews were recorded. The interviews were standardized, open-ended questions. During the data collection process, the six research participants were asked to sign a consent form that revealed the data collection and analysis process. The chosen method of conducting interviews was through face-to-face meetings; however, some interviews were conducted via telephone. Situations did arise that required rescheduling interviews due to unanticipated situations.

The individual 45-60 minute interviews were recorded and transcribed. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data by open-coding. She looked for "distinct themes, and categorize them in order to explore theoretical possibilities the data carried" (O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003, p. 45). After each interview session, field notes were reviewed and a summary of the interview was documented in writing. In addition, the audiotapes from each interview were transcribed.

The qualitative data collected was examined to identify codes, patterns, and themes. To ensure the participants' responses were accurate, member checking was

employed. The researcher forwarded the transcripts to the interview participants and asked them to confirm the accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2005). The researcher then used the data and examples from each participant's descriptions to create analytical categories, patterns, and emerging themes (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002). Seven major themes were identified and linked to the critical race theory and Latino critical race theory frameworks.

Setting, Population, and Sample

The setting for the study is the community college system in California - specifically, the office of administration. Six individuals participated in semi-structured interviews, which lasted between 45-60 minutes. The interviews took place in a mutually agreed upon public location. The sample population was purposeful in order to directly study how microaggressions in a work environment influence the leadership development of Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. In accordance with Creswell's (2007) suggestion, the research participants were selected based on their ethnicity and professional experience. All research participants were women of Latina decent and first generation college graduates and with a minimum of two years of professional experience as a CCC administrator.

The sample population was recruited from the CCC system that currently has 113 college campuses and 72 districts. The California Community Chancellor's Office reported 2,052 educational administrators in the CCC system. Out of the 2,052 educational administrators, 199 educational administrators are Latina women. The

sample of the population was purposeful since the study's primary aim was to study Latina women in the California community colleges system.

The researcher solicited research participants from an electronic invitation solicitation questionnaire. The researcher administered the solicitation questionnaire via email to the targeted research participants. The questionnaire was also electronically posted on the Latina Community College Network list server. In addition, the researcher accessed California community college websites and connected with colleagues in the California Community Colleges system to obtain the contact information for potential research participants.

The research participants self-identified as volunteers; accordingly, the researcher selected six participants from the volunteer sample that responded to the interview request. In qualitative research designs, sample sizes are small in order for researchers to gain information from specific targeted populations (Bernard & Bernard, 2012; Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). A total of six Latina California community college administrators provided in-depth data during the data collection process.

<div align="center">

Participants

</div>

As previously noted, the six participants are a purposeful sample. All of the research participants are Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. Five of the research participants currently hold an administrative position in a California Community Colleges setting; one research participant is working in a California Community Colleges district. Table 4 represents a brief individual profile for

each research participant. This sample was reflective of the state's regional demographics (Southern, Central, and Northern California).

Research Questions

The researcher examined the element of discrimination, i.e., overt and covert microaggressions, in the study participants' work environment and assessed the strategies of resilience that have helped Latina administrators succeed in their leadership positions. Using CRT and LatCrit, Latina administrators' stories were collected and analyzed to answer the following questions, which guided the study:

Research Question 1

How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina

California Community Colleges system administrators?

Research Question 2

How do microaggressions impact the promotion of Latina CCC administrators?

Research Question 3

What factors contribute to the resiliency and retention of Latina CCC

administrators?

Creswell (2009) recommended for phenomenological research questions to be descriptive and for the researcher to derive significance from the participants' experiences. Table 2 presents the research questions and the more conversation-friendly interview questions that were asked.

Table 2

Research Questions and Interview Questions

	Research Questions	Interview Questions
1	How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina California Community Colleges system administrators?	- Have you ever felt ignored or overlooked by colleagues during a discussion in a meeting? How did this make you feel? How did you deal with these feelings? - Have you ever felt that your leadership skills were questioned due to your race or gender? - When you became an administrator/educational leader, what observations or experience did you have with discrimination and microaggressions in the work environment? What trials did you have to overcome, and how did this experience affect you? - How have microaggressions impacted your leadership development as a Latina CCC administrator/ educational leader? What feelings did you internalize after experiencing a microaggression? - What do you believe are the reasons that so few Latinas advance to leadership positions in the community college system? - What has been your most significant challenge for you as an educational leader?
2	How do microaggressions impact the promotion of Latina CCC administrators?	- What career pathways in the community college system would you recommend for Latina women? - Have you ever felt that your race or gender has limited your upward mobility in administration? - What leadership training, educational, and/or networking opportunities do you see as helpful tools for future Latina administrators? - What do you think should be done systemically so more Latinas can attain educational administrative positions in the California Community Colleges system?

| 3 | What factors contribute to the resiliency and retention of Latina CCC administrators? | Can you describe your career and leadership path that steered you into higher education? What influenced you to become an administrator/educational leader in a community? How have microaggressions impacted your leadership
development as a Latina CCC administrator/ educational leader? What feelings did you internalize after encountering a microaggression?
From your perspective, what skills have helped you maneuver microaggressions as an administrator/educational
leader?
What do you believe are the reasons that so few Latinas
advance to leadership positions in the community college system?
What factors contributed to the accomplishment of your career?
    What kept you motivated toward your goal? |

Trustworthiness

Credibility is defined as the researcher's ability to accept the details of the study and account for discrepancies that may arise within the study (Guba, 1981). Hence, this study involved thorough descriptions to catalogue each step of the research process. The researcher also conducted member checking with participants to confirm the transcription of the data obtained (Creswell, 2007). According to Guba (1981), member checking is "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314).

The dependability of the data was demonstrated by the stability of the data. Williams, and Morrow (2009) stated that the trustworthiness of a study can be established through the display of original data; it is considered a trustworthy way to give a 'voice' to the participants. This technique is illustrated in Chapter 4, and participant responses were directly cited in support of the themes presented.

To confirm the use of unbiased data in this study, a peer review process was incorporated for the findings. An individual who was not an expert in the study's content reviewed the study, as recommended by Creswell (2007). To ensure the study participants' identities were protected, the researcher confirmed that the peer reviewer data did not review any data with personal information and the data reviewed was not identified. Participants' identities were protected at all times.

Data Collection and Instrument

The data collection process began with an International Review Board application submission at California State University, Sacramento. To ensure the research protocols were followed, a complete application was submitted, which included the electronic email invitation to solicit research participants (see Appendix A), the consent form (see Appendix B), and the interview questions (see Appendix C). When the IRB application was approved (Appendix D), the researcher solicited volunteers via an electronic invitation that was posted in the California Community Colleges Latina list server.

In addition, the researcher accessed California Community College websites and connected with colleagues in the California Community Colleges system to find the contact information of potential research participants. Latina administrators were asked to self-identify as volunteers for the study. The research participants completed a pre-interview questionnaire in order for the researcher to gain some sociodemographic background information about the participants. Once the six research participants were identified, the researcher contacted the participants by phone or email to schedule a 60-

minute semi-structured face-to-face or telephone interview to listen to the participants

share their stories and thus to collect data.

The in person interviews were scheduled at a mutually agreed upon public

location. The participants were asked to sign a study participation consent form that

allowed the researcher to record the 45-60 minute interview. The interviews were guided

by a series of open-ended questions that were related to the study. The researcher

designed the questions, and the interview questions were piloted prior to the interview

process. For instrument design validation, a member-check-in was utilized to assist in the

review of the open-ended interview questionnaire.

The researcher conducted pilot testing of the interview protocol to certify the

interview questions captured the research participants' lived experiences with

microaggressions. During the pilot testing, the researcher administered research questions

to Latina educational administrators who did not participate in the study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process entailed the researcher's review of the narrative data

collected, and this process helped shape the development of the research findings. The

qualitative analysis process was a complex analytical approach that required the

researcher to collect and explore the emerging data (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative data

analysis of the narrative data of Latina CCC administrators was conducted (DeCuir &

Dixson, 2004). The storytelling supported the CRT and LatCrit framework by addressing

issues of race and assessing practices and policies that hinder the promotion or retention

of Latina CCC administrators.

The researcher followed Creswell's qualitative analysis processes to fully analyze the data (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). The researcher gave study participants the opportunity to validate data by reviewing interview transcripts. The researcher read through the data and used the transcripts to study the participants' narrative and descriptions. The second stage of the analysis process involved the researcher's repeated review of the data to ensure the significance of the data were interpretive. This guided the research data interpretation process and allowed the researcher to divide the text into segments of information and group-shared experiences. The researcher then label segments of information with codes and reduced the overlap and redundancy of codes. The final stage consisted of collapsing the codes into themes.

From the narrative data analyzed, seven themes emerged that were used to answer the research questions of the study. The themes that were discovered helped the researcher to recognize the lived experiences of Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system.

Protection of Participants

All study participants completed an informed consent form that included a detailed description of the study (Appendix B). Research participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used and understood their privacy would be protected. All the data collected were de-identified, and participants' identities were kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. During the data collection and analysis process, the participants' interview recordings and transcripts were kept in a locked cabinet and a password-protected computer. Identifiable information was securely locked in a safe location that

was only accessible to the researcher. Participants had full access to their transcripts and had the opportunity to clarify any responses or omit data from the study. Upon request, participants were able to receive a copy of the study prior to its completion and after its completion to ensure accuracy. After the completion of this study, all recordings, transcripts, and documents related to the identity of the subjects will be destroyed in order to protect each participant's identity.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role was to have professional interactions with the six participants for the purpose of data collection. To avoid a conflict of interest, the researcher did not seek any participants that she had previous professional relationship with, including those who had been in a supervisor or supervisee position. The researcher contacted the research participants solely for the purpose of the study. Only volunteer participants were contacted to schedule interview appointments, and interviews were held in a mutually agreed upon location.

The researcher served as the primary instrument to collect and analyze data. The researcher in this study conducted research using a holistic interaction process (Berg, Lune, & Lune, 2004). As such, the researcher used her counseling training to provide a safe and welcoming environment to ensure a trustworthy environment to appropriately collect data.

The researcher is a Latina educator with over thirteen years of experience in higher education; five of those years have been as an administrator in a California community college. Therefore, the researcher made a conscious effort to remain objective

to prevent personal bias from affecting the collection and analysis of the data. To ensure objectivity, the researcher took a proactive approach by keeping a journal that detailed the descriptions of what she observed.

Summary

This chapter provided a thorough overview of the research methodology that was applied in the study. The study's phenomenological approach gave the researcher the opportunity to fully investigate the research participants' experiences. In brief, this qualitative study incorporated the study participants' narrative data that was collected from Latina CCC administrators. Audiotapes were used to increase the accuracy of the transcriptions. The phenomenological process allowed the researcher to identified themes and patterns in participants' stories.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter introduces the stories of six research participants: all first-generation

college graduates Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. It

provides the profile of each administrator interviewed, with a description of their

educational and professional backgrounds. This chapter also presents an analysis of the

findings that demonstrates how microaggressions in a work environment influence the

leadership development of Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges

system.

The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the experience of Latina

administrators in leadership roles. The study sheds light on the strategies Latina

administrators have used that helped them succeed in their leadership positions. The

individual stories that relate the experience of microaggressions in the work environment

also facilitated a better understanding of their "emotional experience" as Latina

administrators (Merriam, 2009, p. 26).

Research Design

The chosen design for this study was qualitative methodology for its' capacity to

highlight the voices and experiences of six underrepresented individuals; in this case,

Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. The qualitative

research design for this study captured the women's stories and descriptions of racial

microaggressions in their work environment. This study used a phenomenological

approach because it focuses on "how people describe things and experience them through their senses" (Patton, 2002, p. 105). The phenomenological study approach helped describe the meaning behind research participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

A purposeful sample of six research participants was selected for the study. These participants were carefully chosen based on their race and professional experience as administrators in the California Community Colleges system. The participants were recruited through email distribution via professional organizations. The email request solicited research volunteers and included a demographic survey that consisted of 13 questions. The survey was utilized to develop a profile of each research participant as well as gaining an understanding of the participants' leadership development, and their personal and educational backgrounds.

Thirteen research participants volunteered and submitted the demographic survey were invited to participate in interviews. Seven of the volunteers did not respond to the interview request. Consequently, only the volunteers who responded were scheduled for interviews that fit their schedule. Creswell (2005) recommended that qualitative researchers record the participants' responses; therefore, all interviews were recorded. After each interview session, field notes were reviewed and a summary of the interview was documented in writing. The audiotapes from each interview were transcribed.

Given the in-depth examination of the Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system, a phenomenological approach was appropriate in facilitating the knowledge to be gained regarding this phenomenon. The interview

questions explored the participants' lived experiences with microaggressions, their perceptions of outside influences on their own career advancement, and demonstrated resilience in their work environment.

The qualitative data collected was coded according to identified patterns and themes. To ensure accuracy of the participants' transcribed responses, member checking was employed. This procedure entailed forwarding of the transcripts to the interview participants and requesting that they review and confirm the accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2005). The researcher then used the data and examples from each participant's descriptions to create analytical categories, patterns and emerging themes (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002). Seven major themes were identified and correlated from the Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory frameworks.

Theoretical Framework for Themes

This study finding specifically contributed to Critical Race Theory (CRT) by providing narrative that acknowledges an underrepresented group conquered racial oppression in a work environment. Latina administrators share their reality of racism, therefore the frameworks to analyze the impacts of microaggressions in the work environment were linked to CRT and Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit). CRT provided a lens by which to review the California community college system with a focus on racial structure and inequalities (Delgado, 2001).

LatCrit theory provided a framework by which to examine the numerous dimensions of subordination and oppression that Latinos/as face in higher education institutions such as gender, class, number of generations in the United States, English

language acquisition, and immigration status (Alemán Jr, 2009). The analysis focused on

how microaggressions impact the leadership development and career advancement of

Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. Table 3 and Table 4

reveal the results of the research embedded under the theoretical frameworks.

Table 3

Critical Race Theory: Beliefs and Descriptions

Findings	Descriptor
Storytelling	Latina women shared their experiences with microaggressions. Research participants describe: • Working in an unwelcoming work environment • Feelings of being invisible by being overlooked or ignored • Feeling of working within institutional barriers • Feelings of inadequacy

Table 4

Latino Critical Theory Descriptions

Findings	Descriptor
Race/Gender	Latina women were perceived as unqualified administrators.
	Research participants shared their experiences of being socially isolated and feeling oppressed due to race or gender.
	Research participants were categorized as a "token" in their work environment, which added pressure for work performance, due to increased visibility in this leadership role.
	Research participants were constantly second-guessed, questioned, scrutinized, and viewed as inferior.
Language	A research participant was perceived as not speaking "American or English."

Emerging Themes

From the narrative data collected, seven themes emerged that were used to answer the research questions of the study. The themes that emerged helped researchers to recognize the lived experiences of Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. The seven emergent themes described in the chapter are listed in Table 5.

Table 5
Themes Descriptions

Category of Findings	Description
Negative Colleague Interactions	Research participants described negative microaggressive interactions with colleagues.
Psychological and Physical Stress	Research participants described the psychological and physical stress they experience with microaggression.
Feelings of Inadequacy	Research participants described feelings of being underestimated, overlooked or isolated by their colleagues.
Positive Leadership Development due to Microaggression	Research participants described self-empowerment and leadership growth in spite of negative experiences.
Institutional Barriers	Research participants described lack of institutional support for career advancement.
Mentorship	Research participants describe how mentors helped them advance their careers by lessening the negative effects of microaggressions.
Building Support	Research participants recognized that building a coalition of support contributed to their resiliency.

Student Commitment	Research participants attributed their resilience to their commitment and mission to their students.

Profiles of the Research Participants

To protect the identities of the research participants, their names and affiliated institutions have been kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The participants are referred to as Administrator One through Administrator Six. Any information that the researcher felt could potentially identify the participants has been omitted. Consequently, research participants' personal and educational backgrounds were used to identify each participant's individual ethos. All of the research participants are Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. Five of the research participants currently hold an administrative position in a California Community Colleges setting; one research participant is working in a California Community Colleges district. Table 6 represents a brief individual profile for each research participant.

All individuals participating in this study did so voluntarily. No financial compensation was provided. The participants were geographically diverse across a variety of areas throughout the state of California. Five of the six participants were born in the United States; one was born in Mexico. All research participants were first-generation college graduates. A majority of the data was collected in the participants' offices; however, two interviews were conducted via phone. Table 7 visually associates the lived themes and experiences of each participant.

Table 6
Participant Demographics

Participant	Born in the U.S.	First-generation college graduate	Number of years working in Higher Education	Number of years working CCC administration
Administrator 1	Yes	Yes	23	13
Administrator 2	Yes	Yes	25	10
Administrator 3	Yes	Yes	14	12
Administrator 4	Yes	Yes	25	25
Administrator 5	No	Yes	8	3
Administrator 6	Yes	Yes	9	2

Participant Demographics (Continued)

Participant	Type of setting when transitioned into administration	Highest degree obtained	Administrative position held
Administrator 1	City or urban community	Doctorate	Vice President of Student Services
Administrator 2	Suburban community	Master	Dean of Student Services
Administrator 3	Rural community	Master	Director of a campus-wide Initiative
Administrator 4	Suburban community	Doctorate	District Student Services Executive Administrator
Administrator 5	Rural community	Doctorate	Director of a campus-wide Initiative
Administrator 6	City or urban community	Master	Director of a campus-wide Initiative

Table 7
Themes by Participants

	Negative Colleague Interactions	Psychological and Physical Stress	Positive Leadership Development	Institutional Barriers
Administrator 1	X		X	X
Administrator 2	X	X	X	X
Administrator 3	X	X	X	X
Administrator 4			X	
Administrator 5	X	X	X	X
Administrator 6	X	X		X

Themes by Participants (Continued)

	Mentorship	Student Commitment	Felt ignored or overlooked by colleagues (invisibility)	Felt race or gender limited upward mobility
Administrator 1	X	X	X	X
Administrator 2	X	X	X	X
Administrator 3	X	X	X	X
Administrator 4	X		X	
Administrator 5	X	X	X	X
Administrator 6	X	X	X	X

"Administrator 1"

Administrator 1 has over 23 years of professional experience in higher education; 13 of those years have been in the California Community Colleges system. She is a vice president of student services in an urban California community college. She reports directly to the president of the college and is responsible for overseeing eight major departments within the campus at large.

Administrator 1 was born and raised in a low-income, single-parent household in Southern California. Her childhood upbringing consisted of living in poverty, exposure to domestic violence, and living with an addicted father who was in and out of jail. Her childhood experience motivated her to strive for success in education for a better life. Administrator 1 is the oldest of four girls, and was the first in her family to go to college. She is not married, but has many family responsibilities.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, and master of science degree in counseling from a large urban four-year public institution. Her doctorate degree is in philosophy in education, which she earned from a small private institution.

"Administrator 2"

Administrator 2 has over 25 years of experience in higher education. She has worked in various colleges over the course of her career, and served 10 years as a dean of student services. She currently serves as interim dean of student services in a large California community college in Southern California. She reports directly to the vice president of student services and has experience leading as many as 13 major departments within her division.

Administrator 2 was born and raised in a single-parent household in a low-income community in Southern California. She was raised in poverty and this shaped her decision to go to college. She has three brothers and is the only child in her household who earned a college degree.

During her undergraduate college experience at a four-year public university, she learned how to become an activist for social justice. This led her to earn her bachelors of arts degree in Chicano studies. She was "fortunate" to find mentors during her undergraduate education and received guidance to apply to an out-of-state school where she earned her master's degree.

"Administrator 3"

Administrator 3 has over 14 years of experience working in higher education. Twelve of those years have been spent with the California Community Colleges system. She currently serves as a director of a campus-wide initiative. She previously served as a director of a federal categorical program in a small rural Northern California community college.

Administrator 3 was born in Southern California after her parents and two siblings migrated to the U.S. from Mexico in the late 1960s. She was raised in a two-parent household, and is the youngest of four children. Her early childhood was spent in Southern California where both her parents worked long hours in blue-collar jobs.

As a child, Administrator 3 and her family relocated to a small rural community in Northern California. She vividly remembers her family moving to a farmhouse in a community that was not supportive of diversity. Her father worked as a laborer in

agriculture and her mother became a homemaker. Administrator 3 recalls this move as one of her first experiences in which she dealt with discrimination. However, these experiences helped shaped her professional career, encouraging her to empower migrant youth and their families to learn about higher education opportunities. She became the second in her family to graduate from college; she earned a bachelor of arts degree from a large public university. She earned her master of arts degree in counseling from a mid-sized public university in Northern California. She transitioned into administration upon the encouragement of a mentor.

 "Administrator 4"

Administrator 4 is a student services executive administrator in a large community college district. For the past 10 years, Administrator 4 has been responsible for making district-wide recommendations to implement state initiatives or district policies. In addition, she has over 15 years of experience working in various California Community Colleges. She has also served in various leadership roles at the regional and state levels for many organizations. She is an active leader in her community and in nonprofit organizations that help empower youth to obtain a college education.

Administrator 4 was born to a 15-year-old unwed mother. She spent her childhood on the East Coast and moved frequently. As the eldest of four children, she was the first in her family to attend college. She earned her bachelor of arts degree from a large university and a master's degree in counseling from a large public college in Southern California. She earned her doctorate in education leadership from a large research institution.

"Administrator 5"

Administrator 5 has over eight years' experience working in higher education; three of those years as an administrator in several central and northern California community colleges. For the past six months, she has served as a director for a major state initiative.

Born in Mexico City, Administrator 5 migrated to the United States when she was nine years old. Her parents decided to relocate to the United States in order to offer their four children a life of opportunity. Unfortunately, her parents separated, and her mother raised the four children in Central California as a single parent.

Administrator 5 earned a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from a small rural four-year college. She earned her master of science degree in counseling and a doctorate in educational leadership from a large urban public university. She is actively involved in various community service projects and strongly believes in empowering others by giving back to the community.

"Administrator 6"

Administrator 6 has nine years of professional experience in higher education; two of those years in the California Community Colleges system. She currently serves as a project manager for a student success initiative in Southern California. She reports directly to the dean of student services and supervises a staff of 16 individuals. Administrator 6 was born and raised in a single-parent household in Southern California. Administrator 6 began her college education at a local four-year public university, but was academically dismissed after her first year of attendance. Her academic dismissal

discouraged her from continuing her education, so she focused her energy on her relationship and became a parent at 19 years old. Her relationship failed, and she became involved in a custody battle which motivated her to restart her education. She attended a California community college and transferred to a large urban public university where she earned her bachelor's degree. She was the first person in her family to earn a college degree. She continued on to earn a master of science degree in higher education administration and is currently finishing her course work for her doctorate in education from a large urban university.

Discussion of Themes

In the next section, the research participants' lived experiences are displayed to answer the study's research questions:

Research Question 1

How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina

California Community Colleges) system administrators?

Research Question 2

How do microaggressions impact the promotion of Latina CCC administrators?

Research Question 3

What factors contribute to the resiliency and retention of Latina CCC

administrators?

Research Question 1

The first question was: How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina CCC administrators?

Negative Colleague Interactions

In this theme, participants in this study reflected on their experience with racial microaggressions. An important finding in this study was that all the participants acknowledge that they had experience with microaggressions in their work environment. However, it is significant to note that two of the research participants did not identify negative colleague interaction.

Research participants describe feelings of discomfort when they had negative encounters with colleagues. Administrator 3 noted that she was always "conscious of interactions with colleagues and also aware of perception of peers." Consequently, many of the research participants expressed that they were used to frequent experiences with microaggressions. Administrator 2 casually described this when she stated, "microaggressions were a regular event".

Additionally, Administrator 3 explained how peers' assumptions have created a negative work environment for her at times, and have also created a culture of unsupported colleagues. Her statements suggest that her colleagues' assumptions of her sometimes undermine her hard work. She stated, "I noticed that people automatically thought that I was related to the president since he was also Latino; that I was unqualified or unfit to have this position; that I didn't have the appropriate educational background." This statement aligns with previous research that states that microaggressions in academia create barriers for women (Sandler & Hall, 1986). In general, it was found that research participants experienced harmful encounters with colleagues.

It is essential to note the marked difference in responses from two participants who had been in administration in the CCC system for less than three years from the research participants who have over 15 years of experience. The two research participants who have less administrative tenure were taken aback that they had experiences with microaggressions and negative interactions with colleagues due to their race. When they were sharing their stories, there was anger and sadness in their voices. Conversely, the more experienced research participants seemed to accept that microaggressions in leadership roles were the "norm."

Several research participants shared examples of constant occurrences of microaggressions throughout their career. Administrator 3 exhibited her resentment through her observations that illustrate a sense of injustice:

> To be honest, there have been times I (and I don't like this or using this word) hated white people. I felt and saw their privileges; the fact that they walk into a room without a worry, that no one questioned their authority or capabilities, that they would truly run the college into the ground and people would find excuses for them.

This participant introduced the concept of white privilege to the study. She shared a challenging observation that reflected the discrimination she faced by the prevailing group. The emotional impact she displayed spoke to feelings of discrimination. She revealed her outlook of inferiority and institutional bias from her personal experience.

These experiences also created feelings of alienation and isolation. Administrator 1 shared her experience with a negative encounter from a Latina colleague:

"On my first day, a Latina staff member told me I got the job because I'm fair skinned. She also told me I was the only Latino administrator, period." Administrator 1 was instantly categorized as a "token" in her work environment, which added pressure for her work performance due to the increased visibility in her role. By highlighting the lack of diversity in her organizational structural, her co-worker also added pressure for the research participant to "fit in."

Feelings of racism contribute to individuals separating themselves from other colleagues. One research participant shared her hurt feelings that others overlooked her professional experience and doctorate degree. Administrator 6 described how an interaction with a colleague who made an inappropriate statement left her feeling disconnected to a department. She summarized the uncomfortable experience as follows: "I was told 'you shouldn't be using other words or terms that aren't American or English at work.'" Administrator 6 explained that she was completely taken aback by this comment. She did not know how to respond, as she only speaks one language—English—so she struggled to see how someone perceived her as speaking differently. Her reaction coincides with a study that states "covert character of microaggressions individuals power to psychologically affect recipients and limit their ability to respond" (McCabe, 2009, p. 140).

Administrator 6 forced herself to have a difficult conversation with her supervisor and demanded that the entire department go through diversity training. It's important to consider the added stress that Administrator 6 must have encountered in order to garner

the strength to disclose her experience to her supervisor and request that something be done about it.

Administrator 6 also described her experience with microaggressions and how it affected her psychological and emotional state. She noted:

> This was the first space that I've been in where I was second-guessing myself. There were a variety of different things that happened, and I started to think to myself, Is it me? Is it in my head? Is it me? Is this in my head? And it was so mind-boggling to me.

She added:

> They make me look crazy, and they make me look like I'm Latina. I'm not one to come in every day with my fist raised and demanding respect. That's not me. I have other things to do. I have programs to run. Because of these microaggressions, I get put in a situation where I'm constantly the one in the room that has to raise questions, you know?

This description illustrates the lack of institutional support Administrator 6 felt. As she was new to the California Community Colleges system, she did not have a support network with whom to discuss her awareness of microaggressions. She also conveyed that she was still looking for that support.

A similar viewpoint was described in a slightly different way by another research participant. Administrator 2 expressed her feelings by stating:

> In my experience the microaggressions have exacerbated some of the feelings of inadequacy that already were there. I have met and was a Latina who felt that they

just weren't good enough to do "high level" works or be intelligent enough to

make it as a leader and/or administrator.

Microaggressions in the workplace resulted in a variety of experiences for the

participants in this study. Their data provided examples in which they felt unwelcome

and underestimated. In addition, research participants also showed how they internalized

feelings that ultimately impacted their wellbeing. It was evident that some research

participants were hurt by their peers' and subordinates' lack of respect.

Three of the research participants hold doctorate degrees, two achieved the

master's degree level, and one participant is in the process of completing her doctorate

degree. In spite of their educational attainment of success and professional work, peers

still question their professional abilities.

Psychological and Physical Stress

This theme contributes to the psychological research of Latina women who have

experienced stress due to their underrepresentation in their work environment.

Participants in this study indicated that racial microaggressions in the context of their

professional experience caused them to feel invalidated and uncertain in their position.

As a result, several research participants described stress, feelings of inadequacy, and

self-doubt. Some participants also noted that people have low expectations of them and

were surprised when their work surpassed their expectations.

Research has shown that individuals who experience microaggressions become

physically stressed due to frequent encounters of racism, which cause emotional distress

(Carter, 2007). In this study, stress is defined as "an emotional, physical and behavioral

response to an unwanted event" (Carter, 2007, p.25). Some participants in this study indicated that microaggressions created feelings of low self-confidence in their position of leadership. These findings are supported by previous research that indicates "that racial microaggressions negatively predict a lower self-esteem, and that microaggressions that occur in educational and workplace environments are particularly harmful to self-esteem" (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff & Strike, 2014, p.2). The following excerpts illustrate the participants' emotional, physical and behavioral responses to microaggressions.

Administrator 3 described her experience of being perceived as underqualified by her peers. She stated:

> I was perceived as unqualified or unfit to have this position; that I didn't have the appropriate educational background; that I didn't work my way up from the bottom, though I had been employed at the college for almost 10 years.

Her statement reflects that the constant questioning of her credentials translated into a sense of lack of trust and confidence from colleagues. She internalized higher expectations to prove herself, which created physical stress.

Administrator 3 also shared her emotional and psychological disappointment that her colleagues ignored her previous professional experience and her master's degree. This feeling aligns with Franklin, Boyd-Franklin and Kelly (2006) research that found that Latino college students targeted by microaggressions expressed feelings of invisibility. Similarly, Administrator 3 had experiences with microaggressions that created feelings of invisibility.

Administrator 3 reported having added stress due to microaggressions in her work environment:

> I feel that employees (faculty mainly) dismissed my abilities because of my race; they think I only got this position because of my race; therefore, it is okay to question everything that I present.

The stress of constantly being questioned affected her emotional wellbeing and personal development. She added:

> Individuals assume I was planning with the president to make the college Latino and I didn't know anything about analyzing data. This happened with faculty, classified and at one point during an accreditation visit, a visiting team member. I cried, thought about quitting, I hated everyone.

Being constantly second-guessed, questioned, scrutinized, and viewed as inferior can take a significant toll on employees (Sue, 2010). This was illustrated by Administrator 3 when she pointed out that being underestimated and targeted by her colleagues caused her emotional distress. The pressure of constantly being questioned impacted her personal development. Her statement described anger and feelings of being defeated. Echoing this sentiment, Administrator 6 stated:

> I did a lot of crying. And I'm not a crier. When I talk about my personal life, yeah, I get emotional, but when it comes to work, I'm a work horse. I know that I have to be better and I have to work harder for people to respect me. And so I take that very seriously. My first year, I did a lot of crying.

Being exposed to racial microaggressions led research participants to believe they had to prove themselves to others. In turn, that caused some of participants to feel isolated, disconnected, distrustful, unsupported, misunderstood and guarded from their co-workers. Overall, most research participants at one time or another felt a sense of inadequacy and isolation which resulted in self-doubt.

The research participants' comments reinforce the ensuing physical stress due to microaggressions. In addition, it underscores the propensity of participants to experience internalized pressure of having to prove themselves. Instead of recognizing that the research participants had entered a new level in their career as administrators, they perceived their challenges as weakness.

A significant subtheme within this microaggressions research was that all research participants experienced being ignored or overlooked by colleagues during a discussion in a meeting. Specifically, the research participants recognized that their minority status impacted them and that they all have experienced racial microaggressions. The following descriptions came from research participants expressing their feelings and perceptions of being overlooked by colleagues:

> What I battle against are the feelings of frustration and depression due to some of the aggressive and dismissive behaviors of others. (Administrator 1)

> This experience made me feel angry and frustrated. I would make a suggestion and it would be ignored but then others would take credit for my ideas. (Administrator 2)

It made me question my intelligence and contribution to the college. Many times I

felt as though I didn't deserve to be in the room or as if I was just the token person

of color that had to be present in order for a committee or group to be classified as

diverse. (Administrator 3)

Their reflective statements underscore the feelings of rejection. Being ignored or

overlooked generated feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt for the research participants.

Such feelings would naturally contribute to separating themselves from colleagues. In

addition, their responses indicate that their experience with microaggression isolated

them as leaders.

Positive Leadership Development due to Microaggressions

Despite the fact the research participants described negative encounters with

microaggressions, many of the women stated that these experiences helped them shape

their leadership style. In many ways, they rejected and resisted the inherent messages and

implications of microaggression (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2006).

Several participants were able to empower themselves and cope through adaptive

behavior. For example, some participants reported "positive" consequences of

experiencing racial microaggressions in making them stronger. Their personal experience

empowered them and enhanced their leadership abilities. For example, Administrator 1

noted that her personal experience with her supervisor reinforced her collaborative

approach towards leadership. She stated:

> Once I started the job I felt that the V.P. was aloof and distant. What I found out
>
> later is that he was not a leader in the sense that he worked with his deans
>
> collaboratively. He was a hands off type of administrator.

From this experience, Administrator 1 determined that her leadership style was opposite

of that of the V.P. She stated:

> I consider myself to be a collaborative and considerate person who can work with
>
> whomever I need to. I also pride myself in thinking outside of the box and feel
>
> that many administrators don't think creatively and are caught up in the divisions
>
> that have been created so power can be kept in the hands of a few. What I did to
>
> cope with my experience was to do my job and work in the best way I could with
>
> sincerity with all of the departments under my supervision.

The next description shows how Administrator 5 lived the experience of being

overlooked by a supervisor. She recalled feeling ignored and dismissed in lieu of a male

colleague that the vice president supported. She felt discriminated against by her vice

president. As a result, Administrator 5 recalled feeling disregarded and dismissed. She

explained:

> They make you feel like you're not capable to lead anything. I know who I am
>
> now. I know the skills I own. I believe in myself. I have a very passionate heart
>
> for this field of education. I just focus on that and move on.

Administrator 5 then explained how she grew from this negative encounter. She stated:

> I never want to do that to anyone, I'm a leader that is transformative. I see the
>
> strengths of people. I definitely never want to be a person that I cause or make

anyone feel bad. I always remember this from one of my mentors. He's like,

always treat people, if you're talking to one person, and make them feel like

they're the most important person in the world. To me, it's true. We need to treat

people like that. We were talking and so, as a leader, that's what you want people

to demonstrate. You value them. You value yourself. You value the people you

work with. You value your work. That's the way that I've been taught by my

mentors. It goes back to another thing that I've gotten. When you help other

people succeed, success will find you. That's just how it works. I don't look for

my own interests. I look for the interest of others because that's a way that I found

it to be rewarding, to be meaningful, and to actually make true change in people's

life.

Adding to the theme, Administrator 1 said:

These experiences helped my leadership; it fueled my participation in initiatives.

At times I felt (and was) a token member of a committee; however, with my

position, I was now a resource. So I voiced my concerns and thoughts. I was

aware to always bring students and the future of the college into discussions. I

highlighted diversity and a changing demographic in our community.

The common factors of positive leadership development trends due to microaggressions

was the notion that research participants realized that, as individuals in power, they have

to be aware of their personal values to be effective in their leadership roles. In general,

they stated that their challenges and personal experience helped them develop thick skin

and forced them to reflect on their personal values. Through their personal reflection

process, these administrators recognized that they were in a position to influence change. To do so, these participants chose to speak out, be visible, and serve as advocates for equity.

This portion of the study was focused on evaluating how microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina California Community Colleges administrators. In response to this question based on the data gathered, research participants expressed that they had frequent encounters with microaggressions, several research participants described feelings of discomfort when they had negative encounters with colleagues.

Research participants also indicated that racial microaggressions during their professional experiences caused them to feel invalidated and uncertain in their position. These feelings translated into defined physical and psychological stress, feelings of inadequacy, and self-doubt. Despite the microaggressions experienced by the research participants, most of the women stated that these experiences helped them shape their leadership style. In many ways, they rejected and resisted the inherent messages and implications of microaggression (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2006).

Research Question 2

The second question was: How do microaggressions impact the job promotion of Latina CCC administrators?

Institutional Barriers

Being exposed to microaggressions led research participants to realize that their racial status comes with different standards. Several research participants described an unspoken yet clearly conveyed double standard for Latina administrators. They perceived

higher expectations from colleagues because of their under-representation in their roles.

Therefore, most of the research participants felt they would not be considered for roles to

advance their career. As a result, many of the research participants believed that they

must change their work environment and the institutions where they work in order to

advance in their career. This finding aligns with previous research that states

microaggressions play a critical role in creating disparities in recruitment, retention, and

promotion (Sue, 2010).

In this context, the lack of institutional support received by the research

participants led them to feel unlikely to advance their careers in their current institution.

When the participants were asked to describe how microaggressions impact the job

promotion of Latina administrators, their responses brought forth different opinions. The

following examples, however, contribute to a general theme of perceived lack of

institutional support for career advancement.

Administrator 1 discussed her experience of navigating her work environment due

to microaggressions for her career advancement. She stated: "Often I have been finalist

for positions that have been given to younger males with far less experience."

Administrator 2 also stated:

> I had the talent to be a vice president in my late thirties but was overlooked due to
>
> appearing young and being unmarried, it makes people think I'm really young…
>
> After one year I asked to be placed at our satellite campus so that I could serve as
>
> the day dean. Since there are only two deans on this campus we work together
>
> closely to accomplish the tasks at hand and create a positive environment within

the limitations of the current site. In coming to this campus I felt freer to do what I consider to be important and meet the demands of the students, faculty and staff.

Administrator 5 also shared her experience of having to move to a different campus to be able to advance in her career. She stated, "I didn't feel I could make that move there. I could not make it…I felt like she [the vice president] ignored me completely, so I had to move on."

When asked how microaggressions impact the job promotion of Latina CCC administrators, Administrator 5 responded:

Oh God. It does affect us. We're still in a very predominantly white world, however things are changing…I think it goes back to that. People feel threatened that if you move up, oh no. Things are going to look different. It's challenging again, it continues to challenge status quo. Even though it's changing, the lack of diversity is still very, very prominent in our educational system. That's where again, it goes back to encouraging other people to jump into those leadership roles because the more we have, the more power to us.

Other research participants felt that the lack of support can also hinder the mobility of Latina administrators. Administrator 2 stated:

I believe that it is lack of encouragement by other Latina and Latino administrators as well as a lack of mentorship and training. It is tough if you are not encouraged to take opportunities even if you don't get it the first time. It is also lack of people who have, as their focus, the addition of more Latinas in positions of leadership. It takes a lot of work to get things changed and/or

accomplished in the community colleges due to their organizational structure.
Sometimes they can be top down so the top leadership may not be conscious and
take the leadership role of promoting Latinas to positions because they have to
appear politically correct and not offend anyone. It takes strong leadership and
commitment to be able to stand up for your ideals.

Administrator 2 pointed out that the lack of mentoring is another barrier for Latina administrators. The limited access to a support network, therefore, produces multiple disadvantages, including restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organizations and difficulty in forming alliances, which, in turn, are associated with limited mobility and "glass ceiling" effects (Glass & Cook, 2016).

Further adding to this theme, Administrator 3 responded:

In my opinion the aggressions we see taking place prohibit Latinas and other
progressive thinking people from advancing because the fight takes a lot of
energy. What I have noticed is that many faculty members I've spoken to don't
want to get involved in taking a stand and prefer to let things go. As long as they
can do their job they don't worry about others. We need forward thinking,
creative, out of the box thinkers who are willing to take risks to make things
happen. Sometimes it is the status quo thinkers who get the jobs. What is safe and
known is what is chosen. We need to shake things up sometimes and challenge
the traditionalism in higher education.

It's important to note that one administrator had contrasting beliefs to other research participants. Administrator 4 did not believe microaggressions impact the job

promotion of Latina California Community Colleges administrators. However, she did make the following recommendations for career advancement:

> I understand to be an administrator you have to have had certain skills. With this said then I would promote a Latina moving around and taking jobs that require leadership, supervision, community college leadership. I would also highly recommend finding a mentor(s) who you can work with to walk you through the levels of what an administrator does and what's expected. Take risks and move into other areas you may not be comfortable with...get the experience to work at different levels and with different people. Get involved in college wide committees.

Administrator 4 noted that it is important for future administrators to take risks and consider moving in order to advance their career.

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Mentorship

</div>

Another theme that became apparent from the interviews was that mentors help the participants advance their careers by lessening the negative effects of microaggressions. Research participants suggested that having the psychological support of mentors helped their self-confidence and gave them courage to advance in their career. Participants also noted that mentors provided motivation and emotional support.

According to participants, having the support of a mentor helped them to not internalize the negative messages of racial or gender microaggressions. Most participants also stated that their mentors encourage them and help them stay in their administrator roles, providing advice, resources and networking opportunities. This finding aligns with

previous research that shows' mentoring has been linked to career advancement, increased compensation and greater career satisfaction (Allen, French & Poteet, 2016).

Administrator 2 attributed her mentor's support to her career transition into administration, stating:

> After some 19 years I applied to administration and got the job as Dean of Academic Affairs. My primary influence in becoming an administrator (not initially my goal at all) was due to my relationships with Latina leaders at the college and our long collaborations on many issues on campus and off.

Upon reflection, Administrator 1 admitted that becoming an administrator was not her initial goal. Her mentor guided and encouraged her to apply to something she had never considered. Her mentor facilitated a professional network for her and created a professional opportunity for her.

A similar perspective was shared by Administrator 3, who discussed her mentor's encouragement for her career advancement:

> …it was my college president that encouraged me and supported me to apply for the position that I hold today. If it wasn't for his mentorship, I don't think I would hold this position today. He has been the only high ranking Latino administrator we have had in the college since its inception in 1973. We have had deans but no VP or president that has truly encouraged more diversity in administrative positions.

Administrator 4 also shared that her mentor's encouragements steered her into administration in the California Community Colleges system. She recalled:

I worked part time at a local community college in the evenings as an adjunct

counselor, and then landed a position as a dean at an outreach center, which later

transitioned to full college status. I then held several other administrative

assignments before being selected to my current role as an executive

administrator… I was encouraged by the president of the second college I applied

to take on the coordinator assignment, and thus began my journey in community

college leadership.

The positive mentoring experiences shared by Administrators 1, 2 and 4 suggest

that executive leaders have substantial influence to motivate administrators to advance

their careers. Adding to this theme, Administrator 3 validated the need for "higher-up"

administrator support, stating:

In order to truly deal with microaggressions at an institutional level, I feel that

you need to quall those yourself with the support of a higher-up administrator;

who supports people of color in leadership positions.

She felt that high-level executive mentors also helped her adapt to her institutional

culture. Administrator 3 shared that her mentor offered some needed validation,

explaining:

It was the president of the college who offered me the most validation and

support. If it wasn't for his support at my college, I don't think I would have been

able to continue in this position. Because of his mentorship and support, I am now

the 'go to' person for data, data analysis, institutional processes, evaluations,

assessments, grants. It has been a turnaround but now I get that I just tell people

what to do. I have gone out of my way to work in collaboration and to validate

people's work.

From her previous statements, it is clear that Administrator 3 faced many encounters of

microaggressions. Her administrative ability and qualifications were quashed by others.

Yet, her statement demonstrated that she persevered through those challenges and

credited her mentor's support for her retention in administration. Her mentor's

encouragement bolstered Administrator 3's self-confidence which, in turn, helped her

overcome negative encounters of microaggressions in her work environment.

Overall, the responses and examples cited suggest that both psychosocial support

and career development support are important for the research participants' overall

development. Previous research on this subject reveals similar findings. Kram and

Isabella (1985) biographical interview study of 25 relationships pairs demonstrated that

mentoring relationship in early or middle career stages "support both career advancement

and personal growth" (p. 110).

This portion of the study was focused on evaluating how microaggressions impact

the job promotion of Latina CCC administrators. Based on the data gathered participants

felt that being exposed to microaggressions led them to realize that the lack of

institutional support can hinder their career mobility. As a result, many of the research

participants believe that they must change their work environment and the institutions

where they work in order to advance in their career.

Overall, the participants' responses also suggest that mentors provide the self-

confidence needed to overcome negative encounters of microaggressions in the work

environment. Mentorship was found to be a key factor that mitigates negative effects of microaggressions on career advancement.

Research Question # 3

The third research question was: What factors contribute to the resiliency and therefore retention of Latina CCC administrators?

Building Support

In order to create pathways to success for Latina administrators, it is important to understand contributing factors to resilience in the work environment. Several of the participants said that they build their resilience by creating supportive coalitions. Administrators shared their stories of how their supportive team helped them recover in difficult times.

Administrator 1 stated how her experience with microaggressions made her resilient. She explained: "I became stronger, wiser, more organized and got others involved." She assembled a support network in her work environment and personal life. Her support group, along with her faith, family and perseverance, kept her motivated. Administrator 4 commented that her children kept her motivated in her career. She specified: "My hope is to mirror that anything is achievable with the right preparation, initiative and effort." Her statement is reflective of her status as a role model for her children, who gave her the motivation to persevere in her career.

Administrator 2 contributed to the theme by describing her most significant challenge as an educational leader:

My most significant challenge has been that of working with people who don't

have the same perspective, which is okay, but not willing to dialogue about

things. They make things so difficult to achieve and become barriers to getting

something done. They get stuck in the "this is the way we do things" so there's

nothing to talk about. I am a firm believer that being open minded and sincere in

your intentions is very important, especially in this world where communication is

so important and we have to avoid jumping to conclusions so quickly. I have a

certificate in mediation and enjoy working on trying to solve problems in a way

that respects others' opinions but does not allow them to bully their way to a

conclusion.

She also described her learned experience of creating a network of support:

Having a strong support network among Latinas on the campus is essential to

survival. Consistent dialogue with others who are like-minded helps to stabilize a

sometimes chaotic and toxic environment. Taking time off work to regroup is

important. Having social gatherings and sharing special occasions is another

important factor. This requires leadership and effort to make this all happen. Who

will do this on campuses? Who will take this role to make it happen? A leader

cannot work alone. She must be supported by others and when there are crisis

situations there must be people who are there to support and not bash.

Administrator 2 also offered this advice:

Don't let words get to you...consider the source...consider your own self-

worth...where you came from and why you are in the position you chose to be in.

Stay connected! Maintaining a positive attitude and humility kept me motivated. I love working with people and seeing success. I am a true believer that when you treat people positively you will get positive energy back as well. We must all survive in this world but surviving together is something that we need to work towards. Everyone wants to be recognized and why not? Having good experiences with others has been a super motivating factor for me.

The statement by Administrator 2 statement aligns with resilience research that encourages discussion with groups of similar backgrounds to enable individuals to speak about common experiences and provide social support for one another.

Administrator 3 agreed that it was in her best interest to form a strong alliance for additional support. Her statement described her learning process:

I highlighted diversity and a changing demographic in our community. My president had a huge part in this as well, as he voiced the same concerns. Because of this, I felt compelled and was put at ease in voicing my beliefs and I discovered that it was only a minority who wanted things the way they have always been. I found those with similar thoughts and concerns, and they were white, brown, and black. This gave me strength. But, it needed to come from a strong leader and I felt I have that with my president.

The research participants found supportive colleagues who contribute to their resilience. They shared lessons they learned that helped them to get inspired to meet their personal and career goals. It's important to note that the research participants in this study were all determined to succeed in their roles.

Student Commitment

A new emerging theme for this question was that several research participants attributed their resilience to their commitment and mission to their students. The research participants also declared that continuing to stay true to their values and focusing their energy to support students got them through the tough times. Administrator 2 explained that "the prospect of making a difference at the campus in the administrative field" motivated her to continue her work. Other participants shared stories that highlighted their passion for their work. Administrator 5 reflected:

Having to be a leader that can influence and impact the life of students, it's critical. That's where my passion comes from because again, education opened the doors for me to be to where I'm at. I know what it's done for me. It's transformed me. Just having that experience and having that leverage, I think it's successful. I feel that we need to continue to voice that to our community, to let them know, hey, go get your Doctorate.

Administrator 5 noted that being "passionate" about her work was beneficial to her and others. Her emotional intelligence helped her stay focus and inspired her to help students. Another research participant uses her story to stay connected to her goals and motivate her students. She explained:

I cannot tell you how many students I've met in the two years now that I've been here who just start crying when I share my experience with them. When I tell them I was a [equity program deleted] student. I was a community college student and that I was a young mom. I was on [program deleted]. When I can say to them,

I see you. I was sitting there. Where you're sitting right now, I was sitting there, and I got beat up, and I got told that I was just a dumb Mexican, and I was prodded and I was dragged through the mud, but you know what? I have my degrees now. I have a job. I have a skill set that no one can take away from me. And I can provide for my kids on my own, and that's why you have to keep coming to school. That's why you have to show up tomorrow. Because once you get done with it, nothing can take it away from you. No one can take your education. They can take all the other physical matters that you have, but they cannot take your education away from you.

This portion of the study was focused on evaluating what factors contribute to the resiliency and therefore retention of Latina CCC administrators. The majority of the research participants found that supportive colleagues contribute to their resilience. The research participants also declared that continuing to stay true to their values and focusing their energy to support students got them through the tough times.

Summary

This chapter provides an analysis of the data gathered through interviews conducted with six research participants who are Latina and work as full-time college administrators in the California Community Colleges system. The participants' profiles provided an opportunity to learn about the personal and educational backgrounds of the subjects in order to recognize each study participant's individual ethos.

Furthermore, this chapter included the general themes that emerged from the research participants' shared life experiences. These experiences provided a portrait of

the participants' lived experiences with microaggressions, and how these experiences impacted their confidence, leadership development and career advancement. The interview questions helped shape the individuals' stories that contain valuable information for the study.

The process of coding and analyzing the data gathered for this study resulted in the following emerging themes and characteristics:

1. All the research participants acknowledge that they had experienced microaggressions in their work environment.

    a. Research participants described feelings of discomfort when they had negative encounters with colleagues.

2. Research participants indicated that racial microaggressions during their professional experience caused them to feel invalidated and uncertain in their position.

    a. Research participants described stress, feelings of inadequacy, and self-doubt.

    b. All research participants experienced being ignored or overlooked by colleagues during a discussion in a meeting.

3. Several research participants were able to empower themselves an adaptive behavior to cope with microaggressions.

    a. Research participants realized that, as individuals in power, they have to be aware of their personal values to be effective in their leadership roles.

4. Lack of support can hinder the mobility of Latina administrators.

      a.   The lack of institutional support received by participants led them to feel unlikely to advance their careers in their current institution.

      b.   Research participants change work environment and institutions to advance their career.

5. Mentors help participants advance careers by lessening the negative effects of microaggressions.

      a.   Executive leaders have substantial influence to motivate administrators to advance their careers.

      b.   Mentors provided the self-confidence needed to overcome negative encounters of microaggressions in the work environment.

6. The participants in the study reported certain factors as essential to their retention and career advancement in the California Community Colleges system.

      a.   Coalition support and encouragement

      b.   A belief that they are contributing to student success

      c.   Staying committed to personal values and beliefs

7. Research participants attributed their resilience to their commitment and mission to their students.

      a.   Emotional intelligence helps participants stay focused and inspired to help students.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this qualitative study is to shed light on the experiences of six

Latina California Community Colleges (CCC) administrators and the factors that

contributed to their success. More specifically, the study examines how the elements of

overt discrimination and covert discrimination (microaggressions) in their work

environment impacted their leadership development and career advancement. It also

looks at the strategies of resilience that help Latina administrators succeed in their

leadership positions despite their underrepresentation.

All the research participants are women, Latinas, first generation college

graduates, and have a minimum of two years' experience as a California Community

Colleges administrator. Participants' identities were kept confidential through the use of

pseudonyms. A purposeful sample of participants was selected for the study. As

previously noted, these participants were carefully chosen based on their self-

identification as Latinas as well as their professional experience as administrators in the

California Community Colleges system. Creswell (2005) recommended that qualitative

researchers record the participants' responses; therefore, all data collection processes

were recorded. After each interview session, field notes were reviewed and a summary of

the interview was documented in writing. The audiotapes from each interview were

transcribed.

Given the in-depth examination of the Latina administrators in the California

Community Colleges system, a phenomenological approach was appropriate in

facilitating the knowledge to be gained regarding this phenomenon. The interview questions explored lived experiences with regard to microaggressions, perceptions of outside influences on their own career advancement, and resilience in their work environment.

These elements were studied, and contextualized in accordance with critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical race theory (LatCrit). The theoretical framework of CRT brings to the surface issues of race, racism, and sexism which are often muted (Alemán Jr, 2009; Rivera, Forquer, & Rangel, 2010). LatCrit was also used to better articulate the experiences of Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal explained that "LatCrit compliments CRT by putting the needs and perspectives of Latinos at the center of its theory and practice in a way that ask questions and produces knowledge not often discussed in CRT" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2002, p.125). Specifically, LatCrit provided the researcher the opportunity to focus on the oppression of Latina women (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Using CRT and LatCrit, Latina administrators' stories were collected and analyzed to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1

How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina

California Community Colleges system administrators?

Research Question 2

How do microaggressions impact the promotion of Latina CCC administrators?

Research Question 3

What factors contribute to the resiliency and retention of Latina CCC

administrators?

Six participants shared their lived experiences and provided qualitative data that

was examined to identify codes, patterns, and themes (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002).

Member checking was employed to ensure the participants' responses were accurate. The

researcher forwarded the transcripts to the interview participants and asked them to

confirm the accuracy of the accounts (Creswell, 2005). The themes that emerged helped

researchers to recognize the voices of Latina administrators in the California Community

Colleges system.

Interpretation of Findings

These findings add insight to the existing body of literature on underrepresented

women of color in leadership roles and their experiences with discrimination and

microaggressions in the work environment.

Results for Research Question #1

How do microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina California

Community Colleges system administrators?

According to the findings, underrepresented Latina women experience

discrimination in leadership roles. All the research participants acknowledge that they

had experienced microaggressions in their work environment. Subsequently, many of the

research participants expressed that they were used to frequent experiences with

microaggressions. As a result of the frequent encounters with microaggressions, several

research participants described feelings of discomfort when they had negative encounters with colleagues.

Research participants also indicated that racial microaggressions during their professional experiences caused them to feel invalidated and uncertain in their position. These feelings translated into defined physical and psychological stress, feelings of inadequacy, and self-doubt. These findings contribute to the research that has shown that individuals who experience microaggressions become physically stressed because of frequent encounters with racism which cause emotional distress (Carter, 2007).

Some participants in this study indicated that microaggressions created feelings of low self-confidence in their position of leadership. These findings are supported by previous research that indicates that "racial microaggressions negatively predict a lower self-esteem, and that microaggressions that occur in educational and workplace environments are particularly harmful to self-esteem" (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff & Strike, 2014, p.2). For example, Administrator 6 described her experience with microaggressions and how it affected her psychological and emotional state. She noted:

> This was the first space that I've been in where I was second-guessing myself. There were a variety of different things that happened, and I started to think to myself, "Is it me? Is it in my head? "Is it me? Is this in my head? And it was so mind-boggling to me.

She added:

> They make me look crazy, and they make me look like 'I'm Latina.' I'm not one to
> come in every day with my fist raised and demanding respect. That's not me. I
> have other things to do. I have programs to run. Because of these
> microaggressions, I get put in a situation where I'm constantly the one in the room
> that has to raise questions, you know?

Microaggressions in the workplace resulted in a variety of experiences for the
participants in this study. Their data provided examples in which they felt unwelcome
and underestimated. In addition, research participants also showed how they internalized
feelings that ultimately impacted their wellbeing. It was evident that some research
participants were hurt by the lack of respect from peers and subordinates.

Despite the microaggressions experienced by the research participants, most of
the women stated that these experiences helped them shape their leadership style. In
many ways, they rejected and resisted the inherent messages and implications of
microaggression (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). Several research participants were
able to empower themselves and found adaptive behaviors to cope with
microaggressions. A case in point is Administrator 5, who recalled feeling disregarded
and dismissed. She explained:

> They make you feel like you're not capable to lead anything. I know who I am
> now. I know the skills I own. I believe in myself. I have a very passionate heart
> for this field of education. I just focus on that and move on.

Administrator 5 then explained how she grew from this negative encounter. She stated:

I never want to do that to anyone, I'm a leader that is transformative. I see the strengths of people. I definitely never want to be a person that I cause or make anyone feel bad. I always remember this from one of my mentors. He's like, always treat people, if you're talking to one person, and make them feel like they're the most important person in the world.' To me, it's true. We need to treat people like that. We were talking and so, as a leader, that's what you want people to demonstrate. You value them. You value yourself. You value the people you work with. You value your work. That's the way that I've been taught by my mentors. It goes back to another thing that I've gotten. When you help other people succeed, success will find you. That's just how it works. I don't look for my own interests. I look for the interests of others because that's a way that I found it to be rewarding, to be meaningful, and to actually make true change in people's lives.

Another common factor of positive leadership development trends as a result of microaggressions was the notion that research participants realized that, as individuals in power, they have to be aware of their personal values to be effective in their leadership roles. In general, they stated that their challenges and personal experiences helped them develop a thick skin and forced them to reflect on their personal values. Through their personal reflection process, these administrators recognized that they were in a position to influence change.

Results for Research Question #2

How do microaggressions impact the promotion of Latina CCC administrators?

Being exposed to microaggressions led research participants to realize that the lack of institutional support can hinder their career mobility. As a result, many of the research participants believe that they must change their work environment and the institutions where they work in order to advance in their career. This finding aligns with previous research that states microaggressions play a critical role in creating disparities in recruitment, retention, and promotion (Sue, 2010). The lack of institutional support received by participants led them to feel unlikely to advance their careers in their current institution. Administrator 1 discussed her experience of navigating her work environment. She stated:

> Often I have been a finalist for positions that have been given to younger males with far less experience.

She further explained:

> I had the talent to be a vice president in my late thirties but was overlooked due to appearing young and being unmarried. It makes people think I'm really young… After one year, I asked to be placed at our satellite campus so that I could serve as the day dean. Since there are only two deans on this campus, we work together closely to accomplish the tasks at hand and create a positive environment within the limitations of the current site. In coming to this campus, I felt freer to do what I consider to be important and meet the demands of the students, faculty, and staff.

As indicated by Administrator 1, having to navigate around work environments that are either hostile or, as in her case, do not affirm her talents requires finding other career paths. It is important for future administrators to take risks and consider moving in order to advance their careers.

A different theme that becomes apparent from the interviews is that mentors help the participants advance their careers by lessening the negative effects of microaggressions. Research participants suggested that having the psychological support of mentors helped their self-confidence and gave them courage to advance in their careers. Participants also noted that mentors provided motivation and emotional support. Administrator 3 shared that her mentor offered some much-needed validation, explaining:

> It was the president of the college who offered me the most validation and support. If it wasn't for his support at my college, I don't think I would have been able to continue in this position. Because of his mentorship and support, I am now the 'go to' person for data, data analysis, institutional processes, evaluations, assessments, grants. It has been a turnaround but now I get that I just tell people what to do. I have gone out of my way to work in collaboration and to validate people's work.

Executive leaders have substantial influence to motivate administrators to advance their careers.

Overall, the participants' responses suggest that both psychosocial support and career development support are important for the research participants' overall

development. These findings also suggest that mentors provide the self-confidence needed to overcome negative encounters of microaggressions in the work environment.

Results for Research Question #3

>*What factors contribute to the resiliency and retention of Latina CCC administrators?*

The research participants were conscious of the low number of Latina administrators in the CCC system. Therefore, the majority of the research participants found that supportive colleagues contribute to their resilience. They shared lessons they learned that helped them to get inspired to meet their personal and career goals. In addition, Administrators shared their stories of how their supportive team helped them recover in difficult times. Administrator 2 described her learned experience of creating a network of support:

>Having a strong support network among Latinas on the campus is essential to survival. Constant dialogue with others who are like-minded helps to stabilize a sometimes chaotic and toxic environment. Taking time off work to regroup is important. Having social gatherings and sharing special occasions is another important factor. This requires leadership and effort to make this all happen. Who will do this on campuses? Who will take this role to make it happen? A leader cannot work alone. She must be supported by others, and when there are crisis situations, there must be people who are there to support and not bash.

Administrator 2 also offered this advice:

>Don't let words get to you...consider the source...consider your own self-
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>survive in this world, but surviving together is something that we need to work
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>towards. Everyone wants to be recognized and why not? Having good experiences
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>with others has been a super motivating factor for me.

The last emerging theme for this question was that several research participants

attributed their resilience to their commitment to their students and their mission to help

them. The research participants declared that continuing to stay true to their values and

focusing their energy to support students got them through the tough times. Administrator

2 explained that "the prospect of making a difference at the campus in the administrative

field" motivated her to continue her work.

Administrator 5 reflected:

>Having to be a leader that can influence and impact the life of students, it's
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>critical. That's where my passion comes from because, again, education opened
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>the doors for me to be to where I'm at. I know what it's done for me. It's
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>transformed me. Just having that experience and having that leverage, I think it's
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>successful. I feel that we need to continue to voice that to our community, to let
>
>them know, 'Hey, go get your Doctorate.'

Administrator 5 noted that being "passionate" about her work was beneficial to her and others. Her emotional intelligence helped her stay focused and inspired her to help students.

Limitations

It is important to note the limitations of this study. This study provided the voices of six participants who, in this case, are Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges system. This study focused on their experiences with microaggressions in the work environment. The research participants provided self-reported perceptions to better understand how microaggressions influenced their leadership development, job promotion, and motivation.

The number of participants was purposefully small to accommodate for a qualitative study. This study is a limited representation and cannot be used to generalize to the entire Latina administrator perspective, to other racial-ethnic groups, or to the male administrator experience. The study is also limited to leadership positions in the California Community Colleges system and may not be generalized to other post-secondary institutions. Another limitation concerns the researcher, who is a Latina administrator in the California Community Colleges system, which may cause an unconscious bias and subjectivity with regard to the responses.

Implications of the Study

The study's findings add insight to the existing body of literature on underrepresented women of color and their experiences with discrimination and microaggressions in the work environment. The qualitative findings of this study relate to

the literature review (Chapter 2), which contributes to previous research that

demonstrates that Latina women face barriers in their leadership roles and career

advancement.

The first problem Latina California Community Colleges administrators identified

in Chapter 4 was their experience of navigating microaggressive interactions with

colleagues. These interactions created an unwelcoming work environment, feelings of

inadequacy, and institutional barriers for career advancement for several of the research

participants. In addition, feelings of being constantly overlooked or ignored had an

emotional impact on the study participants. Feelings of racism contributed to individuals

separating themselves from other colleagues.

As a result of these findings, the implications of the study highlight the

importance for community colleges to create a more respectful campus environment for

underrepresented students, faculty, and administration. Senior management need to

recognize that microaggressions in the work environment do exist and that they

significantly impact Latina administrators. Institutions need to address the negative

interactions for underrepresented employees. Systematically, the California Community

Colleges can be proactive in identifying exclusionary practices and can hold employees

accountable for discrimination.

The findings from the study also suggest that the California Community Colleges

Chancellors Office (CCCCO) should hold the 113 community colleges accountable for

providing a strategic plan to diversify the campus leadership and faculty ranks. As

demonstrated in Chapter 1, the low number of Latina administrators is a cause of

concern. Therefore, the CCCCO should generate a policy of inclusiveness to support a diversity funding stream so the community college system can be more representative of its student population.

The present study also offers a foundation to continue to study how long-term consequences of racial microaggressions impact the leadership development of Latina administrators. Given the research findings in Chapter 4 and the literature in Chapter 2, Latina administrators need to take care of their physical and psychological wellbeing. It is important that college campuses provide culturally effective support strategies for underrepresented groups in order to address the negative consequences associated with experiencing discrimination in a constant setting.

Related to the field of leadership, the findings suggest a need to strengthen the leadership development and networking opportunities for Latina administrators in the California Community Colleges systems. Key implications of the study suggest that mentors helped the study participants to advance their careers by lessening the negative effects of microaggressions. The California Community Colleges system should create a diversity initiative to endorse a Latina Administrator Professional Leadership Network that sponsors mentorship programs to focus on navigating microaggressions and empowering women to transition into administration. A systemic network approach can address the need to connect a marginal group. This study can serve as an advocacy tool for mentorship for future generations of administrators.

Recommendations for Action

The results of this study include several recommendations for Latina administrators to protect themselves from daily microaggressions in the workplace and help diversify the administrator ranks of the California Community Colleges system. Based on the implications of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendation # 1: Create Social Support Groups

> The study's findings emphasize how vital it is for Latina administrators to feel a sense of belonging. Latina administrators must create a support group on campus to help generate a culture of social justice and offer them an opportunity to discuss problematic issues. This will also provide a safe environment where individuals can develop personal relationships and alliances which can contribute to positive working relationships.

Recommendation # 2: Professional Preparation

> As emerging leaders, individuals are recommended to seek leadership development and preparation. Both at the master and doctoral levels, this will help them meet educational requirements for administrative roles and acquire supervisory skills.

Recommendation # 3: Preventive Professional Development

> Preventive microaggression training must become part of the CCC onboarding process for employees. Microaggressions need to be discussed in training so employees can become aware of unconscious bias. A systematic approach can promote positive interpersonal behavior and environment. The California

Community Colleges system can pair these teachings with culture sensitivity training to promote an encouraging work environment. Proactively educating others about microaggression could help the campus community to identify and stop that behavior.

Recommendation # 4: Cross Cultural Training

Future administrators can also identify different cultural strengths. Progressively appreciating cultures can promote collectiveness and "US" rather than just the "Me, Myself, and I."

Recommendation # 5: Create Diversity Pipeline to Administration

Latinas are not entering the administration pipeline; therefore, the California Community College system must make an effort to develop "grow your own" diversity leadership programs and provide paths for career advancement.

Recommendation # 6: Professional Preparation

The California Community Colleges Chancellors should establish a partnership with American Association of Community Colleges to provide training in coping strategies for microaggressions for underrepresented groups.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research is needed to further examine the complexities of experiences of racial microaggressions of Latina women in the community college system. Based on the findings of this study and previous research on this subject, a number of recommendations for further research can be made.

Recommendation # 1: Pipeline to Administration

What are the characteristics of Latina administrators which can lead to

recognizing good candidates to pursue a career in community college

administration? How can we increase the pipeline to administration?

Recommendation # 2: Examine Microaggression Coping Strategies

Further research is needed to further examine microaggression coping strategies

for Latina employees. The next step in this research can be to develop effective

racial microaggression coping strategies. Examining this research can assist in the

empowerment of Latina women and help the career advancement of this

underrepresented group.

Recommendation # 3: Examine Underrepresentation of Latina Administrators.

Finally, additional research is needed to understand what factors contribute to the

underrepresentation of Latina administrators. A systemic and environmental

perspective from staff and faculty can address barriers that prevent the

diversification of administration.

Reflection on Research

As a Latina with over thirteen years of experience in higher education, this study

was of interest to me because I wanted to better understand how microaggressions affect

Latina women who are underrepresented in administration in the California Community

Colleges system. Having witnessed microaggressions in a work environment, I

wondered if they contributed to the lack of diversity in administration in many

community colleges. I therefore became curious to learn about others' experiences. At the same time that I witnessed the lack of diversity in administration, I also realized that important perspectives and voices are being excluded from significant decision-making processes to better serve our students.

Accordingly, I wanted to offer research to support the diversification of leadership while encouraging rising administrators into leadership roles. It is my hope that this research contributes to a systemic reflection on the lack of diversity in administration. This is how I learned that the CCCCO can proactively strengthen the leadership development of underrepresented groups. Formal doctoral and mentorship programs can educate rising administrators on how to be an effective educational leader while dealing with microaggressions.

I also learned from this study that Latina administrators are not alone in experiencing discrimination or microaggression in a work environment. As a result, Latina administrators should proactively form supports groups to ensure they get the necessary encouragement to overcome the feelings associated with microaggressions that are detailed in Chapter four. Having an administration that is representative of the student's population can assist in increasing the educational rates of Latinas. This will positively impact the state of California.

Summary

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature on microaggressions. It recognizes that Latina administrators face frequent encounters of microaggressions in their work environment. In addition, the study also validates the participants' commitment to their field and to the students' success. Their stories demonstrate the challenges they face in their leadership roles and document their personal growth because of their capacity to persevere and overcome obstacles.

As noted in Chapter four, this study has identified that racial microaggressions have a negative impact on self-esteem; more importantly, this study has provided a voice to underrepresented women of color. It validates the personal impact microaggressions have had on a marginalized group. As a result, the study acknowledges the importance of providing a supportive environment and sponsorships to promote diversity and inclusiveness in administrative ranks.

Lastly, the California Community Colleges system needs to address the lack of diversity in administration and how this underrepresentation may contribute to the low educational attainment rates for underrepresented students. A serious effort will need to take place in order to increase the diversity pipeline into administration. It is hoped that this study will serve as a call to generate an inclusiveness policy that supports a diversity funding stream so the community college system can be more representative of its student population.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Email Invitation

Dear Colleague,

My name is Delmy Montenegro-Spencer and I am an Educational Leadership doctoral student at California State University, Sacramento working under the supervision of Dr. Rose Borunda. As part of my dissertation requirements, I am actively recruiting participants for my study examining the experiences of Latina California community college (CCC) administrators. More specifically, I am interested in learning about the role that discrimination has on your work environment and factors that have contributed to your resilience and therefore success as a Latina leader.

This study seeks to shed light on how subtle and often unintentional forms of racism known as microaggressions in the work environment influence the leadership development and job promotion of Latina administrators. The aim is to understand your unique experience and ultimately develop a planning tool to increase retention, institutional development, and a succession plan for future Latina administrators. Likewise, with your assistance, it is my hope that through this study I can encourage administration diversification within the CCC system.

If you agree to participate in the study, please complete the one-time short (3 minute) online questionnaire at:

Selected research participants will be asked to participate in a 60 minute one to one interview that will recorded and take place in a location of your choice. After the interviews research participants will be given an opportunity to participate in an optional focus group to further expand your personal experiences. Your confidentiality will be protected throughout all levels of this study. The research participant's audio and video recordings will be erased. Identifiable information will permanently remove after a 3-year period and de-identified transcripts will be securely stored. You will be given the opportunity to stop your participation in the study at any time.

Upon your request, I can also present you with a draft of my dissertation for your review and approval prior to finalizing the document. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me, Delmy Montenegro-Spencer at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or my dissertation advisor, Dr. Rose Borunda at rborunda@csus.edu.

I thank you in advance and will eagerly await your reply.

Sincerely,

Delmy Montenegro-Spencer, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B

Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a dissertation research study conducted by Delmy Montenegro-Spencer, M.S. under the supervision of Dr. Rose Borunda from the Department of Educational Leadership at the California State University, Sacramento. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a California community college administrator.

What is the purpose of the study?
This study seeks to shed light on how subtle and often unintentional forms of racism known as microaggressions in the work environment influence the leadership development and job promotion of Latina administrators. More importantly this study will analyze what characteristics contribute to the resilience of Latina administrators in overcoming microaggressions within the work environment. The purpose of this study is to provide qualitative data to support efforts of postsecondary institutions and legislation in creating policy and practices that will foster diversity amongst CCC education leadership. This study will contribute to the limited literature of Latina community college executive leaders and their experience with discrimination in their work environment.

What will I be asked to do?
If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
- You will be asked to fill out a short (3 minute) demographic and background questionnaire.
- You will then be asked to complete a thirty minute survey or participate in a sixty minute interview that will recorded and take place in a mutually agreed location.
- You will be asked if you want to participate in an optional ninety minute focus group that will be video recorded and take place in a mutually agreed location.
     Note: Your participation in the study is not contingent to your participation of the focus group.
- Interview participants will be allowed to edit and clarify any responses from transcribed notes.

Will the information I give be confidential?
Research participant will be given an opportunity to recommend or recruit research volunteers for the study. Therefore, if you chose to recruit for the study or participate in the focus group you may know or be known by others in the study. Confidentiality of your involvement in the study cannot be promised beyond my efforts of data protection. Focus group participants may discuss the focus group experience outside of the focus group.

Everyone will be asked to respect the privacy of the other group members. All participants will be asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the discussion, but it is important to understand that other people in the group with you may not keep all information private and confidential.

Confidentiality is always a risk in research, but the steps taken to protect your confidentiality are: any information that is obtained in this study and that can be linked to you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Your name and affiliated institutions will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. After the completion of the transcription the audio and video will be erased. All other materials related to the study will be kept and identifiers will be permanently removed after 3 years. The data will be de-identified after transcription to minimize confidentiality risk. to the greatest technological extent possible.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participating in this study is completely voluntary. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You can also refuse to answer any interview questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. Moreover, upon completion of the data collection you will be provided the content of your interview(s) at which point you also have the right to withdraw your data from the study.

How can I get in contact with the investigators?
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Rose Borunda or Mrs. Delmy Spencer- Montenegro at (916)278 – 2278, CSUS Department of Educational Leadership. 6000 J Street, Eureka Hall 318, Sacramento, CA 95819-6068

Rights of Research Subjects
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the CSUS IRB at irb@csus.edu.”

You may also withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Please check the appropriate line and initial:
_____ I agree to allow the recording of my interview to be used for educational purposes.

_____ I do not agree to allow the recording of my interview to be used for educational purposes.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. **I have been given a copy of this form.**

Note: You will be asked to verbally consent to the audio recording at the beginning of your skype or phone session.

_____

Reach Participant Name

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about yourself?

     Probe: Tell me about your childhood and educational experiences that guided you to where you are now?

2. Can you describe your career and leadership path that steered you into higher education?

     Probe: What influenced you to become and educational administrator in a community college setting?

3. When you became an administrator/educational leader, what observations or experience did you have with discrimination and microaggressions in the work environment?

     Probe: Tell me about trials you had to overcome and how did this experience affect you?

4. Have you ever been ignored/neglected/invisible in your work environment?

     Probe: How did this make you feel? How did you deal with this?

5. How have microaggressions impact your leadership development as a Latina CCC administrator/ educational leader?

     Probe: What feelings did you internalize after an encounter of microaggression?

6. From your prospective, what skills have helped you maneuver microaggressions as an administrator/ educational leader?

7. How do microaggressions impact the job promotion of Latina CCC administrators/educational leader?

     Probe: What career pathways in the community college system would you recommend for Latina women?

8. What leadership training/educational/networking opportunities do you see as helpful tools for future Latina administrators?

9. What do you believe are the reasons that so few Latinas advance to leadership positions in the community college system?

> Probe: What has been your most significant challenge for you in this role?
> Probe: What do you think should be done systemically so more Latinas can attain educational administrative positions in the California Community College system?

10. What factors contribute to the resiliency and therefore retention of Latina CCC administrators/ educational leader?

> Probe: What factors contributed to the accomplishment of your career?

> Probe: What kept you motivated towards your goal?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience that I did not ask about?

Thank you again for participating in this interview. I would like to assure you that your information will be kept confidential. If I need to talk with you further, may I contact you?

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letter

SACRAMENTO STATE
Redefine the Possible

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
FWA00003873

March 2, 2016

IRB PROTOCOL #15-16-076

Ms. Delmy Spencer
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Education

RE: IRB Approval

Dear Ms. Spencer:

On February 11, 2016, Sacramento State's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the proposal titled "Latinas in Higher Education Leadership Roles: How their voice, identity, and leadership behavior can influence policy reform for future generations." Your project received an **Expedited** (45 CFR 46.110(7)) review and was approved on March 02, 2016.

This approval is valid through **February 11, 2017.** This research is to be conducted according to the proposal that was approved by the IRB. Procedural changes or amendments must be reported to the IRB, and no changes may be made without IRB approval except to eliminate apparent immediate hazards. For additional information, see *Modification Request* on the website.

If you wish to collect additional data beyond the expiration date, you will need to request an extension. For additional information, see *Annual/Semi-Annual Protocol Report* on the website.

This IRB approval is with the understanding that you will *promptly* inform the IRB if any unanticipated adverse reaction should occur while conducting your research (see *Adverse Event/Unanticipated Problem* the website). Adverse reactions include but are not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma, and the release of potentially damaging personal information.

Should you need further information about the protection of human subjects, please consult our Human Subjects Website or contact the Research Integrity and Compliance Analyst, Leah Vargas, at 916-278-5674 or leah.vargas@csus.edu.

Thank you and best wishes for continued success.

CC: IRB file
        Dr. Rose Borunda

Office of Research Affairs | Hornet Bookstore, Suite 3400 | 6000 J St. | Sacramento, CA 95819-6111
Phone: 916-278-5674 | Email: irb@csus.edu | Web: http://www.csus.edu/research/irb/

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