HAPPENSTANCE LEARNING THEORY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF

EXECUTIVE LATINAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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DEDICATION

To my husband Gabriel Reyes, daughter Kalisha, sons Ladon and Gavin, for always supporting me through this journey. To my parents, Jose Sanchez and Victoria Zamora for always believing in me and teaching me that I can do anything regardless of my circumstance.

To all the Latinas before me and all those to come, *si se puede!*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For as long as I could remember, I have always wanted to earn my PhD, I did not know that as a first generation American, the statistics showed that I was not likely to finish high school I learned that my freshman year of college, that I had so far overcome the statistics that said I'd be more likely to be a teen mom than a high school graduate. I later learned that less than 1 % of Latinas have completed a doctoral program. All this did not stop me from reaching my goal, I did not give it a second thought in my plans to complete my doctoral degree. Despite the challenges we face, we all have a choice to overcome them to reach our goals and we must if we want to make our dreams reality.

I would like to thank everyone that was part of my journey. I am grateful to my committee members for accepting the role as a committee member and providing me with both their time and support during this process. I would especially like to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Jovita Ross-Gordon, for her guidance and direction. I would also like to thank my director, Dr. Gary T. Alexander, for his unlimited support and encouragement throughout the final year of my dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research explored and shared the career development of seven Latinas, in executive administrative roles in higher education institutions, through their narratives. The study used planned happenstance and happenstance learning theory (HLT) to analyze the skills and strategies used in the career development of these Latinas. My goal was not only to share the stories of these Latinas but also to reveal what is needed in assisting the next generation of Latina leaders.   By understanding the skills and strategies that contribute to the success of Latina women in higher education institutions can develop programs to assist other Latinas and minorities to reach their leadership career goals.

The main research questions that guided this study were: What can we learn from the stories of executive Latinas in higher education and how they navigated their career paths into executive administrator roles in higher education institutions? And how does happenstance learning theory help understand the career development of Latinas in these executive higher administration roles? There were seven Latinas in the study, from various regions in Texas providing insight from various institutions and perspectives. This study used qualitative methods to understand their experiences and build theory from the data collected. Data collection included semi-structured interviews, collection of personal artifacts, and documents, such as public data. The narrative analysis process discussed by Riessman (1993) was used to make sense of the events and actions the Latinas took in their career development to reach their executive positions as well as typological analysis discussed by Hatch (2002) to begin the data analysis.

I found that the Latinas in this study used the five skills—curiosity, persistence,

flexibility, optimism, and risk taking—discussed as central to HLT. Two of the five

happenstance skills were more prevalent throughout the Latina's stories; these were

flexibility and risk taking. Additionally, two other career development strategies not

discussed as a part of HLT were identified through inductive analysis of participants

stories. The significance of the study is further discussed in providing recommendations

for practice and future research.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Research Problem

According to the 2010 United States Census, Latina/os are currently approximately 17%, of the total U. S. population and that proportion is even higher in some states like Texas. In 2015, the estimated population of the state of Texas was 27 million people with about 39% estimated to be of Hispanic or Latino descent (U.S. Census, 2016). This data indicates that the Latino population is growing although research suggested that the levels of education attainment for Latina/os has not grown similarly; currently Hispanics have lower educational attainments compared to other groups in the U.S. (Santiago, Taylor, & Calderón Galdeano, 2016). In 2014, one third of Latino adults had earned less than a high school education, almost another third had earned a high school diploma, and the remaining third had either some college or an associate degree or higher as their highest educational attainment (Santiago, et al., 2016).

At the same time, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015) found that number of Hispanic students enrolled in undergraduate programs more than double from the year 2000 to 2014 with an increase of 119% from 1.4 million to 3.0 million of 17.3 million undergraduates in the U.S. (NCES, 2015). Although, the Hispanic student population has increased in higher education the diversity of faculty has largely stayed the same (Haviland and Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009). The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (2015) found that Latina/os made up about one quarter of students in public schools and 17%of the undergraduate population but only 4% of faculty identify as Latina/os in the U.S. higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015) reported a similar finding in 2013, showed

that of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions only 5 percent

identified themselves of Hispanic or Latino descent. In 2016, the NCES reported that in

fall 2013 of all full-time faculty at degree-granting postsecondary institutions two percent

were Hispanic women while only one percent of full-time professors were Hispanic

women.

Despite the increase in diversity in the US population and in higher education

student enrollments, there is still limited diversity when examining current demographics

for female faculty, administrators, and governing board members (Betts & Suárez, 2011).

"Attaining and maintaining full and representative racial inclusiveness remains elusive

among postsecondary leaders—including executives in the "c-suite" such as chancellors,

provosts, and vice presidents" (Campbell, 2018, p.1702). Campbell (2018) also found

that racial/ethnic minorities such as African American and Latino faculty at US

postsecondary institutions have been employed at levels under 10% combined, though

those groups are about a quarter of the general population and higher education student

enrollments. A closer look at the academic ranks suggests that minority women represent

only 3% of Full Professors, 7% of Associate Professors, 10% of Assistant Professors, and

10% of Instructors (non-tenure track) (Tran, 2014). Similar patterns are found in the

representation of administrators in higher education as Tran (2014) reported that "faculty

of color accounted for 18% of full-time administrators in higher education, with 13%

serving as college and university presidents 6% Black, 5% Latina, 1% Asian American,

and 1% Native American" (p. 302). As noted by Madsen, Longman, & Daniels (2012)

the intentional preparation of future leaders for higher education remains a critical need.

They noted that there was a lack of coordinated strategies for leadership development at

most institutions and emphasized a need to increase leadership development programming in higher education.

One in five women in the U.S. is a Latina; one in four female students in public schools across the nation is a Latina. Latinas live in every state, and 17 states now have a kindergarten population that is at least 20 percent Latina (Gándara, 2015). Latinas are projected to become nearly a third of the female population of the nation that by 2060 and will be needed to make important contributions to society and the economy in the time to come (Gándara, 2015). Thus, it is important to study the barriers that Latinas face both in academia and their career development. How Latinas thrive in the education system is closely related to how they will fare in the economy. In states such as Texas where the Latina population is larger, there will be significant consequences for the future social and economy (Gándara, 2015). Research focused on the career progress of Hispanic subgroup members also has the potential to enhance diversity efforts within organizations as well as to contribute to a more expansive understanding of career development (Hite, 2007). Academic leaders can have far-reaching influences on the universities they represent, as well as within other institutions where their scope of research and knowledge can affect much of society (Gangone & Lennon, 2014).

Research on Latina administrative leadership, education, professional development, employment, and retention is very limited (Vargas, 2011). Ovink (2014) discussed how few studies explore the phenomenon of Latinas' increasing educational success and instead many continue to focus on the ways Latinas are disadvantaged. Most of the literature about Latinas in higher education has focused on issues of recruitment and retention of students, not administrators (Lopez, 2013). As there is little research on

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Latinas in administration there is even less specifically on the career development of Latinas in executive roles in higher education. It is also important to note that Latina women lag in participation in leadership development programs (Crespo, 2013). The career development of Latina in executive roles within higher education should be particularly important as the current population predictions suggest that the proportion of Latina/os will continue to increase.

As the demographics of our campuses continue to change, there will be a greater number of Latina/o students, particularly women; therefore, it is important to ensure there exists appropriate numbers of Latina administrators who can advocate for those students (Lopez, 2013). In hearing the stories of current Latina administrators and their journeys in their career development, the skills and strategies used to navigate their career in academia were explored. Their stories and voices can then help improve the career development of Latinas and other minorities facing similar challenges in the world of academia and provide institutions with some insights in how to help these women move forward in their careers.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

This study explored how Latinas navigate their career pathways into senior executive positions in public and private four-year institutions. The research used happenstance learning theory and planned happenstance as the theoretical lenses to understand the story and career development of these executive Latina administrators in Higher Education. The study focused on the career development of these Latina women and the skills and strategies they used to reach their career goals. The research questions for this study were:

- What can we learn from the stories of executive Latinas in higher education and how they navigated their career paths into executive administrator roles in higher education institutions?

- How does happenstance learning theory help understand the career development of Latinas in these executive higher administration roles?

Research Design Overview

The research design of this study was a narrative inquiry. Using narratives, the study explored the life stories and career development of Latinas in senior executive roles in higher education. This study used these qualitative methods to understand their experiences and build theory from the data collected. It included semi-structured interviews, collection of personal artifacts, and the review of documents, such as public data. This study used the narrative analysis process discussed by Riessman (1993), to make sense of the events and actions the Latinas engaged in as part of their career development to reach their executive positions. HLT. The stories were examined using typological analysis (Hatch, 2002) to review how happenstance learning theory and planned happenstance skills were utilized by these Latinas in their career development. By sharing their career development pathways and strategies, this study hopes to provide institutions and leadership development programs with insights and strategies that can help Latina women and other minority group females persevere despite the challenges they face during the career development in academia.

Theoretical Framework Overview

While there are many career theories that could be applied to this study, I chose happenstance learning theory for its fit with the focus of the study. The happenstance

learning theory (HLT) is an attempt to explain how and why individuals follow their different paths through life and to describe how counselors can facilitate that process (Krumboltz, 2009). In developing HLT Krumboltz (2009) recognized that we live in an imperfect world and that social justice is not equally distributed among humans on our planet. Krumboltz (2009) discusses how overcoming social injustice should be an ever-present concern for those working both with individuals and in working toward institutional changes. This theory was used to examine the life story and career development of Latinas in executive roles in higher education to highlight the actions they took to reach their career goals. Happenstance learning theory was helpful in examining Latina career development as HLT focuses on the actions and skills that can be used to overcome unplanned challenges and unpredicted events to reach a person's career goals. Planned happenstance was developed from HLT, with an emphasis on educating people on how to generate, recognize, and incorporate change events into their career development by utilizing five key skills (Krumboltz, 2009). Planned happenstance could be used as a strategy by institutions when developing programs on career development for their faculty and staff.

Rationale and Significance of Study

Despite larger numbers in postsecondary institutions, Latinas/os are among the least likely racial and ethnic groups to complete their bachelor's degrees (Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2009). Latina/o faculty members and administrators are key players in institutional retention efforts because their presence sends a message of inclusivity, and they serve as role models to students (Oseguera, et al., 2009). Research is needed to provide all stakeholders with information and insights on how to best serve current and

future Latinas seeking executive roles in academia.   An examination of the experiences from those Latinas who currently hold posts as university administrators can assist in understanding the paths they took to arrive at their positions and what challenges they may have encountered (Lopez, 2013). By understanding the challenges and barriers Latinas face and the factors or strategies they utilize to achieve to success higher education institutions can better support, empower, and promote the success of other Latinas and monitories into administrator roles.

Researcher's Role and Assumptions

As a Latina myself, I have always been drawn in hearing the career development and stories of Latina leaders. And after hearing some Latinas during keynote speeches I became interested in learning more about the careers of Latinas in executive roles in higher education. I wanted to learn more about how these women overcome the challenges that many Latinas face and often impeded them from moving forward in their careers. I wanted to know if there was something these women were doing throughout their careers and if it could then be taught to others to achieve similar results.

My role as the researcher was to collect and share these Latina women's stories in a manner that represents how they navigated academia in order to reach their executive role. As a researcher, I took a researcher-observer role and I interviewed all the participants. As a Latina student myself in higher education, I have the perspective of the outsider looking in, as I am not a professional in academia. I am a current professional in the healthcare sector with a specialization in mental health. While I understand the limitations, I had in this role, I believe it allowed me to analyze the data with greater neutrality as I did not bring any personal biases or experiences regarding career

development in academia based in my own experience. Although I did have some assumptions based on the literature reviewed prior to initiating the study.   One assumption was that these women faced challenges during their career path into their executive roles in higher education. Another assumption was that these Latina women used some strategies or methods to overcome these challenges to reach their goals. And finally, the last assumption was that these women's career paths were not linear in reaching their position as a senior executive in academia.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this research study, the following definitions for key terms have been constructed, as influenced by the literature review:

Latina or Hispanic. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race. The terms Latina and Hispanic are often used interchangeably, selected according to personal preference of the individual utilizing the terms.

Latina Administrator. A higher education female administrator, who identifies as Latina and is employed at a public or private four-year institution in the state of Texas at the level of dean, associate vice president, or assistant vice president or higher, with a minimum of five years' experience as an administrator.

Planned Happenstance. Developed from happenstance learning theory posits that the goal of planned happenstance is to assist individuals in understanding how to generate, recognize, and incorporate change events to positively influence their career development

Chapter Summary

In summary, the Latino/Hispanic population is growing, and while there are some strides in high school completion and college graduations Latina/os are still lagging in administrative and faculty positions within higher education. This is most noticeable for Latina faculty, administrators and governing boards in academia, with Latinas constituting approximately only 5% of those in executive administrative roles, and of administrators less than 20% are women of color (Tran, 2014). There is a critical need for the preparation of the future leaders of higher education, especially for Latina women. There are few studies that explore the success of Latinas in higher education faculty or administrative roles, instead research has focused more on how they are disadvantaged. We need more research on how Latinas, despite these disadvantages are still able to successfully navigate the system into their senior executive roles in higher education institutions.

This study examined how Latinas have navigated their career pathways to become senior executive positions in higher education institutions. Narrative inquiry was used to capture their life stories and planned happenstance theory was used to understand the stories and career development of these Latina administrators. By sharing the stories of these Latinas that have made it to the "top," institutions can then see what skills and strategies might be important to incorporate in leadership programs intended better prepare Latinas and other women of color for navigating their careers in academia.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature indicated that research on Latinas in higher education generally was very limited. When searching the term Latina, using the Texas State University Library research databank that has over 50 databases which includes records from PsychInfo, ERIC and JStor, about 106,565 peer review articles were found from the year 2006 to 2019. Adding the terms 'higher education' reduced the number of articles to 4,385 and adding 'administration' reduced it even further to 434 articles. After sifting through the articles, I found 16 articles that provided research on Latinas in higher education but only half of those articles were on executive administrative staff. In general, the articles focused on the challenges that Latinas faced in academia, but not how to prepare Latinas for the challenges that they will be facing. This literature search demonstrated the need for more research on the career development of Latinas in executive roles in higher education administration and how to prepare Latinas for these roles. This literature review examined the current literature on Latinas, Latinas and higher education, Latina career development in higher education, professional development and training for Latinas, Latinas and the higher education pipeline, and happenstance learning theory.

Latinos/Latinas

The U.S. Census (2017) uses the term Latino or Hispanic to refer to "a person of Dominican, Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race." The Census Bureau (2017) also explains that "origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's ancestors before their arrival in the United States." The word Latino(s) is

often used as a gender-neutral term, or to refer to men, whereas Latina(s) refers to

women. Latina/os are the largest and fastest-growing minority group in the United States

today and two states experiencing the most rapid growth in the Latino population are

Texas and Florida (Peralta & Larkin, 2011).   Latina/os are a relatively young population,

with more than one third, under age 18, and they have a much younger age distribution in

comparison to non-Latinos with a median age of 26 years versus a median age of almost

36 years for non-Latinos (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004).   The increase in the proportion

of Latinos in the population and the age distribution of Latinos will have a dramatic

impact on education in the U.S. in decades ahead (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). Despite

the large number of Latinas/os, they are among the least likely racial and ethnic groups to

complete their bachelor's degrees (Oseguera, et al., 2009). Authors discuss how no

country can ignore a large potential workforce, and with the shift from a manufacturing

to a technology-based economy, it is vital that every segment of society be educated to its

full potential (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Oseguera, et al., 2009).

The three largest Hispanic subgroups are Mexican (64 percent), Puerto Rican (9

percent), and Central American (9 percent) and these groups together comprise more than

80 percent of all Latinas living in the U.S. (Gándara, 2015). All these groups tend to be

disproportionately represented at low-income levels and have lower levels of education

than the population, whereas the smaller percentages of Cubans (4 percent) and South

Americans (6 percent), for example, tend to have higher median incomes and higher

levels of education (Gándara, 2015). This is important to note, since not all Latinas are

distributed equally across the country. The Southwest has many more Mexican-origin

Latinas, while the Southeast has proportionately more Cuban and South American-origin

Latinas (Gándara, 2015). The Northeast is more heavily Puerto Rican and Dominican (3

percent), and the Midwest has larger proportions of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. Ideally,

researchers would approach each cultural entity separately (e.g. Mexican women and

Puerto Rican women), but due to the limited representation in managerial and

professional ranks gathering sufficient numbers for research samples of specific Latina

cultural backgrounds becomes challenging (Hite, 2007).

Women and Higher Education

Women still lag significantly behind men in status, salary and leadership positions

in academia (Gangone & Lennon, 2014). Higher levels of participation in education do

not translate to comparably high representation in leadership roles in academia (Gangone

& Lennon, 2014). In higher education women represent 57 percent of all college students

(Betts & Suárez, 2011) but only hold 8% of full professorships (27.4% men), 28.4% of

board trustees positions (71.6% men), 22% of president positions (78% men) and chief

academic officers 32% (68% men) at doctoral Institutions; making it an average of

24.53% of women as leaders in academia compared to 64.7% of men in those types of

leadership positions at doctoral institutions (Gangone & Lennon, 2014). Of those women

that are presidents at doctoral level institutions 17% were women of color in 2011

compared to 4.4 percent in 2006 (Gangone & Lennon, 2014).   Also, of note, in 2012

women led five of the eight Ivy League institutions (Gangone & Lennon, 2014).

Currently there are several organizations that assist in preparing women to

leadership roles in higher education institutions. The American Council on Education

(ACE) offers a Fellows program that develops new higher education leadership; they

have more than 1,600 alumna and over 300 that have become CEOs or deans (Leadership

Development Opportunities, 2009). The ACE Fellows Program helps ensure that higher education's future leaders are ready to take on real-world challenges and serve the capacity-building needs of their institutions. Those in the fellowship programs have the following opportunities: Observe and participate in key meetings and events, and take on special projects and assignments while under the mentorship of a team of experienced campus or system leaders; participate in three multi-day seminars, engage in team-based project and case studies, visit other campuses, and attend national meetings; and develop a network of higher education leaders across the US and abroad.

HERS Institute is a leadership development program that serves women in faculty, staff, and administrative roles in higher education. The focus of the institute is to further develop the leadership abilities of the participants. The Center for Creative Leadership, a non-academic institution, also offers a program designed for women with upper management and leadership experience. That is a three-month program that costs about eight thousand dollars. The access of these types of programs is limited not only due to financial constraints but also awareness of the programs.

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' (HACU) Presidential Leadership Academy, La Academia de Liderazgo, a new initiative beginning in the Fall of 2019, is a one-year program to prepare the next generation of culturally diverse leaders for the ranks of college and university presidents (HACU, 2019). La Academia is designed to increase the number of talented individuals who will serve as presidents and chancellors of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Emerging HSIs. Fellows selected for the program will participate in an array of leadership development activities that will not only prepare them for leadership roles in the full spectrum of institutions of

higher learning but will especially sensitize and mold them for leadership positions within HSIs and Emerging HSIs. La Academia is a direct response to the declining rate of Hispanic university presidents (from 4.5 percent in 2006 to 3.9 percent in 2016), despite the unprecedented growth of U.S. Hispanic college student enrollment. In searching the internet for 'Leadership programs for women' limited results of reputable websites were found. This leaves women with limited access to career development tools outside of their workplace and academia.

Latinas and Higher Education

Currently, one in five women in the U.S. is a Latina, and the number of Latinas alone, more than 26 million, make them a critically important group today as projections suggest that by 2060 Latinas will form nearly a third of the female population of the nation (Gándara, 2015). Latinas are graduating from high school at higher rates than their male counterparts, and 60 percent of bachelor's degrees earned by Latinos go to women (Gándara, 2015).   Gándara discusses how Latinas are making some strides in the professions but remain seriously underrepresented in all professions with "Tenured professorships in colleges and universities being among the least integrated professions and an area in which Latinas have made only tentative inroads" (2015). In 2011, less than one-third of all tenured full professorships were held by women with about 4 percent being Latinas (Gándara, 2015). Gándara also noted that research has shown that Latina/o faculty contribute to a more positive campus climate for Latina students and by having a more supportive climate there is better retention and graduation rates for these students (2015). Latina/o faculty members and administrators are key players in institutional retention efforts because their presence sends a message of inclusivity through serving as

role models to students who doubt their ability to succeed in their new environment (Oseguera, et al., 2009).

Studies discuss how Latina/o faculty members are still underrepresented in higher education (Montas-Hunter, 2012; Oseguera, et al., 2009). Many Latina scholars are the first members of their family in academia and might need added assistance in terms of navigating the university system and helping them become successful applicants and employees (De Luca & Escoto, 2012). As Latinas enter academia, they may experience difficulties when transitioning into to a European American value system (De Luca & Escoto, 2012). The current literature discusses how first-generation Latina scholars have few emotional supports throughout their career and when junior faculty do not receive proper mentorship, and integration into the academic system it becomes more difficult to develop their careers (De Luca & Escoto, 2012). Reyes and Rios (2005) share about their own in experience as graduate students and how "Latino faculty are trying their best to mentor Latino bachelor's, master's, and doctorate students in addition to mentoring the other students but they themselves need support from above and below to gain tenure and thus job security."

It is important that Latinas feel welcomed in academia in order to retain them as faculty and positively influence future Latina/o student enrollment and retention. Cavazos (2016) found that Latina/o mentors served as role models to Latina/o students by establishing a sense of identification when they see Latina/os in professional roles in higher education. Latina/o students can connect with Latino professionals through shared experiences, pride in ethnic background, and support of research interests and academic writing abilities (Cavazos, 2016). The more diversity in a university environment the

more opportunities students must develop meaningful relationships with professors, who can serve as role models and mentors. The current literature on Latinas in academia, however, focuses most on Latinas as students and how they learn to navigate the higher education systems rather than Latinas as professionals.

Latina Career Development in Higher Education

As previously stated, it is now more important than ever to assess the career development opportunities for Latinas into leadership roles, given the increased of the Latino population and diversity of the student population. Oseguera, et al. (2009) explained one of the key issues facing higher education is expanding and sustaining the leadership pipeline for minorities. Career development in higher education administration, traditionally, has followed a hierarchical leadership model that has experienced slow growth in including women in top executive leadership positions (Montas-Hunter, 2012). Rodríguez, Martinez and Valle (2016) discussed how as one moves from the lower to the higher end of the stratification system of higher education one finds fewer and fewer Latinas.

Gonzalez-De Jesus (2012) conducted a study that looked at how mid-level Latina administrators may encounter multiple factors impacting their career development in higher education, such as factors based on race/ethnicity and sex. Gonzalez-De Jesus (2012) explained that these factors could contribute to a glass ceiling for Latinas in higher education. The study included the stories of 20 Latinas who were community college mid-level administrators and the stories were analyzed through a rigorous seven-step process of phenomenological induction (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012). Gonzalez-De Jesus (2012) found that qualitative information depicting the experiences of women of color in

senior administrative roles suggested that for a mid-level woman administrator of color to obtain a presidential position her credentials and experience were put into question more so than the experience and credentials of male candidates.

Gonzalez-De Jesus (2012) pointed out that not enough attention has been paid to the barriers faced by women from different racial/ethnic groups. The study data indicated that Latinas in mid-level community college administration are experiencing barriers in and outside the workplace impeding them from advancing to the next level of leadership (Gonazlez-De Jesus, 2012). Gonzalez-De Jesus (2012) provided the following recommendations based on the research findings on how to increase the number of Latinas moving into leadership positions: Latinas should build a support system to balance home life and work and; find mentors to assist them in moving up into leadership roles and HR personnel should expand their recruitment efforts to include more diversity and more diverse methods.

A study conducted by Montas-Hunter (2012) discussed barriers to the upward career mobility of women and of people of color in academia and points to the existence of a glass ceiling in the higher education sector. The study examined the experiences of eight Latina leaders in higher education using a qualitative inquiry (Montas-Hunter, 2012). Montas-Hunter (2012) used Bandura's Theory of Self Efficacy as a theoretical framework to guide the study. Montas-Hunter (2012) found that for a Latina to be able to navigate within the majority culture, she must make her own cultural values compatible with the majority values to survive in academia. She further explains that this kind of constant navigation or bridging the two cultures requires both high levels of ethnic identity and high levels of acculturation (Montas-Hunter, 2012). "The data revealed that

100% of the participants had a strong sense of self as they developed as leaders and perceived that it has influenced how they make decisions and address challenges. One participant indicated, 'You have to be secure in your own skin to deal with adversity and the many challenges and opportunities these jobs afford us.'" (Montas-Hunter, 2012, p. 325).

León and Nevarez (2007) discuss how important it is that we learn more about how Latino leaders attain and carry out executive positions, to help increase the pool of Latina executives and guarantee their success. Muñoz (2010) conducted a study on Latina community college presidents and their experiences on the pathway to the presidency. This study examined the career paths and early influences, and external forces that converged to support their career development in becoming presidents and chancellors of their respective community colleges (Muñoz, 2010). Muñoz (2010) found that Latina women presidents encounter multiple marginality issues in the workplace. The following "four major themes emerged from interviews with the Latina presidents in this study: personal context, professional preparation, professional context, and finally challenges and the leadership pipeline" (Muñoz, 2010, p.163). This suggests that a Latina's progression from mid-level to senior executive leadership is possible with the right supports (Muñoz, 2010).

The literature indicates that some of the challenges faced are both dynamic and cultural for Latina leaders (Gonazlez-De Jesus, 2012; Montas-Hunter, 2012; Muñoz, 2010). Latina leaders deal with being Latina among Latinos and other minority groups, causing a duality in which a Latina must uphold their cultural values while representing her ethnicity among her peers and having to balance being a Latina leader wherein the

Latino culture *machismo* (Spanish for *manliness*) is at the core of the culture (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012). Additionally, researchers discussed that Latinas as chiefs of educational institutions may experience barriers in their careers in the form of work-life balance issues, negative stereotypes based on gender and race/ethnicity, and preconceptions based on cultural notions (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012). As a result, Latina leaders are in a constant state of balancing their behaviors and compromising their leadership style as well as the many roles ascribed to them (Montas-Hunter, 2012). This kind of constant navigation or bridging the two cultures requires high levels of ethnic identity and high levels of acculturation.

Latinas and the Higher Education Pipeline

The current literature suggests that leadership institutes are one solution to helping Latinas prepare for top university positions through instruction and mentoring (León & Nevarez, 2007). For instance, in a nationwide, mixed method study on Latina community college administrators, Muñoz (2010) found several commonalities among participants that were key to their preparation for leadership positions. Leadership institutions are available to empower Latina leaders and develop their careers into senior executive roles in higher education. The literature emphasizes the importance of professionals, especially Latinas, going through leadership programs to advance their careers (Rodríguez, Martinez, & Valle, 2016).

Gonazlez-De Jesus (2012) found that participation in leadership training programs is not only necessary for women of color who want to transition from mid-level to senior executive leadership, but the mentoring and the relationships that come from these programs are essential for Latinas to stay connected to a support system. Professional

development and training are important for career advancement although Latinas may not have the time to commit to these types of trainings (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012). Administrators reported barriers to their career advancement, some of which were lack or limited time for professional development, not having the appropriate degree or credential, lack of mentoring and/or networking opportunities, and the overall lack of institutional support for professional development opportunities (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012). Crespo (2013) also found that professional development is important for women seeking positions in senior leadership positions in higher education and noted that some argue professional development is critical for career advancement. A study by Hannum, Muhly, Shockley-Zalabak, and White (2015) that looked a women of color (WOC) leaders in higher education found that these WOC are not offered leadership opportunities at similar levels, while being more likely to experience scrutiny and criticism than their white counterparts. This suggests that research is needed for new approaches for leadership development.

During the past 20 years the term glass ceiling has been used to describe barriers women and people of color encounter when attempting to occupy positions of higher leadership (Gonzales-De Jesus, 2012). Strategies for entering executive positions with potential for promotion are suggested by the private sector management literature. These strategies are equally applicable to institutions of higher learning and include seeking opportunities to gain visibility by accepting difficult departmental tasks and knowing the right time to interview at different universities (Gonzales-De Jesus, 2012). Challenges begin early for Latinas seeking professional careers in higher education, for example, in his study of Latina doctoral students, González (2006) found that the challenges begin

when Latinas are graduate students and argued that oppressive work environments and institutional barriers make success in academia a daunting prospect for young Latina scholars. Muñoz (2010) also found that role preparedness, as well as earning academic credentials, is a requirement to establish the credibility of Latina scholars.

Some suggest that the corporate world and other organizations have done a much better job at building "Career-Pathing" models than higher education institutions (Crespo, 2013). For there to be a notable change in higher education administration for Latina women and other minority groups to hold senior leadership positions, there is a need for programs that intentionally prepare them for leadership positions (Crespo, 2013). Latinas have specific needs and barriers that challenge them in developing their careers in higher education administration. Crespo (2013) discusses how the role of culture and values of Latina women and their administrative work style makes it difficult for a Latina woman to act in self-promotion, while fighting for the rights of others might seem more natural. The literature revealed that the fourth most cited issue at Hispanic Serving Institutes had to do with faculty (León & Nevarez, 2007) with one president stating, "there is a limited pool of graduates in today's universities being trained to become teaching faculty or higher education administrators."

Professional Development for Latinas

There is a lack of research data on the career development of Latinas. The studies that have been conducted have focused on how cultural and family values, structural barriers and generational status influence career decisions. Research focused on the career development of Hispanic subgroup members has the potential to enhance diversity efforts within organizations as well as to contribute to a more expansive understanding of

career development (Hite, 2007). One recent study conducted by Savala (2014) focused

on the experiences of Latina/o in higher education in senior executive roles and found

that the leaders expressed a need for Latina/os to seek out training programs and

mentoring at every level to be successful.

   In my literature search for studies on leadership development programs for

Latinas I was only able to find one article published in 2015 that references the career

development of Latinas and how they achieved high level positions. The article was on

successful Latina scientists and engineers and their career development (San Miguel, &

Kim, 2015).

   Even a search for research on leadership development program for Latinas

yielded limited results.   In completing a web search for career and leadership

development opportunities for Latinas, I found a few leadership programs that focused on

developing Latina leaders. Though most of the websites had outdated information and

the program costs were in the thousands (National Hispana Leadership Institute (outdated

website, displayed 2014's application process); Latina Leadership Academy) while others

were more focused on a Latina leadership in activism (Latinas en Accion; National

Latina Institute for Reproductive Health; San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's

Latina Leadership Institute). Once again this leaves Latina women with limited options

outside of their institutions for career development opportunities both with availability,

access and affordability.

Planned Happenstance & Happenstance Learning Theory

   Planned happenstance was developed in career counseling after traditional career

counseling interventions were no longer enough to prepare clients to respond to career

uncertainties (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). "Chance plays an important role in everyone's career" and planned happenstance sees these unplanned events as opportunities for learning (Mitchell, et al., pg. 115). Planned happenstance theory is an amendment to the learning theory of career counseling that was an expansion of the social learning theory of career decision making (Mitchell, et al., 1999). The goal of planned happenstance is to assist clients in generating, recognizing and incorporating chance events into their career development (Mitchell, et al., 1999). Planned happenstance theory includes two concepts: the exploration to generate chance opportunities that increase the quality of life and teaching people the skills to seize opportunities (Mitchell, et al., 1999). Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) based planned happenstance on the following five skills career development: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk taking. Curiosity refers to exploring new learning, persistence to exerting effort despite setbacks, flexibility to changing attitudes and circumstances, optimism to viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable, and risk taking to acting in the face of uncertain outcomes (Mitchell et al., 1999).

The happenstance learning theory (HLT) was created to explain how and why individuals follow their different paths through life and to describe how practitioners can facilitate the career development of clients (Krumboltz, 2009). HLT "posits that human behavior is the product of countless numbers of learning experiences made available by both planned and unplanned situations. The learning outcomes include skills, interests, knowledge, beliefs, preferences, sensitivities, emotions and future actions" (Krumboltz, 2009, p. 135). HLT focuses on how individuals often transform unplanned events into career opportunities (Krumboltz, 2009). HLT states that educators can contribute in the

career development of its students "by designing engaging activities that enable students to improve their cognitive, emotional, and physical skills… to help everyone create a more satisfying life" (Krumboltz, 2009, p. 152).

Rhee, Lee, Kim, Ha, and Lee (2016) found that these skills discussed as part of planned happenstance not only take the chance factor in career development into account but also provide a series of guidelines for people on how to take constructive action and create opportunities to achieve personal career goals). The literature discusses how career counselors can use planned happenstance as a model to teach and educate their clients on how to engage and to remain alert to new opportunities, to generate unexpected events and to capitalize on the opportunities to further their careers (Krumboltz, 2009).

Adult educators, much like career counselors, help people handle many transitions in life, not just the transition from school to work. The learning outcomes of Planned Happenstance learning theory are to develop the following skills, interests, knowledge, beliefs, preferences, sensitivities, emotions, and to assist individuals in their future actions (Krumboltz, 2009 & Mitchell, et al., 1999). Skill building involves the exercise of training participants with skills that are practical and applicable to their daily work lives (Witchger, 2012). Leadership programs can apply the planned happenstance skills and strategies to educate Latinas in learning and developing skills to better navigate their careers.

Crespo (2013) found that skill building is an important tool in most leadership programs that can be used in order to have a long-term impact on participants. She also indicated it is also important for participants to have that opportunities to practice newly obtained skills in the work place. Leadership programs in higher education have been a

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long-standing tradition established for the training of future leaders in higher education. Leadership development opportunities may fail to address the differing perspectives or conditions of minority women who must negotiate an older White, male dominated organization (Muñoz, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

For this study, I used a conceptual framework focusing on happenstance learning theory as a lens and narrative inquiry's methodology of life story interview to uncover the untold story in the career development of executive Latinas in higher education. The view of career development for individuals is often thought of as a linear path and that assumption is that we believe it to be the same for everyone, man or woman, non-minorities and minorities alike. As we grow up people ask us "what do we want to be?" without thinking about the part of life that is unplanned and unpredictable. For minority women, such as Latinas, it is even more difficult to navigate a career path with even more unpredictable and unplanned challenges. Happenstance learning theory (HLT) recognizes that individuals are often challenged to respond to events (Krumboltz, 2009; Krumboltz, Foley, & Cotter, 2012) and this could include societal inequalities that are outside of a person's control. By focusing on action rather than primarily on insight, HLT recognizes that individuals can create small success experiences that help restore their sense of self-efficacy (Krumboltz, Foley, & Cotter, 2012).

Happenstance learning theory states that the most successful people in their careers adapt to reality as best they can (Krumboltz, Foley, & Cotter, 2012). Using the lens of happenstance learning theory to examine the career development of the Latinas in executive administrator roles in higher education provided a window into the actions

these Latinas took to reach their career goals. HLT states that the types of "actions to be considered may be quite drastic, for example: moving to a distant location, looking for work that is totally different from the work for which one was trained, enrolling in alternative training programs, and/or reducing expenses to the bare minimum needed for survival" (Krumboltz, Foley, & Cotter, 2012).

Krumboltz (2011) states "every action we take, every word we speak, results in some consequences we could not have predicted. That does not mean that we have no control over our lives. On the contrary, we have a great deal of control because the actions we take can generate outcomes on which we can capitalize. The outcomes may be different than those we expected, but it is important to realize that success depends on the ability to create and take advantage of unplanned events" (p.156). By using HLT's planned happenstance learning theory as a conceptual framework to view the career development of these Latinas, I was able to focus on whether Latinas in these executive roles capitalized on unplanned events to navigate their careers into higher executive roles. What actions did they take to capitalize on unplanned and unexpected events? Did they use the HLT skills to capitalize on these events?

This conceptual framework helped me in retelling the stories of these Latinas and their career development. De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2015) explain how narratives are primary modes of human thinking that enable human beings to share formulations of cause, effect, and consequence. By using the methodology of life story interview to collect their stories in combination with happenstance learning theory, it provided a practical methodological approach for the sensitive collection of personal narratives that

revealed how a specific person's life is constructed and reconstructed in representing that

life as a story (Clandinin, 2007).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework
Happenstance Learning Theory
(HLT) & Executive Latina
Administrators

**Career Goals
in Academia**

**Challenges
Faced**

*Challenges Faced: frequent challenges
Latinas face in academia

**Does not capitalize
on Happenstance**

**Capitalize on
Happenstance**

HLT Skills
curiosity,
persistence,
flexibility,
optimism, and
risk taking.

Did these
Latinas use these
skills to meet or
transform their
career goals in
academia?

**Does not meet
goals or feels
stagnant in career**

**Meets or
transforms
career goals**

Table 1. Categories of Chance Events from Betsworth and Hansen (1996)

Type of chance event	Description
Professional or personal connections	Relationships with employers, friends, professors, advisors, or colleagues produced information about jobs, informal recommendations to employers, invitations to join a specific program or position, and job offers
Unexpected advancement	The resignation, firing, or death of a previous worker and the subsequent selection or promotion of the participant into the vacated position
Right place/right time	Job opportunities arose at a time when participants were best able or prepared to take advantage of them
Influences of marriage and family	Events related to family. Commonly: (a) participants discussed the influence of their partners' careers on their own choices, including lifestyle, occupation, homemaking, and nonwork activities; and (b) participants discussed changes in their relationships that altered their career paths, such as the illness or death of a partner or divorce
Encouragement of others	Significant others provided encouragement for participants to acquire education and experience, set higher goals, or pursue a new field
Military experiences	Military service experiences influence participants' career paths
Influence of previous work/ volunteer experience	Past volunteer or work experiences allowed participants to develop talents and interests, gain necessary qualifications, or acquire experience in new areas of interest
Temporary position became permanent	Participants' tenure in jobs that they initially viewed as short term, evolved into long-term tenure due to personal choice (position was interesting or challenging) or job change (position became permanent or full-time)

Table 1. Cont.

Obstacles in original career path	Obstacles (e.g., lack of jobs, financial strain, illness, discrimination) hindered participants from pursuing their original career goals
Influence of historical events	Participants' career development was influenced by historical events, such as the Great Depression and World War II
Unintended exposure to interest area	Events that reflect the unexpected manner by which participants become interested in their subsequent fields (e.g., ''I happened to visit an animal hospital and became interested in veterinary medicine'')

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this literature review has revealed that there is some research examining Latina/o faculty in higher education regarding student recruitment, success and retention and faculty barriers to Latina/o faculty success in higher education (Delgado-Romero, Manlove, Manlove, & Hernandez, 2007) but little literature specifically on Latina administrative leadership, education, professional development, employment, and retention. Research on Latina administrative leadership, education, professional development, employment, and retention is limited in the current literature (Vargas, 2011) and it is important that we investigate these issues with the Latino population boom underway. As there is little research on Latina/os in administration there is even less specifically on the career development and leadership learning of Latinas in executive roles in higher education.

Understanding how Latinas learn leadership skills and navigate their career development has potential to help in others and institutions in career development and leadership pipelines for Latinas. Further studies are needed to better inform institutions how they can better prepare, develop, and retain Latina leaders and scholars.   A study focused on Latinas and how they navigate their career development into executive administrative roles in higher education is crucial at this time. How Latinas use skills highlighted by planned happenstance theory can help institutions and leadership programs to learn what strategies and skills for preparing Latinas on how to navigate a career in higher education administration.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to uncover the untold stories of Latinas and how they navigated their career into executive roles in higher education administration.   It explored how these Latinas responded to conditions and events during their career development and whether their actions and or skills they used could be explained by planned happenstance and happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz, 2009). This study investigated the following questions: What can we learn from the stories of executive Latinas in higher education and how they navigated their career paths into executive administrator roles in higher education institutions? And how does happenstance learning theory help understand the career development of Latinas in these executive higher administration roles?

This chapter will discuss the research methodology used for the study. The areas to be discussed are rationale for research approach, setting, sample selection, data collection and analysis, methods used to establish trustworthiness of the study, limitations and ethical considerations.

Rationale for Research Approach

To capture the story of the career development of these Latinas, qualitative research was used to retell the stories of how these women navigated academia to reach their executive positions in higher education. Qualitative research approaches allow researchers to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). An important characteristic of qualitative research is that the process is inductive as researchers gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories, particularly in contexts

for which there is limited existing information (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016).   Narrative inquiry helps reflect the narrator's unique personal story at each of their life cycle (Clandinin, 2007). An individual's primary way of making sense of experience is by narrative form, this is especially true in life transitions (Riessman, 1993); making life stories ideal for this research study. This research explored the ongoing process of constructing a narrative during the career choice and development for executive Latinas in academia. The research used a qualitative narrative inquiry approach in combination with life story interviews as the primary tool to understand the participants' stories. These approaches were used to explore how these Latinas navigated their career path into or in higher education to reach their professional goals.

Narrative Inquiry

The narrative inquiry process has grown out of several epistemologies and theoretical perspectives; it is grounded in Vygotsky's theory of learning which suggests that meaningful knowledge is socially constructed through shared understandings, dialogic discourse (Clandinin, 2007). Stories are how we make sense of our experiences, how we communicate with others, and a mechanism through which we understand (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Stories are also called "narratives" and have become a popular source of data in qualitative research (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016).   The key to this type of qualitative research is the use of stories as data, and more specifically, first-person accounts of experience told in story form having a beginning, middle, and end

(Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Narrative researchers, like poets, describe moments in lives in their texts to make sense of life experiences (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

Using narrative inquiry has been found effective in bringing to the fore silenced, untold, devalued, and discarded stories in numerous institutional or research-regulated contexts (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). Narratives help underlying issues become more visible and frequently emerge as the counter-stories, "the stories that are not encouraged or allowed in specific environments, that do not fit expectations of who the tellers should be and what stories they tell" (De Fina, & Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 263). De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2015) also discuss how narrative analysis and storytelling "has now become widely accepted that, even if not accurate or 'truthful,' stories and narratives open valuable windows into a wide range of organizational phenomena, including culture, politics, knowledge management, group dynamics, and so forth" (p. 276). This study used narrative inquiry from the constructivist perspective. The constructivist perspective aligns with this study as it discusses how there is limited separation between the researcher and the narrator (Clandinin, 2007). The narratives were collected through semi-structured interviews, reflecting the participants' intentions and interpretations of their career development (Clandinin, 2007).

Purposive Sampling

The study used purposive sampling as there were specific criteria for the participants (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Purposive sampling is also known as criterion-based sampling. In criterion-based sampling the researcher identifies the attributes that are crucial to the study for the participants (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). The criteria for inclusion in this study on executive Latinas in higher education were as follows:

participants identify as Latinas; were currently employed at the time of the study; had a minimum of five years of experience as an administrator; and had achieved executive status within the organization. For this study executive level was defined as meaning that the participant is in a role that has responsibility for a division or department with supervisory, policy development or organizational strategy responsibilities. Some examples of roles identified as fitting the criteria within academic affairs and student affairs divisions were such roles such as associate vice president, assistant vice president, deans and vice presidents or higher; in other divisions such as finance and other business departments similar roles were seen as acceptable for inclusion, such as assistant directors, associate vice presidents and vice presidents or higher; and other roles that report directly to a university president. The rationale for selecting these participants for the study was their expected experience and knowledge for navigating their careers to the "top," moving up the ladder, breaking both stereotypes and glass ceilings.

Recruitment

Recruitment for this study was conducted by identifying administrators from various 4-year institutions within the state of Texas. The researcher reviewed the online websites of institutions and reviewed information from organizational charts and departmental websites to look for possible candidates to invite to participate. Information from the institution website was crossed referenced with the public information website *Texas Tribune* to determine if an individual identified as Hispanic and/or Latina. The researcher also solicited professional leadership organizations and other online Latina groups to assist by sending recruitment emails on my behalf or sending names of individuals that may be interested in participating in this research study.

The researcher reviewed web sites of twenty public and private 4-year (doctoral granting) institutions within the state of Texas for possible participants. The researcher sent forty individual email invitations to potential participants, explaining the nature of the study. Of the forty potential participants identified eight responded; one stated that she was not a Latina and seven agreed to participate. The participants in the study were from various institutions in the state of Texas; 70% were from public universities and 30% were from private institutions. One of the seven participants had an earlier career outside of higher education; she transitioned from the private sector to higher education later into a mid-level position. All the participants had over 10 years of experience within higher education with 60% having over 15 years of experience. (See Table 2)

Table 2

Participant's Experience and Education

| Type of 4-yr Institution	Years in the Higher Education Field	Education
70% at Public Institutions	40% for 10-15 years	40% Master's or Professional Degree
		20% Currently Enrolled in Doctoral Program
30% at Private Institutions	60% for 15+ years	40% Doctoral Degree
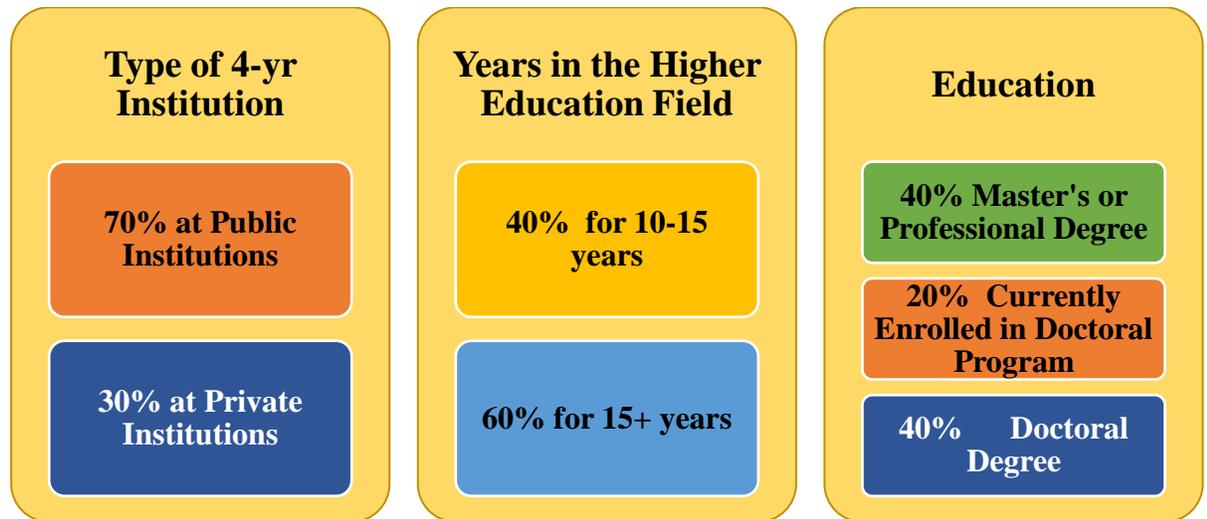
The women had various degrees in different fields, two had professional degrees, two were currently enrolled in a doctoral program and three had their doctoral degrees. The participants were from different regions within the state of Texas (See Table 3.)

Table 3

Texas Regions of Institutions

Texas Region of Institutions			
14% West	57% Central	14% South	14% East
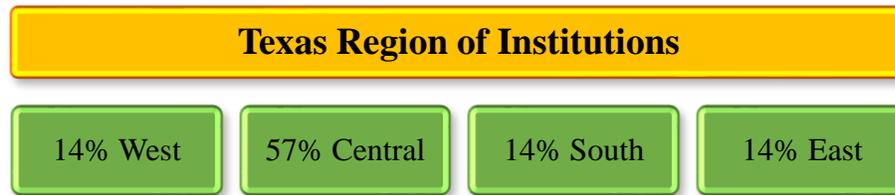
In addition to the participants being from different regions in Texas the size of the institutions also varied. The participants were from both small to large institutions both private and public. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2
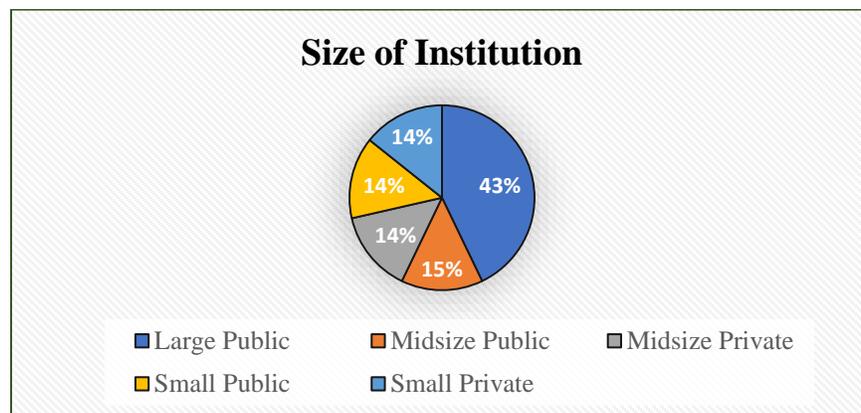
My goal was to recruit participants from various parts of Texas. To enhance potential transferability of findings, I felt it was important to capture as many diverse backgrounds as possible by attempting to recruit participants from various regions in the state of Texas and from different size institutions to include both public and private.

Data Collection

The data collection included interviewing participants, collecting of personal artifacts, and reviewing documents. The majority of the data for this research came from

the interviews. The personal artifacts and the documents were used in building rapport

with the participants and to assist with the interview process.

Interviews

Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how

people interpret the world around them (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016, p.108).   In this study,

it was also necessary to conduct interviews as I was interested in past events that led to

the Latinas' career development (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016, p.108).   Narrative inquiry

refers to the method of the life story interview (Clandinin, 2007). A life story is putting

one's story, one's entire lived experience into a story form (Clandinin, 2007). Hearing

the stories and career development pathways of Latinas in executive roles allows us to

better understand how individuals reach the "top," and perhaps how to help others in their

aspirations to enter executive roles in higher education. The life story interview approach

was used to create the interview guide with the lens of happenstance learning theory

(Clandinin, 2007).

Initial interviews were conducted face to face for most participants; due to

location and time conflicts for some participants interviews were conducted using video

conference. The interviews were one to two hours long and I used a semi-structured

approach with an interview guide that included open ended and structured interview

questions (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). I audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews

and stored the recordings and transcriptions in a secure fashion. Member checks were

conducted with the participants to review their narratives for accuracy of their stories and

to confirm that any revealing information was not present in their story in order to

conceal their identity.

Documents and Artifacts

Documents and artifacts are also sources of data in qualitative research and these types of data sources can exist in both a physical setting and an online setting (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Document is an umbrella term used to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Artifacts are usually three-dimensional physical objects in the environment that represent some form of communication that is meaningful to participants and/or the setting (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). I asked participants to share documents such as resumes, and other documents related to their career development, and any artifacts reflecting their personal journey that they would like to share during the interview process. To protect the identity of the participants the artifacts and documents shared are not discussed in detail. During the interviews the participants provided a copy of their resume with identifiers removed. The request for the artifacts was used as an ice breaker and to build rapport with the participants. Prior to their interview, the women were asked to bring an artifact to share that reflected their careers. Examples of the artifacts shared are: awards of recognition of their skills and gifts from family, mentors or students that were meaningful or reflected their career accomplishments (statues, a worry stone, figurines, a book, a painting). The artifacts or documents shared by participants were used to help me probe about other roles or career moves the participant may not have initially discussed.

Field Journal

A field journal was kept for note taking when conducting interviews as well during the data analysis process. To stimulate critical thinking about what I heard during the interviews I wrote observer comments and memos to myself about what I was

learning, either during or directly after the interviews (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016).

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) "these memos can provide a time to reflect on

issues raised in the setting and how they relate to larger theoretical, methodological, and

substantive issues" (p. 165). The field journal served mostly for purposes of taking notes

such as writing details of participants answers and notating areas for probing during the

interview.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis I used the narrative analysis process discussed by Caherine

Riessman (1993) as a starting point in analyzing the data and creating their individual

narratives. Narrative analysis takes the story itself as its object of investigation and the

purpose is to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience

to make sense of events and actions in their lives (Riessman, 1993). To find the

narratives in interviews a structural method is needed, Clandinin (2007) discusses how

the structure helps in recognizing the boundaries of stories. The boundaries of the stories

have a beginning that provides the reader with the who, when, what, and where; an end

where a coda brings the story to a close; and the in- between which includes why the

story was told and the important points this can also include an abstract summarizing the

story and chronological events (Clandinin, 2007).

I also used several of the steps in typological analysis to analyze the narratives. In

typological analysis the first step is to identify typologies to be analyzed (Hatch, 2002), in

this study it was the five skills of HLT. The next step is to read the data, coding for the

related typologies then looking for patterns and relationships (Hatch, 2002). The next

step that was used from typological analysis was deciding if the patterns supported the

data and reviewing the data for non-examples of patterns (Hatch, 2002). This was done in the study and other strategies used by the Latinas in their career development were identified in the stories using inductive analysis strategies (Hatch, 2002).

The interviews were recorded and transcribed as it is essential to narrative analysis. In transcribing the researcher can unpack the structure that is essential in analysis, by transcribing at this level the researcher can then see the emerging categories, the ambiguity in the language, and the way that the story is told that provides clues to the meaning of the story (Riessman, 1993). Riessman (1993) discusses using brackets in sections of text that appear to take a narrative form when working on a rough draft to assist in creating a story narrative. The task of identifying narrative segments and their representation cannot be delegated, as it is an important part of data analysis in narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993).

The next step of data analysis in a narrative is determining where a narrative begins and ends (Riessman, 1993). Once the boundaries of a narrative segment are decided, Riessman (1993) recommends taking that segment and numbering the lines. The next step is re-listen to the interviews to help the researcher shape how the story will be represented (Riessman, 1993). During this time the data collected would also be coded so that the researcher will be able to interpret the data during this step while data reduction may also be needed (Riessman, 1993). Some questions that Riessman (1993) poses to help the reader analyze the narrative are: "How is it organized? Why does an informant develop her tale this way in conversation with this listener? Whose voice is represented in the final product? How are we situated in the personal narratives we collect and analyze?"

The last step in narrative analysis is taking steps to validate the study conducted (Riessman, 1993). Riessman states that validation is essential to trustworthiness in narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993). Riessman (1993) offers four ways to validate a researcher's narrative analysis: persuasive, correspondence, coherence and pragmatic use. For this research, I used correspondence and pragmatic use. Pragmatic use is characterized by Riessman (1993) as to "whether or not the particular study provides a basis for other investigators' future research" (p. 69) Lincoln and Guba (1985) describes member checks as the review of the data collected, the categories, interpretations and conclusions with the participants. And doing member checks increases the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also made notes to clearly distinguish between my views as researchers and the participants' lives and views. In pragmatic use, a researcher provides others with information that allows them to decide the trustworthiness of the study (Riessman, 1993). The three steps that this study used during the data analysis were: revealing how the interpretations were shaped, making visible how the research was conducted, and making primary data available to other researchers (Riessman, 1993).

I completed each of the individual transcriptions for each interview in order to identify the segments for the narrative more readily. During the transcription process I did a preliminary data analysis and coded for the areas that reflected the five skills that happenstance learning theory discusses. During the second review of the data I continued to code for the five skills discussed by as part of happenstance learning theory: curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk taking, and I also highlighted other themes that emerged. Continuous data analysis was conducted with each subsequent transcription, allowing me to review previous themes. Once all the transcriptions were completed and

each transcript was analyzed, I reviewed all the themes that emerged. I then reviewed those themes and consolidated themes that emerged to more concise schemas. I tracked and coded the data using an excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet had sections for each of the happenstance theory skills, as well as happenstance events. Emerging themes were coded in a second tab of the same spreadsheet. Some coding overlapped amongst various themes, so the data was initially entered in both sections then sorted to one coding.

Role as Researcher

In narrative analysis, the role of the researcher within the interview is diversely connected to the disciplinary contexts and considerations on which it is made to bear (De Fina, & Georgeakopoulos, 2015). According to DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) the role of the researcher is to provide insight into the thinking of a group and the individuals that make it up. A narrative form of expression will be offered explicitly as possible to the interviewees, for this study I used an interview guide to help begin the conversation with participants on their career development into higher executive roles. The role of qualitative research is the development of hypotheses and theory (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). During this research my role as researcher was to complete frequent reassessment of initial research questions and hypotheses and facilitates the development of new hypotheses and questions as new insights occur because of increasing familiarity with the context theory (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). The researcher is expected to be active and an insightful investigator by continually reviewing field notes and transcripts and continually tossing out old ideas and posing new questions for study during the fieldwork and post-fieldwork phases of research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

Narrative research consists of obtaining data on and then reflecting on people's lived experiences thus making it a relational work (Clandinin, 2007). Every part of the research is touched by ethics and it is the narrative researchers' responsibility to protect the privacy and dignity of those whose lives we study (Clandinin, 2007). Ethical practice asserts that researchers ensure that participants consent freely, confidentially is kept and participants are protected from any harm that they may ensue from their participation (Clandinin, 2007). Another ethical consideration is ending the interview(s) in a manner that provides closure to the participant Clandinin (2007) suggests posing the following question to assist in this process "What questions do you have for me as we end our time together?" (p. 545). It is also important at the end of the interview that the researcher should reemphasize their role (Clandinin, 2007).

The role of institutional review boards (IRBs) is to review research to determine that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected. The Texas State University IRB's role is to review any research that is conducted or supported by the Texas State University faculty, students or staff. Texas State is guided by the ethical principles regarding all research involving humans as subjects, as set forth in the by the Belmont Report. Texas State's IRB reviewed this study for the following before approval, to be sure proper consideration was given regarding a) the risks to the subjects; b) the anticipated benefits to the subjects and others; c) the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result; and d) the informed consent process to be employed.

This research followed the IRB procedure for Texas State University, and I took all precautions in protecting identify of participants, including use of pseudonyms, securing files to limit access to data, and selective sharing of data within the study write-up to avoid revealing participant identities. For this study, the data have been stored in a password protected storage. During the data collection and analysis process, access to the data was limited to myself, the participants (their own data only) and, as necessary, by my dissertation committee. The data and any publicly identifiable information are not be stored in the same data file/document and have been kept separate to protect the identity of the participants.

Once the study is complete, I will keep the data secured for three years, then the data will be deleted. I used an informed consent form constructed to parallel a template form provided by the Texas State University IRB, each participant was provided with a consent form and asked to voluntarily agree to participate in the study. Each participant will have the right to revoke their consent at any time and withdraw from the study. A copy of the consent form is included in appendix A.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness for this study the following criteria were used to establish credibility: internal validity (credibility), external validity (transferability), reliability (dependability), and objectivity (neutrality) (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007). In order to establish trustworthiness for this study the following techniques were employed for credibility.   I maintained a field journal in order refrain from distortions that could arise from biases and maintained a consistent data gathering technique to ensure replicability as well. During the second interview, member checks were used,

requesting that the participant review the preliminary narrative and emerging themes. The participant was then asked to submit any corrections within a certain timeframe that worked both for the participant and researcher.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Those who read the research will be assisted in making judgements about the transferability of the findings of this research to their own context by the inclusion of thick, rich description of the context and sufficient inclusion of data supporting conclusions from this study. This description will be evident in the next chapter, sharing stories of the participants with the use of selected quotations. This report also documents the methodological choices taken, including how interviews were conducted, under what circumstances, and how the interviews were recorded and analyzed. This allows the reader to assess the dependability and validity of the study.

Limitations

The study has various limitations due to the nature of the research. In conducting a narrative analysis, the number of participants is limited since it is not feasible to have many participants due to the detailed work in transcribing data, but this is more a delimination related to the choice of methodology, than a limitation per se. A limitation was access to the participants; the women who were sought as participants for this study have busy lives and an interview is time consuming. Only seven participants volunteered of more than 40 who were contacted and met study criteria, based on public and university data information. Another foreseeable limitation may have occurred if some participants felt they could not elaborate on too many details of their career development

for fear of providing data that would make them identifiable, potentially allowing retaliation from the institutions or individuals they work with. This left the researcher with challenges in being both accommodating and flexible when scheduling interviews with these women, and in sharing "thick rich description" that would enhance the transferability of study findings without revealing participants' individual identities or academic units and affiliations. These are limitations that are common for qualitative studies that research underrepresented individuals.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of the current study was to share the career development stories of these powerful Latinas in academia. The study investigated whether their successful career development can be explained by happenstance learning theory. Thus, narrative inquiry and analysis was used to capture and explore their career development and life stories. Narrative inquiry was used as it is appropriate for oral, first person accounts of the experience and is appropriate for small sample sizes as the data collected during narrative interviews can be thick and rich.

The Latinas in this study were executive-level professionals from four-year doctoral degree offering institutions in the United States. The data were collected through interviews, personal artifacts, and public data. Procedures for data analysis has also been described here. The researcher transcribed interviews and re-transcribed the selected sections to find emerging categories and unveil the untold stories of these high-ranking Latinas in academia. Efforts to conduct the study in an ethical manner and attend to the trustworthiness of the study have also been described in this chapter.

IV. FINDINGS

Currently demographic statistics show that Latinas/os remain among the fastest growing racial/ethnic groups in the nation (Ledesma, 2017), although the representation of Latina/o leaders are not growing in the same rate.   Yet, many argue that administrators and leaders in higher education institutions should be reflective of the diversity of student body they serve.   Ledesma (2017) states that in higher education, leadership diversity is imperative and that a diversified postsecondary leadership is a prerequisite to begin responding to students' needs for a more truly cohesive and inclusive learning environment. Arciniega (2012) also discusses the need for Latino leadership-building effort. He further states that institutions and organizations need to organize multiple efforts and initiatives to identify and prepare the next wave of Latino and other ethnic minority leaders (Arciniega, 2012). Researchers state that higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to educate tomorrow's leaders and initiate change in the number and ethnic diversity of women in leadership roles (Onorato & Musoba, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to explore the career development of a purposefully selected sample of Latinas who have succeeded in advancing to executive roles in higher education. It is important to research how these women were successful in reaching the "top." In exploring their career development, this research will provide guidance for future Latina/o and other minority leaders in higher education. This is becoming even more important as the student Latina population continues to grow, and more Latina's are needed in executive roles in higher education to reflect the changing student body. Cabrera (2009) found that in order to keep women in the career track organizations need to identify and implement changes that help women stay. Harris (2007) discussed the

need for a positive institutional change to decrease the challenges that women faculty still face primarily in the form of for equal opportunity to enter, advance, and gain overall gender parity in academia.

By studying the career development of these Latinas in executive roles, we can examine the strategies they utilized to navigate their careers in higher education. This study used happenstance learning theory as the lens to review their narratives and to identify the strategies these executive Latinas used during the career development. The planned happenstance skills were identified within the narratives of the Latina's career development as well as other factors. The use of planned happenstance was noticed in the narratives as key to the career development of theses executive Latinas. Planned happenstance focuses on the actions and skills that can be used to overcome unplanned challenges and unexpected events to reach one's professional goals.

Aside from the skills discussed as a part of planned happenstance theory, there were two other skills or strategies that the women utilized during their career development. The two skills or strategies were self-assessment and networking/building relationships.

Participant Profiles

All the participants of this study identify as Latinas and at the time of the study they were current administrators, or executives at their respective institutions. During their careers they all faced their own challenges and continue to face them every day as executives in higher education. Though the purpose of this study was not to highlight the struggles and challenges faced by Latinas in leadership in higher education, it is important to acknowledge these issues. When sharing their career development these Latinas discussed both the overt and covert discrimination that they face due to their race

and gender. These women learned to face these challenges and not allow others to define them nor how they can grow and develop. Their stories suggest that to be successful as a Latina leader, you must move, grow and develop beyond what is in front of you.

Maria

Maria is currently a vice president for a private university in south Texas. She has worked for the institution for 10 years. Maria grew up in south Texas with both her parents and six siblings. She attended a small private school for her early years of K-8, then public school for grades 9-12. Before her freshman year of high school, Reaganomics hit her parents hard and she and her siblings all transferred to inner-city public schools. Despite the challenges they faced, Maria embraced all the new opportunities that public high school offered her and her sisters. Maria graduated high school with honors and attended a large Texas university. She finished with her bachelor's degree. Not knowing exactly what she wanted to do after earning her bachelor's degree, Maria then decided to enroll in a postgraduate degree.

Maria's first career was in the private sector and she later made a career change into higher education. She started a great career at a small minority-owned company and learned a lot about the field. Maria then had her first child and decided she wanted to be closer to home. She moved back to south Texas after getting a job offer with another company doing similar work. As time went on and her family grew, she moved to a different agency for a better work life balance. While the company at first offered the work-life balance she had hoped for, it didn't completely fulfill her and her values. Like many other companies in the field, there were few minorities and the microaggressions

had become obvious. She was the only Hispanic in her role out of about 60+ other professionals in a city with a large Hispanic population.

She decided to take a leap and change her career field. She took a risk to move into higher education. She knew nothing about the higher education field and had never imagined a career in higher education administration. She began her career in higher education at a private university in south Texas that aligned with her personal values and beliefs. She grew and developed in her role, taking her skills and experience from her previous profession and is now a vice president for that university. Maria faced similar issues that others have faced but her persistence, flexibility, and positive outlook helped her overcome those challenges. Maria is happy to be in a role that does not compromise who she is—that does not make her choose between her role as a mother, her culture or her work.

Janie

Janie is a vice president at a private institution in central Texas. Janie was born in the Midwest. Her parents separated when she was young and when she turned eight her and her mother moved to Texas to be close to her grandparents. At a young age she learned how to live between two households.

Two very different households, one very Latina, very very Hispanic and then one completely not. I learned at a very young age how to adjust to the norms of the culture. It was very clear to me that there were things you did at my dad's house and vice versa.

She learned to be flexible with her identity. Her education began with attending a head start program. She continued to attend public schools from K-12. She reports being an average student in high school but was able to get an athletic scholarship.

As an undergraduate, Janie attended a junior college then later transferred to a large public university. It did not take long before she recognized that a large institution was not for her; she felt lost in such a large university. Janie was no longer participating in athletics and just felt lost in the system. She desired to go to a smaller university and wanted to change her major to education. There were two things her father was not supportive of; he wanted her to major in business and stay at the public university. Janie's father made it clear that if she changed universities, he would no longer support her financially with her schooling.

Janie made the decision to transfer to a private institution despite her father's ultimatum. She made a choice that she was going to choose what was right for her even if it meant losing her father's financial support. Later she felt the urge to complete her master's degree. Janie wanted to develop her career in higher education administration and felt it was the route to go. And now, she is currently working on her PhD, "I'm currently ABD working on my dissertation and um yeah feel very …. I feel as … as inspired but also like an alien"

Janie's career began as an elementary teacher and then later she became a coach at a junior college. After several years of coaching volleyball, she moved into administration at the junior college. She moved into different roles and institutions within Texas before finding the role that she felt provided her both with life/balance and met her values.

Cassandra

Cassandra is an assistant vice-president at a public, west Texas university. Cassandra grew up in west Texas, raised in a middle-class household. She grew up with both her parents during most of her childhood; later when Cassandra was in high school her parents divorced. She has three siblings. For Cassandra elementary school did not start well and she reflected on how that was a major influence on how she feels about education and the importance of being an advocate to students. She had a pivotal moment when her second-grade teacher saw talent in her. Cassandra has memories of wanting to be an astronaut, a pediatrician, and then an attorney. Though Cassandra was not sure what she wanted to be, she knew that she at least wanted to have her master's degree like her mother.

Cassandra not only wanted to do well, but she wanted to excel. This led to her being tracked into pre-AP and AP classes, this then led to her graduating first in her graduating class. Cassandra had many options on where to attend school. She decided to attend an Ivy league college far from home. After a semester there she transferred back to a public university in her hometown. Cassandra had various reasons for leaving the Ivy league school but ultimately feeling like the institution was not the right fit for her. This led her to return home. To her surprise, she fell in love her hometown university and completed her bachelor's degree there.

After she completed her bachelor's degree, she was offered a position in another field. Ultimately, she decided to not take the job as she realized it was not the right fit for her. She decided to go into education despite her apprehension at the lack of prestige in working in education. She moved from K-12 to higher education through a happenstance

event that guided her into the higher education field.   With some guidance by mentors and through the relationships she built, she has been able to grow in higher education into her current executive role.

Donna

Donna grew up in south Texas, her parents divorced at a young age. Later her mother remarried, her stepfather is whom she grew to consider as her father. He raised both her and her brother. She attended private school up to eighth grade. For high school, due to finances and other circumstances, she went to a public high school. "It was a completely different world, just very different and the assumption was that if you came from private school, you were going to be put in all the accelerated courses." Donna was in the band and that's where she was exposed to graduations and the announcement of scholarships. I had this realization with myself like where is this money coming from for college. Then I went to the graduation ceremonies, the students would stand there with their cap and gowns and it would be announced this person received this or that scholarship and the lightbulb went on. Well I must do that; I have to win a scholarship. And I discovered that I am the type of person that once I set my mind something it's hard to sway me."

Donna did win a scholarship; she worked hard, and she got the scholarship that she set her mind on. She learned the importance of persistence as a teen; persistence also helped her finish her undergraduate degree. When she finished her degree, she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She received her bachelors and she just began looking for jobs. She took a risk and searched everywhere. "I just need a job, it wasn't like I was looking for a specific industry, so I got a job at the Office of the Attorney General. It was

an entry level job." When she was ready to look for another place of employment, she went to a university job fair. "It was just an open job fair, I didn't know what was going to be there, but I really felt like I needed to go." She got to the job fair and it was in a stadium type of setting. She felt deflated after all the work she did to get there. After 30 minutes she decided to leave, but just as she was leaving a woman stood in the middle room and stated she was collecting resumes if anyone wanted to drop one off. Donna threw hers in, thinking it was a waste of her time and left the job fair. A few weeks later, she got a call from the university system administration. That was her first step into the field of higher education. She spent several years there before leaving to attend graduate school. After obtaining a professional degree, she returned to higher education where she grew and developed into her executive role as a vice president at a large Texas university. Reflecting on this turn of events, she said:

> *I've learned that sometimes a career just kind of develops over time. If someone had told me coming out of college that I would end up working in a higher education setting in student affairs, I would have probably been like okay, I have no idea what student affairs is. I wouldn't have had a clue.*

Evelyn

Evelyn is an assistant dean at a public university in east Texas. Evelyn and her parents are from Chihuahua, Mexico. She immigrated to the United States when she was two years old. Evelyn was raised by both her parents along with her two sisters. She grew up in the panhandle of Texas. Growing up Evelyn used to say she wanted to be a doctor then a lawyer, and as she reflected on it, laughs "now I'm neither of those things."

Evelyn grew up a in a very small town. From elementary to high school there was just one campus. She obtained her first degree from a private university in central Texas. After completing her first degree she was not sure where she wanted to go. Evelyn had an advisor that she would talk with frequently during her undergraduate years. One day during conversation Evelyn was discussing not knowing what she wanted to do after she graduated. Evelyn then asked her advisor, well what about what you do? How do I do that? Evelyn's advisor explained that there was a degree for her job role. Evelyn liked the idea of student affairs, but she was unsure if it was what she wanted to do. "That's why I did the AmeriCorps, it allowed me to work at a university with students doing service learning." From there, she decided to obtain her master's degree from a public university in central Texas and is now currently working on her PhD from that same university.

Fatima

Fatima is from Central America; she grew up with both her parents. Her parents came from humble means. Though she grew up poor her father always stressed the importance of education. He worked three jobs so that she and her siblings could attend the best schools. She went to a Catholic school. Her father would tell her and her siblings 'you guys are going to break the cycle of poverty' and they all did. Fatima and her siblings are all highly educated and doing very well. Fatima respected education and educators, such that when asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, she would state a teacher.

Fatima completed her education in private school and received her bachelor's degree in her home country. As she continued to pursue her education, she was

nominated to a prestigious scholarship--a scholarship that would have covered all her educational, living and travel expenses in the United States. Unfortunately, she was unable to receive it as she needed to take her GRE in another country and was not able to do that due to the ongoing war at the time in Central America. Fatima did not let this stop her. She persisted on her own and moved to the US. She decided to attend school in central Texas; she even received a special admission in the middle of the year. She completed both her masters and PhD at the university where she is now an administrator. She thanks God for having good self-esteem and the belief that she could go anywhere, do anything and succeed.

Grace

Grace is currently an assistant director at a large university in central Texas. Grace grew up a small traditional Hispanic household with both her parents and one sister. Her mother was a teaching assistant and her father a fire fighter. "We came from modest backgrounds; we weren't rich we weren't poor." Grace attended private school from first to eighth grade. When it was time to attend high school, she decided to attend public school. "My parents gave me the option to go to public school. I wanted to try something different, something out of the norm and not follow all of my friends."

Grace was willing to take a risk in her adolescent years. She gained valuable experiences in public high school. "I competed in state competitions, got scholarships and design work for higher education." Being a first-generation college student, college was completely foreign to Grace's parents. After receiving scholarships for graphic designs, she decided to attend a large public school in central Texas. She completed her bachelors and obtained a job in marketing; it was her dream job. Shortly after, she found

that her dream job was nothing like she expected, and she hated it. She explored her

options and decided to take an entry level position at another university.

Grace took an entry level job as an administrative assistant. She did all the basic

administrative work from working the front, picking up mail, filing paper work and doing

those very basic tasks that you would see in the office. From there Grace moved into a

supervisory role: "and that's when I really started getting more responsibilities and started

supervising two programs out of the entire auxiliary transportation portfolio. and then

from there as my responsibilities grew as well as my skill set." She then found that

having an undergraduate degree and return to school and completed her master's degree.

She graduated with her master's and continued working full time with the same

university. As Grace's role and responsibilities grew, she "read the writing on the wall

"and that if she wanted to move into leadership, she would need to obtain her PhD.

Grace continues to explore new opportunities and grow within her role.

Grace's director recently came to her and asked her to be part of a new mentor

program that is being developed. Her director sees her as a success story since she started

out as a student worker then an administrative and she continued to work her way up to

assistant director for the Department. "I told him yes I would love to mentor other people

under the condition that I get vertical mentoring. I want to be mentored by somebody

executive leadership and move into the next role." She is willing to take a risk and when

asked to take on more responsibilities she not only takes on the new duties it as an

opportunity.

Grace understands the many challenges that can be faced at institutions that have

few minority group members in leadership. Her advice to other women interested in

leadership in higher education is working on finding your voice. "Getting them to listen is always going to be a challenge, it's always going to be uncomfortable. But it is something you grow into and you learn to speak up and not be intimated. You'll learn with experience and you'll take that knowledge into the meeting room."

Planned Happenstance as Evidenced in the Careers of Participants

Planned happenstance theory encompasses discussion of the five skills needed that can help individuals progress in their career development. In developing happenstance learning theory, Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) postulated five skills that an individual could use to make the most of unplanned events. They stated that it is important for individuals to search for and utilize happenstance events in their career development (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). They posited that by using the five skills individuals can utilize happenstance efficiently. According to the theory, the five skills an individual can utilize to help their career development are curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). Happenstance or coincidence plays an important role in the beginning of career development; some people transform happenstance events into an opportunity for learning whereas others gain nothing (Kim, et al., 2014).

Curiosity

Happenstance theory points to using the skill of curiosity to explore new learning opportunities (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). Each of the participants in this study showed an underlying curiosity in learning and exploring new opportunities during their career development. Below are examples of how these executive administrators used curiosity to grow and develop their careers.

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For instance, Cassandra does not look for formal professional learning development opportunities but looks at interactions with vendors, colleagues and even consultants as opportunities for learning.

But I had a lot of interest in student information system data the way that curriculum related to student success and registration. And so [the department] took interest in me, so they started taking me to different events and professional organizations.

Cassandra continues to see the importance of exploring new learning opportunities.

We need to, especially in this role, we need to keep in touch with how students respond to recruitment efforts. Do they respond better to video or text or to printed materials or electronic? Sometimes when something is not working, I reach out to a colleague. I'll ask them to step in and ask can you help me understand? Those are the types of professional development that are important.

Evelyn, like some of the other participants was not sure what she wanted to do after college. She spoke with her advisor and was really interested in what her advisor did.

But I wasn't really sure that's what I wanted to do. That's why I did the AmeriCorps; it used to be the Texas Compact at the time. It allowed you to work at a university in Texas with students doing service learning. And I thought well this would be a good avenue because I didn't have that conversation with her[advisor] until late in my degree attainment. And at the end of the year it solidified for me that I wanted to go into this field.

In taking this opportunity to learn and explore a possible career in student affairs Evelyn was able to discover if a career in higher education was for her.

Maria used curiosity throughout her career. This can be seen in how she decided to explore a different field and switch careers. Maria was willing to move into higher education and explore a new career opportunity.

"Like me coming to this field, I didn't know anything about higher education. I mean I knew about insurance, about litigation personal injury litigation but at some point, you have the confidence. I have transferable skills and you might be scared that first day, but you'll figure it out"

Janie explored career options growing up when the opportunities arose. Curious to explore career field of the only Latina she knew in a professional role; Janie got an internship with her.

She was Latina and I went and spent a summer interning for her. Thinking I wanted to be just like her, that wasn't my call. It was just really amazing to be around ...somebody of power. She ended up being a judge later and being around somebody that was well respected and that was also bilingual. Was very powerful, so I think when I reflect on that um it was more about seeing a professional woman and wanting to be like her opposed to follow that career.

After completing her undergraduate degree, Janie began working. She later decided to explore more learning opportunities. "I never thought I was going to get a master's degree, so you know… and at some point, I just had this urge to do it." This continued when she decided to obtain her doctoral degree "I'm learning all the stuff and I'm seeing

things differently… nobody else around me even understands what I'm talking about…

including my husband. You know, so it's a very lonely being in a doctoral program."

Flexibility

Krumboltz (2009) states that having flexibility during unpredictable, chance

events can assist you in your career development. He further explains that flexibility can

be reflected by changing attitudes and circumstances or the flexibility to address a variety

of situations and life events (Krumboltz, 2009). Below are some examples how these

women used flexibility in their own career advancement.

Janie learned to be flexible at a young age. She learned that she had to be flexible

between her two households to be successful. "I learned at a very young age how to

adjust to the norms of the culture just because it was very clear to me that there were

things you did at my dad's house and vice versa." She used this skill at various times to

develop in her career; capitalizing on the ability to adjust Janie was able to advance her

career at a young age. Janie discusses how being flexible in the roles you take can open

more doors and help in developing skills.

> *It really impacted, how I approached education. Going back and forward has*
>
> *really shaped me, in my framework as a higher education scholar. I have really*
>
> *built my career in [my field]. I was at institution a couple of years and I was*
>
> *recruited away. To an institution completely outside the path into administration,*
>
> *since it was such a niche school, niche market; But I did it and I spent seven years*
>
> *there. At a very young age, I was in my early 30s, I had a seat at the table, and I*
>
> *learned a lot of lessons about what it's like at that table. How to act, what kind of*

questions to ask, when to speak up when not to speak up. I spent a great seven

years there.

Janie used her skill to adjust to a new setting to get the most out of on the opportunity being in a role outside of what others see as norm. By doing so she was able to learn valuable skills early in her career.

As a Latina in higher education administration Cassandra has faced the challenges other Latinas encounter in their roles–both overt and covert microaggressions. She understands that to be successful she must be flexible and to keep moving forward. *She shared "That doesn't make it right for you to be quiet or for you or for the comment to be right. They're tough to take and it's tough to know when to speak up and fight back."* She reevaluates the situation and thinks about how to approach the person if it arises again. *"As I'm going through that process you kind of have to remind yourself, you're not the one that was in the wrong you're not the one that made the comment."* She does acknowledge that sometimes you do have to respond to the comments, because the comments need to stop.

Maria also faced discrimination in her first career, which led her to be flexible. She learned how to adapt in the role, and she developed herself by pushing herself beyond her comfort zone. She stated, *"I mean what do you say, I mean you have to be respectful and rise above it and recognize that it is their problem and not mine."* Another way that Maria displayed flexibility was in moving out of her comfort zone and realizing that it was necessary for her to further her career. *"The value of networking in my business is huge and I am a real introvert. I learned to work at not being that."* Flexibility can also be used when work life balance is needed. Maria discussed taking a

job so she could balance having more time raising her children versus a role that require more travel and time away from home.

> *And with this company I would have nothing but cases that were easy; I mean easy it's stuff that I practiced enough where I could just do those cases without a lot …effort but you know. I had done so many of those, so it was easy. I needed the easy work. I needed the easy schedule.*

Maria did not want to be the kind of mother that did not know her kids and she also did not want to not have a career. She was unwilling to give either one up, so she was flexible in her choices in order to have both. Her flexibility allowed her to accept roles that would serve her needs but still gain the experience she needed to advance.

Donna also recognized the importance of flexibility and optimism in order to meet her career goals and development. She stated:

> *We must be flexible and be nimble and look for the opportunities. A lot of times I think that just comes from doing the best work that you can all the time, because you never know coming into circles when you're going to be asked to do something. Or the next person that you're working with, that person that's watching you work it's going to be the one that opens the next door for you. You just must be on your game all the time.*

Cassandra also discussed how being flexible in her career choices helped her move into a career that she initially did not think would be a good fit for her.

> *So, when I decided that I was going to turn down the job to do policy work and that I was going to go into teaching it was a really really hard decision for me. It just was just a tough thing for me and so I decided that I was going to go into*

education and for some ways it was a relief for me because I was doing what I

wanted to do. And really the work that teachers do is no less important. As I

started to see a lot of the walk out of teachers especially recently and as we study

the correlation between education and economic prosperity and opportunity for

students. Now, I am more proud that I did in years past.

Persistence

Happenstance learning theory also points to the importance of persistence in career development. Persistence means to continue to push through despite setbacks and determination to deal with obstacles that arise. Each of the women discussed how persistence has helped during different stages in their career and education.

During Cassandra's career she experienced an event that helped her grow and pushed her to be more. A mentor made it clear to her that she did not believe Cassandra was ready for the current role.

She didn't think that I was strong enough [to]deal with some of the misogyny that

continues be present in higher education careers and that [I]didn't have the

experience as well. And that really changed me because I really started to

question and doubt myself and it was one of the first times that I had experience

that it was humbling.

Cassandra looks back at that conversation and recalls it was one of the harder conversations that she has had with a mentor. She reflected: "*and that, changed the relationship that she and I shared but I became a much more humble person. If anything, it pushed me. Okay, so I don't know enough about enrollment, but I can learn. I'm going to read everything that I possibly can.*" She took that conversation and decided to keep

pushing forward and to overcome her inexperience she decided to do something to improve herself. She also discussed how as a woman in higher education she faced challenges but learned how to keep moving ahead. "*And another thing the misogyny it's here, it's probably everywhere, and it has made me a lot stronger.*"

When Maria faced challenges both in her academics and in her career, she reminded herself to be persistent. She recognized several experiences where she had to "Those are just experiences that you push through you don't let it stop you. You use it as an opportunity to show that you merit their respect and if they don't want to give it to you, you don't change who you are… And you just keep moving forward." Others, like Maria, faced struggles that challenged their determination.

Fatima discussed how she persisted when she faced obstacles during her career development. "I think that was one of my greatest challenges was that I didn't have anyone to guide me. It hurt a little because you could see other people being groomed, positioned and I didn't have that. But I didn't let that make me bitter, that only gave me more strength to continue. In the end I got what I want it, but it was hard. Self-determination is crucial; it's the belief that you can do it. We must share that with students, that we can do it!"

Similarly, during Evelyn's career development she experienced an event that helped her grow and recognize her areas of improvement. She was encouraged to apply to an assistant dean position at her previous institution. She applied but did not get the role. "*I was thinking that sucks, they encouraged me to apply. This is kind of like you're kicking me in the gut or at least that's what it felt like.*" But it highlighted for me that I was still missing that skill set."

When Evelyn started her PhD program, her professional role and responsibilities had just shifted. Some days she found it very overwhelming thinking "Why am I here for 3 hours? Couldn't I have just read about this?" Then she relearned the importance of persistence. She stated:

You're just like you just have to push through it and it teaches you more than you think in the moment. It teaches you to persevere and to manage your time. To keep pushing forward and I think that's why you have people that don't finish because they don't grasp that.

Optimism

In planned happenstance theory optimism is defined as having a positive attitude when pursuing new opportunities. Optimism can be utilized to maximize benefits from unplanned events.

Grace has shown throughout her career development the importance of a positive attitude when pursuing new opportunities by doing so she has been able to make the most of unplanned events.

One way that I look for opportunities is taking on additional tasks that are outside of my wheelhouse by becoming the point of contact for HR. Becoming the person over the administrative side of the department to sitting on the conduct committee. It's something you never see as part of my department. This has led to other opportunities like becoming a lecturer.

Fatima discussed how she believed in herself and was optimistic she would succeed. She articulated: *"I had to do it on my own. So, what I did was, I created my own opportunities and that's how people were able to know me."*

Janie combined optimism and risk taking early in her career. She accepted a job offer prior to graduating college. The job was contingent that she be graduate by that Fall, *"so I went straight to my advisor that May and said I need to graduate by August. Again, by the grace of God and relationships that I had built I was able to do it."* Another example in Janie's career was when she was offered a leadership position with a small niche university. She took that opportunity despite the risks others warned about. *"The decision to go to that [institution] was a huge risk for me. I actually had somebody tell me that it was career suicide."* In taking the role at an institution that many did not see as an opportunity, she learned so much more than she expected or imagined. She learned how to sit "at the table" and how to conduct herself at the executive level in higher education early in her career.

Maria discussed how she uses optimism every day and imparts that in her children as well. "It is optimism" you can say "'omg I hate this job' but it is what you make it. I tried to tell my kids that if you want to have a good day, you can have a good day. If you want to have a bad day you will definitely have a bad day."

Risk Taking

Happenstance learning theory discusses taking risks to reach our career goals; acting in the face of uncertain outcomes (Krumboltz, 1999). The women each took risks in their careers, some major and some minor. Following are some examples of how these women took some risk to reach their career goals.

Fatima did not have a clear idea or plan for her career journey but took some risks to develop opportunities. Fatima explained that she took these risks in her life and career with faith that she would get to the path God planned for. She left her country with no

family and no money, only with the determination to make a better life for herself and family. She continued this on when she finished her PhD and found herself looking for a job. She took a part-time job to make ends meet since she was unable to find a job.

I applied for 2 years without getting even an interview. That was very interesting, and I remember because I chose to stay, I didn't want go to through the faculty route. They didn't accept my experience from my home country as a valid experience. I didn't have experience in the US because there were no internships at this time and that's the reason internships. I made my own internship in a way. I chose the Dean of student office because they had student retention and it was academic success for the Black and Latino students.

Maria had various times she used risk taking in her career. One instance was motivated by wanting to move back to her home town. She asked her supervisor:

What are the possibilities of ya'll opening an office in __. I know I'm asking a lot but I contribute a lot. I mean I handle all the cases down south I am the only Hispanic professional that you have in this office to deal with a lot of those cases. And I understand the value that that brings.

Another time Maria used risk taking to advance her career was when she decided to change careers. This was a big decision, Maria wanted a better work life balance and no longer felt that the company she worked for had the values she wanted from a workplace. She no longer wanted to work for a company that allowed misogyny. She saw an opportunity from moving from the private sector to higher education and to an institution that shared her personal values. Maria took the risk, in both changing fields and with being clear about her priorities during the interview process. She reported:

I applied to this position at … I really didn't think I would get it because I didn't

have a traditional higher education background…and I knew I would make

probably less money, but it would be a lot better for my family.

In describing another risk-taking situation, Maria said

He knew that I had kids and they were my priority. I told I am looking because I

need more of a family-friendly environment. My husband and I work full time jobs

and my kids are my priority. I just need you to know that, if you hire me, I will

work very hard and I will do a good job. But you need to know I've worked

enough weekends and unless it's an emergency or something unusual I won't be

here every weekend. He says well I'm not here every weekend either so that's

fine. He ended up hiring me despite me telling him that was my priority.

Early in Evelyn's career she was faced with a personal decision that affected her

continuation with her first full time employment. She chose not to compromise her

values and resigned from her position. She related that*: "I left the university for the first*

time for personal reasons, I had just gotten engaged and at that time we couldn't move in

and live together on campus." Though Evelyn did not have a plan on what she was

going to do next. Later, she got a call from a different department. They offered her a

temporary position at the dean of student's office.

Grace showed risking taking and curiosity to explore other options in comparison to

her peers. She decided to attend public school and selected the vocational route instead

of working half days like other students: "*I wanted to try something different and*

something out the norms and not follow all of my friends."

Grace later moved from her hometown to another metro area for better job opportunities.

I did not have an exact path from A to B to get where I am now there's curves and

turns along the way and I decided I wanted to move. I thought I had a better

chance of doing things if I moved. I took a job at a department that I was

working as a student. The position opened the door to expanding my skills and I

never thought I[would] end up being a planner.

Janie took a different type of risk during her career, one of not taking an opportunity.

They called me and said [their department] was in real tough shape, ... so I went

out there. Dropped everything, they offered me ton of money and I mean, I was

really like do I really want to do that? It was, a really good experience and a

lesson for me in going and letting my supervisor know. I need to let you know I'm

getting this call I'm being recruited. "Go." He was so supportive, he said "go"

you know, he said I definitely think you should do that. So, I came back and told

him I don't know where I am in my decision process. And [my department] said

"we don't want you to leave, tell us how we can keep you?" I had never had

anybody do that. I mean I was like 'oh my god' you know. So, I learned a lot

about negotiation. I declined that job and I am so glad that I did.

Donna discussed risk taking in her degree completion as an undergraduate and her early career exploration. Donna was not doing well in her major and decided to change.

I finally got myself you know what you can grind it out and you can graduate from

this University with a Bachelor of Science or whatever. "What are you going to

do with those horrible grades, you're not going to A medical school anywhere

with these grades so then what's the point of fighting I'm going uphill" I was

going against my skill-set so then at that point I switch I decided to be a liberal

art's major. I didn't know what I was going to do with that, and people were

always asking the same thing. "Are you going to teach? No, I'm not going to

teach". But other than that, I didn't have a plan. And so, when I got out of when I

got my degree, I actually started teaching.

Each of these Latina higher education administrators discussed the various

strategies they used to navigate their careers. Throughout their narratives the women

discussed examples of each of the five skills discussed by Krumboltz (2009). While this

study used happenstance learning theory as a lens to explore this women's careers, there

were other factors and strategies that these women noted as important in both their

personal and career development.

Other Strategies Utilized in their Careers

Each of the women had unique experiences throughout their lives and careers. There

were still some similarities in their thinking and strategies they used to move up to the

"top" in higher education. There are two strategies not considered as part of planned

happenstance theory that the women discussed as factors that assisted them in their career

development. The two factors were building relationships or collaborations and self-

assessment throughout their careers. Aside from the two themes that were reflected in all

of the seven participants' careers, there were a few other skills and strategies that were

identified. These skills or strategies that assisted these women in their career

development were: receiving/requesting feedback from others, achieving work life

balance, family supports   or other supports, self-actualization /confidence, giving back,

and personal values.

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Building Relationships

Fatima discussed the importance of building relationships**.** She elaborated how building relationships is not the same as networking.

So personally, the way I got to be successful is by building up relationships; by working hard, by being involved professionally, not because you want a job but because you want to keep growing as a professional. I think people have gotten to know me and respect me and people will support you when they like you

Fatima further explained how building authentic relationships can help you get connected for a job opportunity. *"I think the most difficult part was getting in the organization, to have my foot inside. Once I was inside, I made it happen. How? Through hard work, building relationships, and being clear with what my goal"*

Similarly, Donna discussed how important it was to maintain and keep the relationships she had created when she began her professional degree. Although, Donna attended graduate school almost three hours away from home, she worked on keeping her connections in her field.

"It was a bit of struggle, but by doing that I was able to go to school there but keep a foot here. And that was really important to try to keep my contacts, my professional relationships. So, that way I wouldn't disappear from the radar for four years and then come back and be like hey remember me, would you hire me? I kept those relationships alive and kept in contact with people. I did my networking and so I was able to get hired back for jobs between semesters and?????

Evelyn, like several of the other Latina leaders in the research, expressed her interest in building relationships but viewing these relationships and collaborations differently than networking.

For me this relationship in this network isn't because I need something but just making sure that that they're good healthy networks that I'm developing. I knew early on that I needed to build some connections. I did that as a graduate student I got involved and gave back. That led to my first full time job.

For Cassandra, she explained that relationships are more than just networking. Relationships that can lead to collaborations in the future and at times lead to job opportunities. "*We have to know that others bring to the table, part of what has helped me in my career path has been I recognize that the others bring something to the table.*"

Janie discussed creating a space and group where she and others like her could have a place to discuss administrative concerns.

We came together and my other two friends and I, we realized that even though we were in [the same] administrative positions [as these women] we really craved a space and environment where we could talk about some of the issues we are experiencing on our campuses as leaders. And also create a space for the next generation because we didn't have that. And it has helped me developed in my career. There are countless stories of how somebody that came to [one of our meetings] and got connected with another woman at another campus and was able to find another job. --A promotion essentially. We talk about negotiations, salary negotiations things like that. But also, it resulted in career development for me and career advancement for me.

Self-Assessment

Another theme that was found in these Latinas narratives was the use of self-assessment. The women discussed how important it was to do self-assessment and reflection throughout their careers. It is key in continuing to grow and develop not only in their careers but as a person as well.

Evelyn discussed how she continues to work on her self-development through self-assessment. "I'm really looking for those professional development opportunities that can help me build a skill set whether that is supervision or management budget finance. I need those specific skills to be able to move into my next role."

Cassandra reflected on how she decided to obtain her PhD after a discuss with a mentor. She stated:

> She pushed me to get a PhD she explained to me that it would be something that would open doors. Not because I needed to, not because she didn't think I was smart, not because I needed this credential to be smarter but because your perceptions of people in higher education who didn't have PhD.

Grace discussed how she uses a past award as a reminder of her achievements and how she can achieve by continuing to grow and develop. She stated:

> I have that up on my wall to remind me that the work that I do is recognized. Even though, it's not something that I hear every day verbally from my supervisor and from my bosses. My work does not go unnoticed for as long as I've been here, I've grown as a leader within my portfolio and there's recognition and proof of that period… it shows that I've grown as an employee.

Janie talked about recognizing an important part of her role that she needed development in understanding better.

> *In my job role data is a really big piece of my job. I wouldn't say that that is something that is my strength. It's something that I had to learn, and I have grown to love it. But it is not one of my strongest skill sets. So, I reach out to those that it is their skill set. This wasn't like this formal 'hey will you teach me this' but through our day to day weekly interactions she taught me how to do.*

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the career development of a selected sample of Latinas higher education administrators in Texas. These Latinas have succeeded in advancing to executive roles in higher education. This chapter shared the personal and unique stories of theses participants, from their childhood to the development of their careers in higher institution. The women came from various backgrounds, social economic status, geographical locations in Texas and upbringings. Their stories reveal the skills and strategies they utilized to navigate their careers to the "top."

The data from the interviews was analyzed through the lens of happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz, 2009; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). Each of the five skills (curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism and risk-taking) discussed by the theory was found in each of the participants stories, throughout their careers. The two most common skills found in the participants career development were risk taking and flexibility. The least commonly used skill was optimism. It was also found that there were two other common themes among the women that were used in their career development

The two additional strategies commonly employed by these Texas Latina higher education administrators were self-assessment and building relationships. Each of the women discussed how important it was to self-reflect, continue to learn and develop to continue growing both professional and personally.

V. INTERPRETATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will provide an interpretation, analysis and synthesis of the findings. The chapter will begin with a brief review of the study and review the lens of happenstance Learning theory and how it appeared in the career development of these women. The chapter will also identify other factors that contributed to the participants career development discussed in the findings. The findings will be interpreted considering current literature. Finally, a discussion of the study's trustworthiness, limitations and transferability is provided.

Brief Review of Study

The purpose of this study was to provide insight to how Latina women navigate their careers into executive roles in higher education. The study explored the career development of Latinas in executive roles in higher education through their narratives. These Latinas were from various four-year institutions in Texas; from small to large; both public and private; and from various regions in Texas. The study used happenstance learning theory and planned happenstance as the theoretical lens. An HLT lens was used to further examine the skills and strategies used for career development by these Latinas.

The research questions for this study were: What can we learn from the stories of executive Latinas in higher education and how they navigated their career paths into executive administrator roles in higher education institutions? And how does happenstance learning theory help understand the career development of Latinas in these executive higher administration roles?

The study used narrative inquiry to gather the life stories and career development of seven Latinas in senior executive roles in higher education. Qualitative methods were

used to collect data aimed at understanding their experiences and then the data was analyzed. The narratives were built from semi-structured interviews, documents and personal artifacts. Riseeman's (1993) narrative analysis was used to review the stories of these women and utilized to analyze the data and results.

Interpretation of Findings

This section will review the theoretical lens of happenstance learning theory and how it was reflected in the career development of study participants. The findings will be compared to current existing research applying this theory. Other factors that contributed to the participants' career development as presented in the findings will also be reviewed and discussed considering literature.

Happenstance Learning Theory

There are few studies that have investigated the use of HLT skills for career development with which to compare the results of this study. A recently published study discusses how career decision making is traditionally believed to be a logical and linear activity (Lee, et al. 2017). However, recent career development scholars have begun to view career-related uncertainty as a factor that invites open-mindedness and developing curiosity (Krumboltz & Levin, 2004; Lee et al., 2017; Peila-Shuster, 2016). When individuals change their perspective of career decisions and they begin implementing planned happenstance skills into their career decision-making processes, it can lead to desirable outcomes (Krumboltz & Levin, 2004; Mitchell et al., 1999).

The data from this study revealed that each of the women used the five skills defined by happenstance learning theory to maneuver their career development in higher education. The top two that were reported the most through each of these women's

career narratives was flexibility and risk taking. In addition to the five skills discussed as part of HLT, planned happenstance and HLT discuss how chance events occur in individuals lives and career development should teach how to capitalize on such events to create successful career opportunities. Rice (2014) elaborated that chance events are characterized as being unpredictable and unplanned by the person who experiences them. Each of the women experienced chance events throughout their careers. For a brief description and explanation of chance events see Table 1.

Krumboltz (2011) discussed how capitalizing on happenstance involves a few factors for a person to be successful. The individual needs to view unplanned events as necessary and normal; past success to reinforce self-efficacy and focusing on action rather than passively managing their own careers (Krumboltz, Foley & Cotter, 2013). In these women's narratives one can see how they managed their own careers and did not depend on the institutions to manage their career path. Each of the women faced happenstance events throughout their careers and utilized the skills described by HLT and other strategies to move forward in their careers.

Similar findings on the skills that Latina/os administrators used to develop their careers were reported in the literature. Some of the HLT skills that were found in this study were: optimism "while some of the participants have experienced some challenges, many of them have maintained a positive outlook" (Savala, 2014, p. 150); persistence "the participants in this study display astonishing acts of resiliency" (Savala, 2014, p. 150); and flexibility "the participants talked about the importance of adapting to the environment and the importance of being cross-culturally competent in their roles"

(Savala, 2014, p. 150) to help them navigate their careers in higher education administration .

Comparison to Existing Literature on the Leadership Pipeline

My research findings are consistent with previous research in that participants as Latina higher education leaders identified a lack of formal career development or supports (Betts, et al, 2009; Heffernan, 2018; León & Nevarez, 2007, Savala, 2014). Participant responses also aligned with reported understandings that a lack of racial/ethnic representation negatively impacts higher education institutions and the students it serves (Betts et al, 2009; Campbell, 2018;). Study findings also point to a strong need for a visible career path into higher education leadership. All the women in the study discussed not having a clear career path into their executive roles and most of the them stumbled upon the role through a chance event.   According to Betts et al. (2009) "Visible career paths accompanied with professional development will increase and expand the leadership pipeline for individuals seeking careers as well as seeking career advancement leading to senior administration and to the presidency" (p. 7).

When the participants were asked "When you were young, and people asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up what do you recall telling them?" all reported having had other life plans than higher education. Some even commented that if they had been told they would be in their current role; they would have laughed. This was due to not knowing that higher education leadership was an option until much later in their degrees, and for some, even during a career change.

The literature discusses that leadership institutes and programs are necessary for the success of Latinas in leadership roles in higher education and suggest what was most

important from these programs was the mentoring and relationships that develop from these programs (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012; León & Nevarez, 2007; Munoz, 2010; Rodríguez, Martinez, & Valle, 2016). Some researchers suggest that higher education institutions should have formal mentoring programs, pipelines and leadership trainings to help minorities into senior executive roles (Betts et al., 2009; León & Nevarez, 2007; Valentine, Valentin, Lincoln & Gonzalez, 2016).

Yes, this study found that these formal and structured leadership trainings, as well as organized mentorships developed by the institutions, were lacking in the career development of the participants. None of the seven women attended any formal leadership development programs. Five of the seven women did discuss having informal mentors that assisted them throughout or varying stages of their career development. The five women that had informal mentors described these mentors as coming later in their careers. The two women that did not have any mentors discussed wishing they had a mentor to learn how to navigate the system in academia and advance in their career. Seeing the need and benefit of mentoring, both women provided examples of mentoring others.

Other Factors Relating to Career Development

The study found that the women believed it was important to build relationships throughout their careers for a variety of reasons. A limited amount of the literature on career development addressed the importance of the relationships that are built when attending leadership institutes or programs and how those relationships can assist women in their career development (Gonzalez-De Jesus, 2012). In my study all seven of the women reported building and maintaining relationships throughout their careers. They

discussed how the purpose of building the relationships was more than just to network but to also build supportive and mutual collaborations.

Participants found that by building authentic relationships many of those relationships have assisted them in their career development. Three of the seven women took it upon themselves to create their own support system through mentoring type of groups. The creation of the groups was to fill the void and to help other women in their career development. These groups have provided these participants with unforeseen opportunities for development and growth. Janie stated "I shared that with you because it is one of my projects and experiences that I am really proud of. And it has helped me develop in my career." Similarly, Fatima discussed a group she created "what I did was create a lateral support with other professionals like me."

Another factor that the women shared that assisted them in their career development was ongoing self-assessment and reflection. Some literature has similarly focused on self-assessment/evaluation in the experiences of women in leadership (Diehl, 2014; Moodly & Toni, 2017). In describing women in her study, Diehl (2014) states "These women chose to redefine or recast themselves after their experiences and found new identities and meanings for their lives. As a result, they were empowered and discovered new opportunities in life" (p. 60). She does not discuss or specifically detail how redefining or being flexible with one's identity can be used to advance in career development. The women in this study discussed the importance of reevaluating their strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of this was to grow and develop themselves in those areas. Cassandra shared "it pushed me [to think] okay so I don't know enough about enrollment, but I can learn." Fatima stated this as well: "try to get a holistic

approach; it's about your personal development and being professional, but also introspection and awareness it's very important. Because you have to be in touch with yourself."

Recommendations for Practice

Based on my previous research and this study I would recommend that institutions investigate implementing or encourage some of the following on their campuses: Work groups, mentorships, leadership development series both formal and informal; and career pathing like the corporate world.

Work groups

There are a variety of types of work groups that institutions could utilize to support the needs of Latinas and other minorities. One type of informal group is the community of practice; this particular type of group would be ideal to both empower the women in the group and providing an avenue to work towards a mutual goal. Communities of practice are collaborative, informal networks that support professional practitioners in their efforts to develop shared understandings and engage in work-relevant knowledge building (Hara, 2009, p. 3). This type of group would fit the type of supports that the women in the study discussed needing and would fit in meeting their career development needs.

Another type of work group is an employee inclusion group. This is similar to a community of practice but is more formalized. An inclusion group could be defined as being part of diversity specific group where the individual feels they are an esteemed member of the work group through experiencing treatment that satisfies his or her needs for belongingness and uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1265). Shore et al. (2011)

further discuss that in an inclusion group an individual is treated as an insider and allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group. For example, minority group members with developed networks and a sense of belongingness report a high level of career optimism (Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998). This type of group could help Latina women in higher education create a sense of belonging, while also developing relationships and career skills.

Mentorships

The workgroups discussed could provide a community in which mentorships are developed formally or informally. Previous research has indicated that mentorships are key in helping individuals become successful in their careers (Badawy, 2017; Helms, Arfken & Bellar, 2016; Hunt, & Michael, 1983; Savala, 2014; Tran, 2014). Mentors can exist at any organizational level. Mentors provide emotional support and feedback, share information about navigating institutional politics, strive to increase the mentee's confidence, and focus on the mentee's personal and professional development (Helms, Arfken, & Bellar, S. 2016; San Miguel & Kim, 2015) Both informal and formal mentorships can be beneficial in one's career development providing support and growth. Institutions interested in retaining and developing Latina/os should consider establishing mentoring programs for faculty considering administrative positions (Savala, 2014). Institutions should consider developing opportunities to encourage informal mentorships as well as formal mentorships to help Latinas and other minorities in their career development. A study on female university administrators found that these women sought out mentors at all levels as they progressed on their career ladder, though none of the participants in that study mentioned being in a formal mentoring program or being

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assigned a mentor (Searby, Ballenger, & Tripses, 2015) This again reflects the importance of mentoring in career development as the participants in that study and this study voiced the benefits of mentoring in their career development.

Career Coaching

An additional recommendation for institutions is to provide more types of career coaching to their employees. This could be conducted through the human resources or staff development departments which all universities and institutions already have. This could build leaders from within the organization and across departments. Two types of programming that an institution could implement are leadership series and career pathing. A leadership development series can include various sessions offered on a one-time basis or on a continued ongoing basis (Ashby & Mintner, 2017; Jakubik, 2017). A leadership series can also be offered to selected employees (chosen by supervisors and above) or to all employees and could even be extended to students. These can be conducted in person, as live webinars, or developed in a way that supports self-directed learning. A workshop or leadership series that institutions could consider providing is on how to navigate the challenges of being a young professional in higher education (Savala, 2014).

Another type of career coaching that could assist in the development and retention of their top employees is career pathing.   Career pathing is a developmental tool that maps a plan so employees can understand what opportunities they can pursue in the organization and details the skills and experience they need to secure those roles (Brecher, 2017; Burack, & Mathys, 1979; "Career pathing," 2018). Career pathing could assist potential leaders into understanding what skills would be needed to be considered

for the next role. This could be done in simple one-to-one sessions or during employee

evaluation sessions.

Recommendations for Research

The following recommendations for future research are provided based on the study

findings. The recommendations are for research on the career development of Latinas in

senior administrative roles in higher education.

As noted in the literature review, there is little research that has been completed

on Latinas in senior executive roles in higher education. Participants indicated feeling the

lack of support and how it impacted their career development. More research should be

completed focusing on how mentorships and other types of supports can assist Latinas in

their career development at higher education institutions. Participants also discussed a

lack of career counseling or career-oriented trainings. It is recommended that institutions

conduct research on the benefits of offering more formalized career development and

growth opportunities to their staff. Research should also include those interested in

leadership and senior executive roles. These research studies could review how effective

trainings that use HLT career skills or other career building strategies and see which tools

better assist Latinas in their career development.

The Latino population in Texas and the United States will continue to increase,

thus more Latinas will aspire to positions of leaderships in higher education.   It is

evident with the small number of Latinas in senior executive roles and the experiences of

the participants that discrimination and other challenges still exist. While some research

was located on Latinas and higher education there was few studies on those in executive

roles. Most current studies focused on challenges or barriers that are faced in academia

with few solutions. It is vital that institutions take the time to assist Latinos in moving into executive roles to be serve and represent the students they serve.

It is also recommended that higher education institutions do more research on how Latinas are successfully moving into executive leadership roles. A quantitative study is recommended for analyzing the career strategies use in their career development. A quantitative study can provide a large sample to better assess what types of strategies most Latinas use and which they feel have assisted the most in their career development.

Another research recommendation would be a longitudinal study that examines Latinas early and later in their careers in higher education, a study using professional development with participants such as happenstance learning theory or other career development strategies. The study could then see how the women transformed what they learned, and it could also compare those that perhaps were not as successful in reaching their career goals. This type of study could offer a comparison as to how effective HLT could be for career development for Latinas in higher education. Aside from more research within higher education, research that focuses on the career development of Latinas in executive roles in the private and public sectors would also be recommended to learn more about the strategies Latinas use to navigate their careers in those sectors.

Limitations and Transferability

This study like any other has limitations in generalization and transferability. The study was intentionally delimited to focus on Latinas in executive roles in higher education in the state of Texas. Given the limited pool of eligible participants and the challenges of recruiting within this small pool, the study findings are based on the career development experiences of seven participants. Also, the impact of race, gender identity,

and alternatives to the traditional view of the family have not been explored in this research. These might bring in dynamics that may influence the data, analysis and interpretation thereof, had they been considered in the research.

While I have attempted to provide thick rich description of the context of the participants to aid reader's interpretation of the transferability of study findings to their own context, the need to protect the confidentiality of participants drawn from such a small population created some constraints in providing such description. At the same time, in selecting participants efforts to achieve maximum variation were made in order to select as representative a sample as possible. Participants ages ranged from thirty-five years old to sixty-five; the women were from various social economic backgrounds and geographical locations throughout the state of Texas. The women worked throughout various institutions in the state of Texas with the majority being in central and south Texas; they also worked in both small and large institutions as well as public and private institutions.

Researcher Reflections

During this study I learned that career paths and journeys are woven in many directions. Each participant made their own path along the way, without knowing whether their next step would achieve their goal. In hearing each of their narratives I learned so much more about being a Latina and navigating a career. I learned about their career development not only in higher education but through different backgrounds, eras and geographical locations. Due to the intimacy of sharing one's story, completing a semi-structured interview and narrative analysis was the best method to use to gather information from the participants.

I went into this study with the HLT lens in mind, and while I saw the themes developed during the interviews, I was still surprised to see how each of the women used the skills discussed in HLT to reach their careers goals. In completing this study, I have now learned that there are many career paths that one can take to become a senior executive in higher education. It is not limited to being groomed from an entry level position and can even be accomplished later in your career from a field outside of higher education. Ultimately, I am thankful that these very busy Latinas were willing to participate in the study without receiving anything in return but a thank you.

Conclusion

Demographics are changing, especially in states like Texas, and there will be more Latina/os both attending and in entering the workforce in higher education institutions. Latina/os are an important part of the United States economic future. Due to this it is important that Latina/os receive supports in their career development for those entering careers in higher education. Careers are no longer linear, if the prescribed linear career has ever applied for Latina women, it does not any more. In the narratives we can see that these women grew, changed, and developed through chance events. Happenstance learning theory and planned happenstance are frameworks used to discuss how certain skills can be used to capitalize on the chance events that occur in our lives. In particular, the skills discussed by Krumboltz are to further one's careers (Krumboltz, 2009). Through these women's story this study found that these women utilized all the happenstance learning theory skills during their career development. The women also used other strategies in their career development including building relationships and

continuous self-assessment. Latina women are making great strides despite challenges

and more research on Latinas and other women would be beneficial.

Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT
Study Title: The Life Stories and Career Development of Executive Latinas in Higher Education
Principal Investigator: Norma Reyes   Co-Investigator/Faculty Advisor:
Sponsor: n/a

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this research study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate as well as any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. We encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
You are invited to participate in a research study to learn more about the career development of Latinas in executive roles in higher education. The information gathered will be used through one to one interview. You are being asked to participate because you were identified as a Latina in an executive and administrative role in higher education with at least 5 years of experience in higher education institutions.

PROCEDURES
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in 2 brief interviews that will be scheduled at your convenience. Each interview will last approximately 90 mins. During the interviews, you will be asked questions about your career development in higher education, challenges you faced in reaching your executive role and what you did to overcome these challenges. The interview will be (audio-recorded) and the researcher may take notes as well.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS
The interview will include a section requesting demographic information. Due to the limited amount of available Latina women in these roles, the combined answers to these questions may make an individual person identifiable. I will make every effort to protect participants' confidentiality. However, if you are uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you may decline to answer.

In the unlikely event that some of the survey or interview questions make you uncomfortable or upset, you are always free to decline to answer or to stop your participation at any time. Should you feel discomfort after participating and you are a Texas State University student, you may contact the University Health Services for counseling services at list 512-245-2208. They are located Texas State Counseling Center 5-4.1 LBJ Student Center 601 University Drive, San Marcos, Texas 78666

BENEFITS/ALTERNATIVES

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information that you provide will help institutions on how to better serve Latina and other minorities with their career development in higher education institutions. This research could also shed light on the challenges that Latinas and other monitories face during their career development into executive roles in higher education.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.
Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION
You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY
You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw from it at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

QUESTIONS
If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, PI Norma Reyes: ns1057@txstate.edu
This project [insert IRB Reference Number or Exemption Number] was approved by the Texas State IRB on [insert IRB approval date or date of Exemption]. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB Chair, Dr. Jon Lasser 512-245-3413 – (lasser@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2314 - (meg201@txstate.edu).

DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT
I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand I can withdraw at any time.

By answering interview questions, you are agreeing to be part of this research and allowing your responses to be audio recorded.

Appendix B

Interview Guide

Background:

1.   Tell me about your family background, where did you grow up? Who did you live with?

2.   When you were young, and people asked what you wanted to be when you grew up, what do you recall telling them?

3.   Who do you recall as some of your earliest career role models, those you imagined being like when you grew up? What kind of work did they do?

Education:

1.   Please tell me about your educational background.

2.   Did you attend college immediately after high school, or did you start later?

Career Development:

1.   Before starting your first full-time job, what were some of your career interests? How did these changes once you entered the workforce?

2.

   Probe questions:

   a.   Over time, how have you changed the way you look at your career?

   b.   Please tell me about your networking experiences for your career development.

   c.   Please describe your experiences with receiving mentoring or career counseling. How did these help you along your career path?

   d.   What have been the most influential experiences in your career?

   e.   What do you feel have been the important successes in your life? The frustrations?

   f.   What were some obstacles or challenges that you faced during your career? Please describe how you overcame these challenges.

Happenstance

1.   During your career journey, what unexpected events or happenings occurred that you transformed into a success?

2. Looking back, we're there any "missed" opportunities during your career?

Probe questions

Describe to me any events that that changed your career path.

During your career path, what were some new ideas or things that you tried that led you to a career opportunity?

g. In the work place, what are some ways that you looked for opportunities to learn and develop new skills?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

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