SOCIOCULTURAL, RESILIENCE, PERSISTENCE AND GENDER ROLE EXPECTATION FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF HISPANIC FEMALES

by

MARCELA ORTEGA PARRA

B.A., University of Arizona, 1995

M.Ed., Northern Arizona University, 1998

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative collective case study was to examine the sociocultural and gender role expectation factors that contributed to the success of 10 Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a large university in the Midwest. Additionally, the study investigated the characteristics of resilience and persistence that helped these women continue their pursuit of higher education in spite of the challenges they faced. The participants in this study were identified as recent immigrants from Mexico or Mexican-Americans born in the United States of Mexican immigrant parents. All of these respondents graduated from a midwestern K-12 public school system and are now attending a large midwestern university.

This study used a qualitative paradigm and open-ended, in-depth interviews for data collection. The 17 question interview focused on the areas of sociocultural backgrounds, resilience/persistence factors, and gender role expectations. Demographic data about the participants' life histories and educational experiences were collected during the 90-minute interviews.

Findings in the study indicated that Latinas are faced with many conflicts. They have specific gender role expectations placed on them and are limited by cultural rules and norms. Along with these conflicts they learn to build resilience/persistence attributes to help them succeed in their academic careers. The seven factors that contributed to the lived experiences and factors of resilience/persistence of Latina/Hispanic female academic success included: 1) lived discrimination; 2) the need to obtain an education that would lead to a better life; 3) active involvement in extracurricular activities in school; 4) strict and protective parents; 5) positive role models from family and other Latinas; 6) traumatic life experiences; 7) and strong familial/parental support. Additionally, the study also revealed six more contributing factors to

the sociocultural and gender role expectations and pressures that impact the success of Latina/Hispanic female students in a K-12 public school system. Those factors included traditional Hispanic households, living in two worlds, traditional gender role expectations, independence from family, transference of parental gender role expectations, and the behaviorial expectations for Latinas. The study offers recommendations for future studies and implications for practice advisisng and encouraging Hispanic females to pursue their academic goals.

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Approved by: Approved by:

Co-Major Professor   Co-Major Professor
Marjorie R. Hancock   Linda P. Thurston

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

If you're smart, you'll weave together traditional Hispanic values such as familismo and simpatia with self-reliance and self respect to create a whole new fabric whereby you enlist the support of your friends and loved ones in achieving your goals—for the betterment of everyone. Only when you sincerely believe you deserve that support you will get it. And only when you get it you will be free to stride confidently into the brave new world of possibilities that waits for you (Gil & Inoa-Vazquez, 1996**,** p.26).

Across the nation, Latina/Hispanic female students are dropping out of school, are being excluded from classroom participation, or are quietly fading away from the educational system. This is a system that is supposed to prepare these students for a future career and success. Latinas now constitute the largest "minority" group of females in the United States (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Even though large numbers of Latinas are reflected on the public school systems' rosters, many are not graduating from high school or pursuing higher education.

Many Latinas in the United States have been left without academic, economic, and social success because of their cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity. Valenzuela (1999) proclaims schools have become part of "a subtractive process… It divests these youth of important social and cultural resources, leaving them progressively vulnerable to academic failure" (p. 3). Past research indicates that the success of Hispanic students is not wholly determined by instructional choices. The stigmatization of Hispanic children, by incorporating practices that devalue their culture or enable inequitable power relationships in classrooms, also affects the educational outcomes for these students (Cummins, 1989, 1995; Unger-Palmer, 2003).

The number of Latinas enrolled in universities should be high, but unfortunately the numbers are not. All too often, schools tend to overlook their female population,

especially their Hispanic females. They are often ignored in the classroom, rarely

participate in class, and/or are invisible in academic and extracurricular activities.

Hispanic females are not nurtured, mentored, or inspired to further their academic goals.

Hispanic females may not be informed of their academic choices or encouraged to further

pursue their education after graduation at the same rate as that of their peers. It has been

my experience and observation that there is an underlying attitude among the public

school system of "*pushing them through*" and graduating "*them*" without preparing

"*them*" for postsecondary education. As a successful Hispanic female, I have dealt with

many of the same issues with which other Latinas are faced today. Even though I have

overcome them, many of these issues still exist. This study, therefore, focuses on the

underlying issues encountered by Hispanic females in their communities and in the

educational system.

This chapter includes a discussion of the following sections: (a) overview of the

issues, (b) statement of the problem, (c) purpose of the study, (d) the significance of the

study, (e) a brief description of the methodology, (f) the limitations of the study, (g)

definitions of relevant terms, (h) and a summary.

Overview of the Issues

The education of Hispanics has become a national crisis in the United States and

has presented public schools with many challenges. The challenges that continue to affect

Hispanic students include gaps in academic achievement, high drop-out rates, and low

college participation rates. These problems, most visible in the high school years, reflect

a systematic failure on the part of many public schools to educate Hispanic children

(Aguirre & Ladner, 2003). Education is the road to success in America, but unfortunately, a disproportionate number of Hispanic students encounter roadblocks that impede their access to achievement.

Another example of this failure is reflected in the national test results from the United States Department of Education. These results revealed that 55% of Hispanic fourth graders in public school failed to demonstrate even a basic level of reading comprehension (United States Department of Education National Assessment, 2003). Aguirre and Ladner (2003) reported, "Hispanic Americas' high school class of 2010 has already been set up for failure; while high dropout rates and low university participation continue to characterize the ultimate results for many Hispanic students" (p. 4).

Hispanics are a diverse group of individuals from different origins and races. According to the Status Trends in the Education of Hispanics (2003), the largest Hispanic subgroup in the United States is of Mexican origin. In 1997, they comprised two-thirds (66%) of the Hispanic population. The National Center for Educational Statistics, (NCES, 2003) reported that in 2000, minorities constituted 39% of public school students in kindergarten through the 12th grade, of whom 44% were Hispanic (17% of total enrollment).

A study on education conducted by the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (HCREO, 2001) found that (a) Hispanics have the lowest rate of participation in early childhood development programs; (b) 30% of United States Hispanics do not have a high school degree; (c) the Hispanic dropout rates have remained between 30% and 35% over the past 25 years and are 2.5 times the rate for Blacks and almost 4 times the rate for White non-Hispanics; and (d) Hispanic parents believe that

3

overcrowded schools, lack of qualified teachers (for teaching Hispanic children), and lowered academic expectations discourage their children and that school bureaucracies discourage parental involvement. In a companion poll conducted in this research, "24% of Hispanic parents voiced their belief that the biggest problem facing public schools was that their children were not getting the knowledge and skills they needed to succeed" (p. 1).

Williams (2003) also noted the poor education received by Spanish-speaking students. Students often find that they are not prepared for college because of their lack of preparation in public schools and poor English skills. Reformation of programs and practices involving the education of Hispanic students is considered necessary in order to increase their success at the secondary level. Valdes (2001) concurred by stating that, "In the United States, it is not just a question of teaching English; rather it is a question of providing large numbers of students with access to the curriculum at the same time that they are learning English" (p. 14).

There are several key law cases such as *Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Lau v Nichols* (1974), *the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974,* and *Castañeda v Pickard* (1981) that "prohibit the discrimination against students on the basis of language and require that districts take affirmative steps to overcome language barriers" (Valdes, 2001, p. 14). *Castañeda v Pickard* (1981), in particular, made it clear that districts have dual obligations to teach English and to provide access to academic content instruction. Cummins (1995) agreed, "Groups that tend to experience the most severe underachievement are those that have experienced subjugation and discrimination for several generations, namely Latinos, Native Americans, and African Americans" (p. 63).

According to Cummins (1995) there are four areas of empowerment needed in the education of minority children: "These elements include (a) incorporation of minority students' culture and language, (b) inclusion of minority community in the education of their children, (c) pedagogical assumptions and practices operating in the classroom, and (d) the assessment of minority students" (p. 106). As Cummins (1995) noted, minority children must be in a school environment where their language and culture are respected. Their parents need to be given an active role in the education of their children. Educators need to promote the active use of native language to help encourage and generate students' own knowledge, thus freeing them from a predetermined curriculum. Educators must use assessments that take into account a child's culture and native language. This theory is further elaborated upon in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Statement of the Problem

The Hispanic population consists of many distinct groups with different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Presently, all are part of a calamity that encompasses multiple issues and problems. These issues and problems, according to the Report of on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (President's Advisory Commission, 2003) are:

Low societal expectations for Hispanic children and youth, weak early childhood language and cognitive development, educational opportunities, limited parental and community choices, poor academic instruction especially in reading, teachers—and college faculty who are poorly prepared to teach Hispanic students,

lack of resources for schools with a large number of Hispanic students and lack of

a federal research agenda that supports Hispanic students (p. 1).

The report further stated, "The Hispanic high school drop out rate for 25 year olds and

older subgroups of Mexican Americans is 30.96%, Mexican immigrants is 61.14%,

Puerto Rican is 35.08%, Cuban 28.79%, Central or South American 35.71%" (p. 3).

New Latino Diaspora

In the new millennium, the New Latino Diaspora still represents a unique

sociohistorical perspective. The usual obstacles with which many of their ancestors were

faced with are still prevalent today. Hamann, Wortham, and Murillo (2002),state "Like

most immigrants and many other U.S. Latinos, most new Diaspora Latinos regularly face

racism and the burdens of being working class and speaking a minority language" (p. 2).

Unlike many of the immigrants arriving in the United States at the beginning of the 20th

century, Hispanics immigrants are arriving directly to rural areas. Once there, Hispanics

are confronted with the majority culture's resistance and uneasiness with their language

and culture. "Many of the Latino newcomers are coming directly to rural locations that

are unaccustomed to outsiders of any type, or that have conceptualized differences only

in dichotomous terms into which the newcomers do not readily fit (e.g., white and

black)" (Hamann et al., 2002, p. 2). Latinos bring with them their own culture, values,

and practices, and this can often result in cultural contradictions within their new

communities.

Many of these contradictions result from the interaction between the families who

are from a different ethnic group than that of the mainstream society and their children's

schools. The underlying agenda of moving Latino students into mainstream classrooms and society as fast as possible only aggravates the frustration of obligation to become part of a noninclusive public school system with a curriculum that only sees the importance of the majority population traditions, culture, and value system. Diaz-Greenberg (2003) stated, "Some educators in the United States still underestimate the contributions of Latino families and attribute the underachievement of Latino students to the inferiority of their culture, the organization of their family values, and a lack of interest in education" (p. 2).

Hispanics and African Americans are tied as the largest minority group, but by 2045, Hispanics will be the largest group in the United States. According to the Status Trends in the Education of Hispanics (2003), "The largest Hispanic subgroup in the United States of America is of Mexican origin, and in 1997, they comprised two-thirds (66%) of the Hispanic population" (p. 6). Hispanics are a diverse group of individuals from different origins and ethnicities. According to NCES (2003), "In 2000, minorities constituted 39% of public school students in kindergarten through 12th grade, of which 44% (17% of total enrollment) were Hispanic" (p. 26).

Traditionally, Latinos have long settled in the southwestern United States, but in the new Latino Diaspora, Latinos are arriving in unfamiliar places where the residents have little or no experiences with Hispanics. "Increasing numbers of Hispanics (many are immigrants, and some from elsewhere in the United States) are settling both temporarily and permanently in areas of the United States that have not traditionally been home to Latinos—for example, North Carolina, Maine, Georgia, Indiana, Arkansas, rural Illinois, and near resort communities in Colorado. Enrique Murillo and Sofia Villenas have called

this the "New Latino Diaspora" (Hamann et al.,2002, p. 2). Currently, this phenomenon is also impacting and causing changes in the Midwestern states.

Latino Diaspora and Midwest Migration/Immigration

In western Kansas, the influx of new Hispanic immigrants over the past decade has increased tremendously. The Limited English Proficient (LEP) nonmigrant population in Kansas has increased at a steady pace over the last decade. *The History of Kansas Education (2001)* states, "During the 1999-2000 school year, 19,403 LEP students were served in Kansas public schools" (p. 7). According to the NCES's (2003) *Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts,* "the total number of enrolled students was 470,205:of that 103,682 were minority students, 42.8% resided in midsize cities, 12.3% lived in the urban fringe area of the city, and 14.8% lived in small towns or rural areas" (p. 25). *The Kansas State Department of Education Report Card (2003-2004)* overall report the state demographics as White, 75.27%; Hispanic, 10.80%; African American, 8.71%; and other, 5.22%. The state's overall gender composition is 48.34% females and 51.66% males. The migrant students comprised 3.02% and nonmigrant students 96.98%. LEP students accounted for 5.12% and non-LEP students 94.88% of this student population. Midwest states are currently experiencing the continuing population increase of Hispanic immigrants. The Midwest began to witness rapid growth in its Hispanic population in the 1990s. According to census statistics (Lazos-Vargas, 2002), from 1990 to 2000 the Midwest had an 81% increase in its Hispanic population, the largest increase for the four United States census regions (Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska). Lazos-Vargas (2002) documented that recent

8

Hispanic settlement in the Midwest has been both in urban and rural areas. The former is more important in absolute numbers of Hispanics, of course, but the latter is experiencing by far the greatest proportion of Hispanic population growth, with the tremendous influx of Latinos into *agromaquila* centers created by large meat processing corporations and corporate dairy farms.

The most notable demographic changes in the Midwest include the large, young, and quickly growing Hispanic population, coupled with the persistent achievement gap among Hispanic females. As the demographic changes continue to shift, so do the persistent achievement gaps between Hispanic and White students. Many Hispanic students, upon entering Midwestern public school systems, are academically ill-prepared (Freeman, 2004). This is especially true for Hispanic females who are often overlooked and undervalued in the public school system. Consequently, these students do not pursue higher education. The reasons Latinas fail to move forward with their education include a lack of motivation, educational advisors, and school experience, coupled with the unique challenges they face. According to Unger-Palmer (2003), "Each immigrant group/subgroups within ethnic/national groups, reasons for immigration, unique cultural and linguistic differences, all determine aspects of the schooling experience of the students" (p. 2). Despite adverse challenges, unique cultural expectations, and obligations, some Latinas continue to thrive and achieve academic success. As resilient students, successful Latinas have the ability to recover from drastic, traumatic changes and/or misfortune in their lives. This study identified the resilience and motivating factors that contributed to successful Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a Midwest university.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the sociocultural, resilience, persistence, and gender role expectation factors that contribute to the success of Latina/Hispanic females. For the purpose of this study the terms Hispanic females and Latinas will be used interchangeably. This collective case study will focus on the lived experiences of Latina high school graduates from several midwestern K-12 public school systems who are now attending a post secondary institution in the Midwest. The purpose for this research study is to examine the lived experiences, in their realms of sociocultural experiences, resilience, persistence and gender role expectations-all of which could be contributing factors to the success of Latina/Hispanic females.

The central purpose of this study was to explore the factors that contributed to the success of Hispanic females now attending a large university in the Midwest. For the purpose of this study, *success* is defined as Hispanic females who graduated from a public K-12 school system. Second, this study also focused on the lived experiences of Hispanic females in an American educational system. Third, the data and conclusions from this study will help better prepare administrators and classroom teachers to gain a clearer understanding of the situations Hispanic female students experience that can contribute to their failure or success in the United States' educational system. This study used an in-depth qualitative collective case study through use of qualitative interviews to gather data that address the unique issues effecting Hispanic females. The perspective of these voices were; (a) Hispanic female high school graduates of an American K-12 public school system, (b) the effects of negative attitudes in academic and social settings, (c)

expected cultural gender roles in traditional Hispanic families for females, and (d)

resiliency and persistence factors that influenced academic success in K-12 public

schools. This study, therefore, focused on the underlying issues encountered by Hispanic

females in their communities and within the educational system.

Significance of the Study

According to Vives (2001), report for the National Organization for Women,

Latinas are dropping out of school at a much higher rate than any other female group.

Vives (2001), cited the reasons why Latinas leave school: teenage pregnancy, marriage,

cultural gender role obligations, stereotyping, familial demands, and economic status.

Other contributing factors for the dropout rate increase are attitudes toward Latinas by

their teachers and peers, lack of positive role models, and peer pressure. According to

the final report of the President's Advisory Commission (2003), Mexican immigrants

experience nearly twice the dropout rate (61%) compared to other Hispanic subgroups.

As reported by the Kansas Accountability Report (2002-2003), the overall

"Hispanic dropout rate is 3.1%, compared to African American 2.6%, White 1.3%,

Native American 2.5%, and Asian/Pacific Islander 1.3%. The student graduation rate for

Hispanics is 70.3%, compared to African American 76.2%, White 90.1%, Native

American 78.5%, and Asian/Pacific Islander 90.8%" (p. 19). Freeman (2004) noted that

minority children are more likely to live in low-income families. The author continues to

state that in 2003, 40% of all school-aged children were eligible for free or reduced

school lunch; Hispanic students were the largest group participating in this program, with

71% of all Hispanic children receiving free or reduced lunch. Hispanic and Black

children are more likely than other racial groups to be concentrated in low-income schools where they are less likely to receive a quality education. In cities, 64% of Hispanic children were in the highest-poverty schools. These numbers show that Hispanic students are at a disadvantage compared to other ethnic groups in America (Freeman, 2004).

Although both male and female Hispanic students face incredible challenges in the American school system, female Hispanic students face even greater challenges for several reasons. First, there is a difference in the treatment of Hispanic females throughout their educational experience that limits their potential academically, psychologically, emotionally, and economically, thus impacting possible future career choices. Second, Hispanic gender role expectations and stereotypes do not permit flexibility for Latinas to fully achieve their potential in and outside of the classroom setting.

Because Hispanics are the largest growing segment of the U.S. population, it is important that research, such as this present study, be conducted to determine what factors may be involved in the educational successful of this group. This study focuses on Latinas because they face even more roadblocks on their way to educational success than their female peers.

Research Questions

To examine the lived experiences, resilience and motivating factors that contributed to the success of Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a university, the following questions were proposed:

1. What are the lived experiences and factors of persistence and resilience that contribute to Latina/Hispanic female academic success?

2. What are the sociocultural and gender role expectations and pressures that impact the success of Latina/Hispanic female students in a K-12 public school system?

These questions focus on experiences that have not been explained or explored in previous quantitative or qualitative research.

Limitations of the Study

All research has limits. The recognized limitations of this study are:

1. Not all Latinas will have the same or equivalent educational background or experiences. With the Hispanic demographic shift, there are many recent immigrant Latinas enrolling in midwestern public school systems; therefore, their educational experiences differ.

2. A major cause in the Hispanic demographic shift is the transient lifestyle of migrant farm workers who move frequently due to the demands of the seasonal labor (farming, agromaquilas, food service industries, etc.). Therefore, some Latinas participating in this study may have more problems in the educational system because they have not attended the same school year-round.

3. The length of time living in the United States (e.g., migrant versus nonmigrant students and/or new immigrants versus generational immigrants) is important because if the study participants have been in the United States for a longer period of time, they could be more acculturated and/or assimilated into the mainstream society.

13

4. Due to the nature of the qualitative research implemented, the researcher's limited access to Hispanic females residing in the Midwest limits the scope of the study.

5. As a member of this ethnic group, I bring my own personal experiences and biases to the study. As a female member of the Hispanic community, I have had many of the same experiences that might hinder Hispanic female educational progress. There are many issues that we encounter on a daily basis, such as familial responsibilities and obligations, parental concerns, finances, lack of guidance to help navigate the application process of admittance to higher education institutions, inadequate information for parents, and uninterested school counselors. It is possible that the findings in this study could be influenced by the researcher's own experiences.

6. Language barriers are also a limitation to the study. As the researcher, it is my intention to utilize my bilingual skills (fluent in both Spanish and English) to overcome this barrier.

The central purpose of this study is to examine the sociocultural, resilience, persistence, and gender role expectation factors of successful Latina/Hispanic female graduates of a midwestern public school. The research did not explicitly focus on the experiences of sociocultural, resilience, persistence and gender role expectation factors that lead to success of Hispanic females/Latinas in a K-12 public school system. Neither did it specifically concentrate on cultural and gender role conflicts of Latinas that impact home and school relationships, on their educational experience in classrooms or access to other academic opportunities, nor self-perception/possible selves, peers, academic and cultural pressures that influence the success of Latina students. Most noticeably absent

from the research are the experiences and voices of the Hispanic female students who have persevered and succeeded.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation: Refers to changes wherein one group acquires some of the characteristics, values, and behaviors of the other without giving up its own values and behaviors. It is important to note that acculturation is different from assimilation. According to Freeman and Freeman (2001), "A person can take on a new culture without giving up his or her primary culture. This is acculturation, and the result can be bilingualism and biculturalism" (p. 78). They further argue that students are able to maintain their first language and culture and learn English and succeed academically.

Assimilation: Refers to the process of absorbing a minority group into the main cultural body. By wholly absorbing the main cultural group's behaviors, characteristics, and values, the minority group, along with their own cultural group's behaviors, characteristics, and values, are not valued or acknowledged by the main cultural body. Freeman and Freeman (2001) consented by stating, "Assimilation involves losing one's primary culture and becoming similar to those of the target culture" (p. 43). For this study this definition will be used because it corresponds to the researcher's desire to expose the dual lives that many Hispanics experience everyday. It also helps to reinforce some of the literature that maintains that successful immigrant students have acculturated rather than assimilated.

Education: The traditional/historical definition of education is the act or process of providing with knowledge, skill, and competence, provided through a formal course of study, instruction, or training. In the Hispanic culture education or *educación* encompasses much more. Valenzuela (1999) helps to elaborate on the Hispanic culture, view, and belief of education. Her optimal definition involves "a definition of caring theory, Mexican culture (represented in the term *educación*) and the concept of social capital" (p. 21). The researcher's caring theory addresses the need for "pedagogy to follow from and flow through relationships cultivated between teacher and student" (p. 21).

Universally, education has implications for pedagogy. In the Hispanic culture it is part of the culture's foundation that provides instructions on how one should live and behave in the world. Valenzuela (1999) further elaborates that *educación* emphasizes "respect, responsibility, and sociality; it provides a benchmark against which all humans are to be judged, formally educated or not" (p. 21). Therefore, in accordance with Valenzuela's three-pronged definition of education or *educación,* represents both a means and end. The end being *'bien educado/a'* (well-mannered, educated, and knowing one's role in familial relations) which is exhibited through respectful relations with others. The opposite is *'mal-educado/a'* (an ill-mannered person deemed disrespectful and inadequately oriented toward others). For the purpose of this study the researcher chose this definition because it illustrated cultural intricacies about which non-Hispanic teachers lack of knowledge of the Hispanic culture and its unique definition of education. Although the term *educación* is a conceptually different from the English language cognate, it still includes the pedagogical aspect of it. At the same time it also

encompasses the "family's role of inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility and serves as a foundation for all other learning" (Valenzuela,1999, p. 23). *Educación* incorporates life in the social context, "wherein one respects the dignity and individuality of others" (p. 23).

ELL: The researchers Freeman, Freeman and Mercuri (2002) discussed their past reference to students "who do not speak English as their native language as 'second language learners' or bilingual learners" (p. xiii). They continue to stress that the students "already have another language and English is an additional language for them" (p. xiii). However, the researchers have become uncomfortable with these terms because many ELLs are multilingual and the aforementioned terms are too limiting. Upon further elaboration they state, "The term we currently use is English Language Learners (ELL) or simply English learners(EL)" (p. xiii). These terms focus on what students are trying to do and what they have in common, so it is the term we use most frequently. The researcher chose Freeman et al.'s (2002) definition of ELL because it represented the lived experiences of the proposed study's targeted respondents.

Gender roles: For the purpose of this study, this term will refer to thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are identified historically, traditionally, and/or culturally as either female or male; specifically, in this case, the culturally determined behavior of both genders. The literature in the study addressed two culturally relevant and gender specific roles known as *marianismo* and *machisimo.* Both terms have very specific gender role and gender trait expectations. These gender expectations are implicit in every

17

aspect within the Hispanic culture. Hence, the Hispanic culture and all that it expects is only one of the dual worlds that Hispanic females must learn to navigate successfully. The researcher chose this definition because it helps demonstrate the importance of family and its expectations for all who are part of it. Ginorio and Huston (2001) concurred, "Many families emphasize or highly esteem traditional roles for women as wives and mothers," and further state, "Hispanic gender roles for women are extremely restrictive; many traditional adults question the value of any education for women" (p. 24).

Hispanic: Refers to a diverse population of individuals and groups. Under this rubric are people who descend from inhabitants of México, countries of Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Most of the population that the U.S. government considers Hispanic is of Mexican descent (Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Gouveia, Powell, and Camargo (2005) declare that the term Latino/a has "become the preferred self-denominational terms for most individuals who were born in Latin America or who trace their historical, cultural, and linguistic roots to peoples living within the current or past borders of that region" (p. 3). It has been this researcher's experience that many Latinos choose to identify themselves by their nationality e.g., Mexican, Colombian, Costa Rican, Cuban, etc. Gouveia et al.,(2005) agreed that "Rather than a panethnic designation such as Hispanic or Latino, many chose their nationality" (p. 3).

Immigrants: There are many Hispanics to whom this term applies and there are many to whom it does not, and many who choose not to acknowledge it. Many are

considered first, second, or third generation immigrants in spite of their birth place, and/or the citizenship of the United States of America.

Latina/o: Refers to a person of Hispanic descent.

Latino Diaspora: Traditionally, Diaspora means a dispersion of a people from their original homeland, a dispersion of an originally homogeneous entity, such as a language or culture. Enrique Murillo and Sofia Villenas (as cited in Hamann, Wortham, & Murrillo, 2002) have this term calling it the Latino Diaspora because of the increasing numbers of Latinos who are permanently or temporarily settling in areas of the United States that historically have not been home to them. Such is the case within the Midwest in areas such as Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. The new Latino Diaspora is making its presence known in rural towns and midwestern cities where traditionally long-time residents have had little or no experience with Latinos. For this research study, this definition was incorporated because it helps to illustrate the demographic change that is occurring within the Midwest, which is the researcher's targeted area. It is also indicative of some trends that are occurring in other areas and the non-Latino attitudes that come with this population change.

Mexican Americans: A United States of America citizen either born or naturalized or a permanent resident of Mexican descent.

Migrant: "An itinerant worker who travels from one area to another in search of work or seasonal labor or one who migrates" (Merriam-Webster, 1986, p. 1432).

Persistence: For the purpose of this study, persistence is defined as the act of living through an experience and benefiting from it. This definition helps to illustrate the action of the participants' high school completion and subsequent enrollment at a university. Persistence and resiliency are factors that are a part of one another. These two factors compliment each other and help resilient and persistent students succeed in school. This definition is be further elaborated upon in the final chapter findings.

Possible selves: The concept pertains to how individuals think about their potential and about their future (Ginorio & Huston, 2001).

Recent immigrants: Newly arrived immigrants in the United States (one to five years) from another country.

Resilience: Is the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles. In order to thrive, mature, and increase competence, a person must draw on all of his or her resources: biological, psychological, and environmental (Gordon, 1993). According to Henderson and Milstin (2003), it is "the capacity to spring back, rebound successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social and academic competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply the stress of today's world" (p. 7). The resilient child is one who, despite adversity, continues to work well, play well, and expect well. Resiliency is characterized by four common factors: (a)

social competencein the form of responsiveness, empathy, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humor; (b) problem solving skillssuch as abstract thinking, developing alternative solutions, planning, and goal setting; (c) autonomy-in the form of independence, a strong sense of self and identity, and a sense of mastery; and (d) sense of purpose and future—a most important factor that includes a strong sense of educational achievement, strong goals, persistence, and a positive view of the future.

Summary

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, explores the purpose and background for the investigation into the success of Hispanic females in the United States K-12 public educational system. Chapter 2 reviews the literature realms of sociocultural experiences, resilience/persistence factors and gender role expectations, all of which could be considered contributing factors related to the success of Latina/Hispanic females. For this study the focus is on Hispanic female high school graduates of a K-12 public school system now attending a university. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology utilized to guide the research, data collection procedures, and analytical approaches. Chapters 4 and 5 present the results, discussion, and implications of the findings to showcase the case studied and to highlight the similarities and differences between and among participants for teaching implications and further research studies.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The researcher's purpose in this study was to investigate themes of sociocultural factors, resilience, persistence, and gender role expectations, all of which are factors that contribute to Hispanic female graduates' academic success in the United States. Participants were Hispanic females who graduated from a midwestern K-12 public school system now attending a postsecondary institution. This chapter discusses the following areas: (a)Latino Diaspora effects on education, (b) sociocultural factors, (c) resilience factors, (d) persistence and resiliency (e) gender role expectations, and (f) possible selves.

Presented in Chapter Two is a review of literature of current research related to the aforementioned. If discussed separately, there is enough research to help build a thorough review as it applies to the sociocultural, resilience/persistence, and gender role expectation factors relative to the study's purpose. Unfortunately, none of the existing research focused solely on Hispanic females. Most of the research focused on comparing resilient and nonresilient students, Hispanics as a group, and/or educational practices and policies affecting Hispanic students.

There is a small amount of research on many of the issues involving Latinas in the school system and even fewer studies that discuss the sociocultural, resilience, persistence, and gender role expectation factors that contribute to Hispanic female's successes. Latinas in public schools are confronted with many issues on a daily basis:high dropout rates, low enrollment in advanced placement (AP) classes, exam taking, low grades, gender role issues, possible selves and/or self-esteem, and family obligations, issues with parental discord, and issues with acculturation (Ginorio & Huston, 2001).

Researchers report that the education received by culturally and linguistically diverse

(CLD) children in general and Hispanic students, in particular, is part of an intricate

series of sociocultural, historical, and political concerns, conditions, and relationsthat

include issues of class, race, power, and colonialism (Diaz-Greenberg 2003; Walsh,

1992).

Latino Diaspora Effects on Education

The Hispanic population consists of many distinct groups with different

socioeconomic and educational backgrounds that are presently in a crisis. This crisis

consists of multiple issues and problems that include:

> low societal expectations for Hispanics children and youth, weak early childhood
>
> language and cognitive development education opportunities, limited parental and
>
> community choices, poor academic instruction especially in reading, teachersand
>
> college faculty who are poorly prepared to teach Hispanic students, lack of
>
> resources for schools with a large number of Hispanic students and lack of a
>
> federal research agenda that supports Hispanic students. (President's Commission,
>
> 2003, p. 1)

In order to help relieve this crisis and to provide teachers of diverse populations, a

long-term solution would be to help teachers gain a better understanding in what it means

to be a successful teacher in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. To facilitate

the growing need, more culturally responsive training for preservice teachers, in-service

teachers, school staff, parental involvement, and professional development should be

provided and implemented in schools serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

According to Hamann et al. (2002), "In the New Latino Diaspora, the Latinos face more insistent questions about who they are, who they seek to be, and what accommodations they merit—questions that are asked both by themselves and by others" (p. 1). There are other factors such as education, to consider because recent immigrants are unique; some minority school models might not be as easily adaptable to them and their education. "Because of the unique conditions they face, Diaspora Latinos do not easily fit most models of minority children in school" (Hamann et al., 2002, pp. 2-3). "Host community members (typically Anglos) and newcomer Latinos often differ in their views of education. Both see schooling as a vehicle for education, and there is some overlap in their goals for schooling (e.g., English literacy skills, acquisition, graduation)" (Hamann et al., 2002, p. 3).

Hamann et al., (2002)further discussed the implications for communities receiving the current wave of the new Latino Diaspora; they discussed how educational policy at the local level "is always challenged by demographic change" (p. 5). With the new Latino Diaspora, these challenges "have left it to the existing social service infrastructure—such as schools, health care providers, municipal offices, etc.—to negotiate the added costs and complications of serving the new populations" (Hamann et al., 2002, p. 5). When a school is faced with a growing number of Latino newcomers, many of whom only speak Spanish or have little English language skills, the most immediate basic need is the ability to communicate with them. Hamann et al. (2002) found "That this might mean hiring bilingual paraprofessionals for the school setting.

Typically, however, the changes and needed responses are much more profound, extending beyond school sites into the larger community and proving to be much more profound, more complex than just a need for language interpreters" (p. 5).

Resilience

History is repetitive with stories of survivorship, stories such as the horrors of the Holocaust, enslavement of the African Americans' ancestors, the Japanese interment camps, and relocation of Native American nations, as well as the boycott of the California grapes initiated by Hispanic migrant workers. Stories such as these all have one thing in common--the persons who t survived learned to be resilient. Modern research has provided enough knowledge to develop and create a clear lens through which to view these stories through. Bernard's (1993) theoretical profile of a resilient child is defined as "one who works well, plays well, loves well and expects well" (p. 44). She further and other researchers identified four common attributes of resilient children-- social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future (Bernard, 1993, 1995; Gordon, 1993; Gordon-Rouse, 2001).

First, social competencerequires qualities such as responsiveness and the ability to bring forth positive responses from others such as empathy, flexibility, caring, and a sense of humor. The second characteristic isproblem-solving skills that include the ability to think abstractly and to reflect and find alternative solutions for both cognitive and social problems. The third characteristic, autonomy, is very dominant among resilient children. This characteristic allows them to have a sense of one's own identity and the ability to act independently, as well as being able to detach oneself from distress and

25

maintain outside pursuits and satisfactions. The final characteristic is a sense of purpose, such as goal setting, educational aspirations, persistence, hopefulness, and a sense of a great future all of which are very deep-seated.

Bernard (1993) recommended to help avoid suppressing the budding resilient characteristics of students that schools nurture a climate to help foster the development of resiliency. Many schools, families, and their communities protect those who are growing up in adverse situations by providing an environment that is both caring and supportive, positive, and provides continuous opportunities for participation. These three characteristics are considered "protective factors" that are part of resilient students lives. With the multitude of familial stressors to which students are exposed everydaya caring environment within the school, "has become a vital refuge for a growing number of children" (Bernard, p. 45). It has become their protection against the daily uncertainty they are exposed to in a stressful world.

Bernard (1993) also found when schools establish high expectations for all students and give them the support necessary to live up to them, the schools have incredibly high rates of academic success. First, when students are exposed to a curriculum that is rich in variety and encourages success in all areas such as arts, sports, community service, apprenticeship, and helping peers, it helps communicate that students' strengths are desired and valued.

Second, schools that are very encouraging of students do not rely on standardized tests that assess only a few types of intelligence. Encouraging schools to use multiple approaches such as self-reflection and authentic assessments, all of which help validate the different types of intelligences many resilient students possess (Bernard, 1993).

Third, the researcher found that schools are the most important vehicle for students' motivation and learning. By building upon successful promotion of resiliency, school's help build motivation and interests through varied curriculum by encouraging cooperation rather than competition.

Fourth, how school's group students in the classroom and within the school reflects upon the school's student expectations. "An enormous body of research points to the consistent positive academic and social outcomes of heterogeneous, cooperative learning groups for all students especially low achievers" (Bernard, 1993, p. 46). Finally, schools provide students with the opportunities to get meaningfully involved and help encourage a sense of responsibility and high expectations within the school.

> Resilience is the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles. These circumstances may be severe and infrequent or chronic and consistent. In order to thrive, mature, and increase competence, a person must draw on all of their resources: biological, psychological, and environmental. Resilience, therefore, is a multifaceted phenomenon. (Gordon-Rouse 2001, p. 461).

Henry and Milstein (2004) argued that resiliency must be promoted among youth, educators and communities. Resiliency can be used as a vehicle for school and community improvement. The authors discussed the resiliency model and its applications. It consists of the following attributes:

1. Positive connections: This helps students grow and know who they are and how they fit in with their peers.

2. Clear, consistent, and appropriate boundaries: Communicates of expectations in writing including procedures, rules and cultural preferences and norms.

3. Life-guiding skills: Help students become competent with their own abilities to navigate obstacles through life.

4. Nurture and support: Students thrive when supported and nurtured by those actively involved in their lives.

5. Purposes and expectations: When students have clear goals and the motivation to understand them, they are more likely to engage in school and life's challenges.

6. Meaningful participation: This helps students confirm that they are not alone and that they are valued and have something to offer.

The resiliency model applications can help lay a foundation for improvement of school and communities for several reasons. It is a positive approach that focuses on the students' strengths and potential. It is easily communicated and shared by everyone- students, teachers, administrators and schools staff, parents and other community members. Resiliency is a holistic framework, that promotes widespread involvement, and energizes and motivates participants (Henry & Milstein, 2004). The researchers also discuss the challenges and responses that many students will face in school and life.

Henry and Milstien, (2004) have identified several ways that students might respond to adversity in school and life. The first is the dysfunctional response; students feel overwhelmed and choose to withdraw from the situation. Second is the survival response; students learn to scrape by, to survive and respond in ways that are least successful and continue to struggle. Third is the comfort zone response; with persistence

and learning more adequate responses, students will return to where they were before the challenges came their way. Last is the resilient response; disruptions that result in new skills, new insights, increased self-confidence, and improved support from their environment to increase resiliency.

Overall resiliency is about the ability to deal with "disruptive and stressful challenges, learning coping skills, and becoming more effective in dealing with life events in ways that promote healthy well-being for everyone" (Henry & Milstein, 2004, p. 262). Resiliency focuses on students' strengths, problem-solving skills and promotion of positive attitudes.

Classic Resilience Studies

Waxman, Gray and Padron (2001) discussed three major concepts of resilience that emerged from several classic resilience studies, all of which found the same major concepts of resiliency: "(a) individual differences in recovery for trauma, (b) people from high-risk groups who obtain better outcomes than would typically be expected from these individuals, (c) reference to the ability to adapt, despite stressful experiences" (p. 3).

Waxman et al. (2001) also examined some of the classic resilience studies. The first research was by Rutter (1979) who conducted an epidemiological study that reflected the first category of resilience (individual differences in recovery for trauma). Rutter suggested:

Genetic factors do play a significant role in determining individual differences in personality characteristics and intelligence, and found that the school environment contains important protective factors, such as fostering a sense of achievement in

29

children, enhancing their personal growth, and increasing their social contacts. (Waxman et al., p. 3).

Waxman et al. (2001) also examined Werner and Smith's (1977) longitudinal study concerning high-risk students. It reflected the second category of the resilience phenomena (people from high-risk groups who obtain better outcomes than would typically be expected from these individuals). The cohort was deemed high risk based on certain factors such as poverty, family instability and discord, and poor child-rearing conditions. One-third ($n=72$) of the cohort grew up to be competent, productive, caring adults. The researchers added,

> Students at risk of academic failure often face a complexity of problems caused by poverty, health, and other social conditions that have made it difficult for them to succeed in school. They discovered several differences when comparing with at-risk kids who did develop serious problems. The results were separated into three types of protective attributes that supported resilience: (a) dispositional attributes of the individual, (b) affectional ties with the family, and (c) external support systems in the environment. (p. 4)

The Project Competence Study by Garmezy, Masten, and Tellegen as cited in Waxman et al., 2001) illustrated the third category of the resilience phenomena (the ability to adapt, despite stressful experiences). The researchers wanted to better understand how resiliency influenced children when they experienced stressful situations. The focus of the research was to determine how life stressors would impact the

competency levels of elementary children. "The participants were found to be suffering from multiple stressful life conditions" (p. 4). The researchers found that "disadvantaged children with lower IQs and socioeconomic status (SES) and less positive family qualities were generally less competent and more likely to be disruptive" (p. 4). However, Garmezy et al. (1984), (as cited in Waxman, et al., 2001) also found "that some of the disadvantaged children were competent and did not display behavioral problems. Because of this they began to question as to why some children did not succumb to the adversity they faced and develop negative adaptations" (p. 4). The results from these classic resiliency studies help to provide evidence that general factors help student at risk of failure become resilient despite adversity. The researchers found that "A central theme connecting all of the results mentioned above was the emphasis on both individual characteristics and environmental factors as possible sources of resilience" (p. 4).

Common Attributes/Characteristics of Resiliency

Researchers have found four common attributes among resilient students: (a) social competence, (b) problem-solving skills, (c) autonomy, and (d) sense of purpose and future (Bernard, 1995; Gordon, 1993, 1996; Gordon-Rouse, 2001). As elaborated earlier in the resilience section, Bernard's (1991) resilient theory proposed that all of these attributes are present to some degree in most people.

The occurrence of resilience seems to be an interwoven force among other factors. Gordon's (1996) theory found that previous studies regarding resilient youth shared certain characteristics: (a) resilient youth are able to live in both worlds, to be more androgynous than most other youth; (b) resilient youth are more socially responsible; (c)

resilient females are more adventurous and assertive, whereas the males are socially

perceptive, sensitive, and emotionally responsive; (d) resilient students are reported to be

friendly, with excellent social skills; (e) resilient students have a strong internal locus of

control; (f) resilient students are described as very independent, and (g) resilient students

are both cognitively and academically superior to their counterparts. Other researchers

also found that resilient ethnic minority adolescents are bicultural and able to live in the

dual cultures (their own and the mainstream cultures) successfully and effectively (Clark,

1991; Gordon, 1996; Winfield, 1991). Gordon-Rouse (2001) summed up the

characteristics as "intelligence, internal locus of control, independence, androgyny, and

social skills are the core personal factors" (p. 462).

Protective Factors

Researchers have found that protective factors often consist of students' individual

characteristics and the school environment of which they are a part (Rutter, 1979; Waxman

et al., 2001). Wang and Walberg (1994) stated,

> Research on successes from at-risk groups is undertaken to identify "protective"
>
> factors, or contributors to resilience. Factors such as personality characteristics,
>
> personal attributions, environmental characteristics, caring parenting behavior and
>
> family cohesiveness, school-home relations, caring mentoring by teachers,
>
> provision of opportunities to learn in school, involvement in community activities
>
> and sports, and community support networks are commonly tied to resilience. (p.
>
> 17)

According to Holleran and Waller (2003), "Risk and protective factors impacting resilience may be defined differently across diverse contexts and can only be understood in the context of culture, class, place and time" (p. 347). Feyl-Chavkin and Gonzalez (2000) found that the literature on resiliency identified five key protective factors of families, schools and communities, including:

(1) supportive relationships, particularly encouragement from school personnel and other adults, (2) student characteristics, such as self-esteem, motivation, and accepting responsibility, (3) family factors, such as parental support/concern and school involvement, (4) community factors, such as community youth programs (e.g., sports, clubs, hobbies), (5) school factors, such as academic success and pro-social skills training. (p. 2)

Bernard (1995) continued, "Whether they are strong enough to help individuals cope with adversity, however, depends on the presence of protective factors during childhood" (p. 1). Holleran and Waller (2003) stated that "Data found that a strong positive ethnic identity particularly identification with traditional Mexican values and beliefs may be a protective factor contributing to resilience among Chicano/a adolescents" (pp. 342-343).

Waxman et al., (2003) published report, *Review of Research on Educational Resilience,* concluded:

Students' at risk of academic failure often face a complexity of problems caused by poverty, health, and other social conditions that have made it difficult for them to succeed in school. One area of research that has important implication for the educational improvement of students at risk of academic failure is focused on

'resilient' students, or those students who succeed in school despite the presence of adverse conditions (p. 1).

McMillan and Reed (1994) described four factors that appear to be related to resiliency: (a) personal attributes such as motivation and goal orientation, (b) positive use of time (e.g., on-task behavior, homework completion, participation in extracurricular experiences), (c) family life (e.g., family support and expectations), and (d) school and classroom learning environment (i.e., facilities, exposure to technology, leadership, and overall climate). Overall, these variables seem to be interrelated to each other and can only help to initiate, develop, and enhance resiliency traits in students to use when confronted with educational/academic and life challenges.

Current Resilience Studies

In a series of studies conducted by the United States Department of Education's National Research Centers and the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE), Waxman et al. (2003) concluded that resilient students were found had significantly higher perceptions of involvement, task orientation, rule clarity, satisfaction, pacing, and feedback than nonresilient students. Waxman et al. (1997) compared, on the one hand, the motivation and learning environments of resilient and nonresilient Latino inner-city middle school students from a multiethnic, in a major urban city located in the south central region of the U.S. There were significant differences between the two student groups (resilient and nonresilient) on their academic aspirations. About 78% of the resilient students indicated that they would graduate from high school

compared to only 43% of the nonresilient students. Resilient students were found to have significantly higher perceptions of involvement, task orientation, rule clarity, satisfaction, pacing, and feedback than nonresilient students. Resilient students also reported a significantly higher social self-concept, achievement motivation, and academic self-concept than nonresilient students. There were no significant differences between the two groups on variables such as parent involvement, homework, and teacher support. One reason for why no differences were found with regard to the teacher support variable was that "Both resilient and nonresilient students had low perceptions of their teachers support; there was also a variability of responses within the groups" (Waxman et al., 1997, p. 6). The researchers also elaborated for not finding noteworthy differences between resilient and nonresilient students and for not finding considerable parental involvement was that "Both groups' responses were very high and there was little variability within the groups" (Waxman et al., 1997, p. 6).

Some similarity was found, such as over 90% of resilient students indicated that they would graduate from college or attend graduate school, compared to only about 46% of the nonresilient students. Resilient students reported that they spent significantly more time doing mathematics homework each week than nonresilient students. Resilient students also indicated that they spent more time on additional reading than nonresilient students. Upon further review of multivariate and univariate post hoc tests the researchers' data "revealed that resilient students had significantly higher perceptions of involvement, satisfaction, academic self-concept, and achievement motivation than nonresilient students" (Waxman et al., 1997, p. 7).

The present research on educational resiliency has focused predominately on minority students from low-income families. The typical findings revealed that there were several factors, including learning and classroom environment and motivational aspects that were very different among resilient and nonresilient students. Results from the studies usually indicated that resilient students perceived a more positive learning environment and were more satisfied with their classrooms. In addition, nonresilient students often indicated that they had more difficulty in their class work than resilient students. "The magnitude of these differences is both statistically and educational significant. These findings present a major challenge for classroom teachers who need to provide optimal learning environments for all of their students" (Waxman et al., 1997, p. 11).

Sociocultural Theory

Cummins' (1995) *empowerment theory* stresses four areas. "These elements include (a) incorporation of minority students' culture and language; (b) inclusion of minority community in the education of their children; (c) pedagogical assumptions and practices operating in the classroom; and (d) the assessment of minority students" (p. 106). First, the incorporation of the minority students' culture and language "included under incorporation of minority group cultural features is the adjustment of instructional patterns to take account of culturally conditioned learning styles" (p. 107). Hispanic students achieve as students in a classroom that is more active, involves group work, cooperative learning communities, and is more student centered than teacher centered.

Second, with regard to community participation, Cummins (1995) stated, "When educators involve minority parents as partners in their children's education, parents appear to develop a sense of efficacy that communicates itself to children with positive academic consequences" (p. 108). Any school that advocates for strong parental involvement will realize higher student academic achievement. The third element is pedagogy. Cummins(1995) commented, "Learning disabilities are pedagogically induced in that children designated 'at-risk' frequently receive intensive instruction which confines them to a passive role of and induces a form of *learned helplessness*" (p. 109). When students are expected to fail, they usually do. At times, educators can only reinforce the students' lack of confidence by not having positive student-teacher interactions. Finally, on assessment, Cummins (1995) asserts that the assessment of language for minority students can be utilized in two ways. The first way is that when implemented as an advocacy-oriented instrument it can only serve to empower students. The second way is that when "assessments are used as "legitimization oriented" instruments it can only disempower (disable) students" (p. 107). Assessment instruments can be used to either place the student in a negative, deficient, disabled position, or they can be used to enable and promote the students' abilities.

Cummins (1995) identified a continuum from empowerment to disempowerment. These two variables depend upon the administration and pedagogy of the school. Cummins identified four characteristics of empowerment. The first is the extent to which ELL's culture and language are respected and incorporated into the school program(s). Second is the depth of the role parents as advocates have as a part of their children's educational experience. Third is whether the educators promote the active use of native

language to help encourage and generate students' own knowledge, thus freeing them from a predetermined curriculum. When pedagogy induces "learning disabilities," students are considered "at-risk," which initiates intensive instruction and confines them to what Cummins (1995) called a form of *learned helplessness*. The final characteristic is whether the school and its staff advocate for the students or if students are perceived as the problem.

Another sociocultural theory deals implicitly with cultural and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, educational experience and life changes. Researchers Herrera and Murry (2005) state that the most common sentiment among culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student educators is, "If they [CLD students] would just learn English, everything else [in their school performance] would just fall right into place" (p. 12). However, research (Herrera & Murry, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997) showed that no single part of CLD student academic achievement should be addressed in isolation. Thomas and Collier's (1994, 1997) research shows that both sociocultural processes are part of the CLD students' school performance. It is referred to as the Prism Model. This model encompasses four areas:

1. Language development

2. Cognitive development

3. Academic development

4. Social and cultural processes

Herrera and Murry (2005) reflect that the CLD student's life encompasses sociocultural challenges.These include but are not limited to (a) the CLD student must adjust to a new country, city, and neighborhood; (b) the CLD student must adapt to a new

educational system; and (c) the student must cope with the nuances of the school's

culture. The researchers also add "Equally formidable for the CLD student are the

psychosocial challenges of the sociocultural dimensions including (a) ambiguity, (b)

anxiety, (c) prejudice, and (d) discrimination often on the basis of skin color, nationality,

language and more" (p. 13). When discussing psychosocial and cultural challenges the

authors elaborate on the culture of the school. Some cultural issues brought to the

forefront are recency of immigration and/or migration and the culture of the school.

Herrera and Murry (2005) stated that some schools might show disrespect for the CLD

student's native language, diversity, conflict between minority and majority cultures, the

CLD student's school and class environment, and distance and time perspectives. They

comment on the "emphasis on equality and meritocracy versus equity" (p. 14). When

discussing the processes of these challenges one should consider acculturation,

developing conflict resolution skills, and the ability to view situations from multiple

points of view.

In the psychosocial context, the researchers further state that there are several

issues related to CLD students to consider. First, affective variables, can encompass, but

are not limited, to homesickness, anger, depression, and the instructional input and

environmental demands of the student. Second intragroup challenges exist, such as

language brokering and separation from support groups such as the CLD student's family

and friend network. Third intergroup challenges stem from lived experiences dealing with

discrimination and prejudices. Fourth, socioeconomic challenges can include issues

relating to socioeconomic status (SES) and stability, family employment, lack of access

to health care and residency (immigration) status demands. The final variable discussed is

the sociopolitical environment. Issues to be considered are the relationships between the community of the CLD students and their school. Also on a much broader national scope is the debate over bilingual education and immigration policies and the "increased terrorism and subsequent rise in xenophobia" (Herrera & Murry, 2005, p.14).

Herrera and Murry (2005) elaborated on the processes in which these issues become apparent. When discussing the psychosocial issues of a CLD student, the processes are also manifested in the development of self-esteem, cultural identity formation, motivation building, formation of social identity, and the establishment of positive interpersonal relationships along with the creation of a supportive psychosocial network. When considering all of these challenges, variables, and processes, it can be argued that the school and its culture can profoundly influence t CLD students' educational experience. Herrera and Murry (2005) state that a number of schools' culture is composed of three prominent elements:

1. The attitudes and beliefs of educators, school administrators and school staff.

2. The rules and norms to which school members (teachers, administrators, and school staff) adhere.

3. The relationships that exists among its members.

Herrera and Murry (2005) argued that school culture affects not only the students but also, the schools teachers and staff as well. More specifically "School culture is often pivotal in shaping teachers attitudes and beliefs toward change" (p. 15). This includes teachers' perspectives on increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the school and providing the necessity of adapting curricula and student services to help CLD students achieve academic success. Herrera and Murry (2005) elaborated on characteristics that

are entrenched in school cultures that lead to the development of a variety of myths and misconceptions regarding CLD students. One such given myth holds that CLD students' learning is due to inherent abilities. This myth presumes that "CLD students regardless of their culture or language, are less capable of educational excellence than grade level students of the dominant culture" (p. 15). They further postulated that when school culture assumes inferiority of CLD cultures and native language(s), neither the curricula nor the teachers place value on the diverse cultures or native language support. "This myth of learning abilities is but one among many that can arise from a rigid and entrenched school culture" (p. 16).

As was earlier discussed, acculturation is probably one of the most significant of sociocultural processes for the CLD student, especially if the student is newly or recently immigrated. From birth each person becomes enculturated, that is the initiation into one's own home or culture. Even though enculturation is a lifelong process, not all are able to confront the new trials and tribulations of an additional acculturation process. Herrera and Murry (2005) commented that through enculturation, persons develop a sense of self-identity as well as group identity.

> We gradually and almost imperceptibly develop a sense of group
> identity that forms our set of values, guides our beliefs, patterns
> our actions, channels our expectations, and gives us an
> ethnocentric view of the validity of our ways. Unless we
> geographically relocate or experience significant and frequent
> cross cultural encounters in our lives, we have little occasion to
> question the validity of our ethnocentric world view or our need

to adapt to the perspectives and cultural ways of life that differ

from those of our own enculturation (pp. 19-20).

Herrera and Murry (2005) further argued that CLD students must come to terms with and understand the subtle yet powerful variances and influences of their own enculturation, yet the need to excel in their new engagement of adjusting to another culture which in many cases is new to the CLD student. The environment (school) should take into account and accommodate the stages of acculturation through which the student will progress. Accommodations such as cultural and linguistic diversity support, respect of the students' ethnic identity, and the CLD student academic, linguistic and cognitive growth and progress are necessary for student success.

Herrera and Murry (2005) concluded by summarizing a few of the sociocultural dimensions and environments and their implications for the classroom. First are the educators need to understand that the increasing diversity among their students should not be perceived as a liability. When negative perceptions come into play, educators tend to react negatively which at times can be manifested as frustration. "Frustration and negativity toward increasing school diversity are not uncommon responses among teachers, staff, and school administrators" (p. 24). Lastly is the value of cultural and linguistic diversity that their students bring to the classroom. Incorporation of diversity will help to enrich the learning of all students.

Acculturation

When immigrants come into contact with the majority culture, a social and psychological process takes place which leads to changes of the minority culture, of one or both groups. Ginorio and Huston (2001) reported that:

"Latino families are also shaped by their connections to other cultures in the United States and often characterized by marginal economic survival, segregation in poor urban neighborhoods, and an uneasy distrust of dominant cultures that is often typified by racism and intolerance" (p. 15).

Ginorio and Huston (2001) further stated,

In the United States, it is assumed that immigrants will change their culture to resemble that of the Anglo majority. This has become known as "acculturation" that refers to changes wherein one group acquires some of the characteristics values and behaviors of the other without giving up its own values and behaviors. What many Hispanic families tend to fear is "assimilation" that refers to "the acquisition of new values or behaviors that replace original values or behaviors with the intent of becoming like the group being copied" (p. 21).

Latino parents who are unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system are lacking in what social scientists call "cultural capital." Ginorio and Huston, (2001), referred to cultural capital as resources such as:

"Familiarity with educational terms and jargon, the provision of reading materials in the home, and exposure to (European based) cultural enrichment such as museums, literature, art and music. This becomes problematic when schools assume that children come to their classrooms with these resources at their command and parents can and will aggressively advocate on their child's behalf" (Ginorio & Huston , 2001, p. 19).

Cultural and Value Conflicts

There are two worlds in which Latinas have to learn to survive . First is their home and family life, and second is the school and home community. According to Vasquez-Nuttall and Romero-Garcia (1989), there are many cultural and value conflicts in Latinas lives today. Many Latinas:

1. Come from low-income family where preschool experiences is not the norm;

2. Parents put more value on the family's daily survival than the importance of their children's education;

3. Families do not see the connection between school related behaviors, such as daily school attendance, and doing well in school;

4. Are part of a culture that values achievement for family satisfaction;

5. Promote ignorance in sexual matters;

6. Where parenting is of an authoritarian style;

7. Nurtures dependency and cooperation;

8. Values its children, which are loved and enjoyed;

9. Have nonsegregated age groups as well as segregated sex groups;

10. Promotes *machismo* for boys and *marianismo* for girls;

11. Girls do not need to be educated as much as boys (p. 67).

Vasquez-Nuttall and Romero-Garcia (1989) added the school cultural and value conflicts Hispanic females are exposed to at school. Many Latinas students attend schools that

1. Value independence;

2. Teachers seem distant and cold;

3. As a whole value competition;

4. Use a democratic style of leadership;

5. Expect preschool experiences;

6. Expect parents to value education above other values;

7. Believe both sexes should be educated equally;

8. Advocate sex education;

9. Support achievement for self-satisfaction;

10. Has segregated age groups and nonsegregated sex groups;

11. Does not promote machismo or marianismo;

12. Expect that families should know the types of child and family behaviors that lead to good school performance; (p. 67).

All of these experiences are directly opposite of Latinas lives at home and of what their culture values and expects. Diaz-Greenberg (2003) noted "that her participants considered one of the most important issues to them was ethnic identity, along with culture, language, and identity were integral parts" (p. 85). Participants further

emphasized how each characteristic was important throughout life, contributing to the development of self-esteem. The researcher further found that

> "The role of the family in the development or suppression of ethnic identity was of utmost importance, since children see parents and relatives as the sources or transmitters of culture and language. Likewise, the school was seen as a potentially important contributor, which could play a major role by incorporating the home-based linguistic and cultural experiences of the students but often chose not to" (p. 78).

Holleran and Waller's (2003) study focused on Chicano/a (this term is widely used in the southwestern states, particularly California, more than Hispanic and/or Latino, but it is only used when designated individuals are of Mexican-American descent) youth along the borderlands. Throughout their discussion with the Chicano/a participants they found that "collectivism and related values (e.g., *familismo* (centrality of family), *respeto* (respect), *dignidad* (dignity), *fidelidad* (loyalty), *orgullo* (pride), *machismo, and marianismo*), and *religiosidad* (religion, particularly belief in the inevitability and transformative value of suffering) repeatedly emerged in adolescents' stories" (p. 341).

> It is important for practitioners to be knowledgeable about the complex interplay of historical, social, economic, and political factors related to both personal social identify formation among Chicano/adolescents in the borderlands. Other researchers agree that, as Chicano/a youth move between home, community, school, and work contexts, they may have to contend with the pressures of diverging expectations related to language use and overall behavior (p. 12).

46

Holleran and Waller (2003) stated "Recognition of shared cultural values and beliefs may provide immigrant parents and their acculturated children with common ground amidst the discontinuities of diversity levels of acculturation and disrupted family and community life" (p. 14). The researchers further stated that, "The respondents' stories are about social problems, but they are also stories about traditional values and beliefs that give meaning to adolescents' experiences, guide their behavior, and inspire positive life transformations" (p. 346). The study further found data suggesting "adherence to these traditional Mexican-American values and beliefs may fortify ethnic identity, give meaning to experience and assist Chicano/a youth in forging adaptive bicultural identities" (p. 346).

Dropouts

According to *Trends in Educational Equity of Girls and Women, (2001),* 22.1% of Hispanic females between 16-24 years old from 1972 to 2001 dropped out of school as compared to 31.6 % of Hispanic males. Ginorio and Huston (2001) argued that "girls who did leave school are less likely than their male counterparts to return and complete school" (p. 2). Phillips (1998) supported this research commenting, "Once Black and Hispanic girls leave school, they are less likely than Black and Hispanic boys to make up their educational loss;thus high status dropout rates are not just a problem associated with recent immigration" (p. 2). In the U.S.Census 2000, the Hispanic origin population was 35.3 million or 12.5% of the U.S population. The Hispanic population increased by 57.9% from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000. Whereas 25.7% of the U.S. population was under 18 years of age in 2000, 35.0% of Hispanics were under 18.

Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population and became the largest

teen minority group by 2005. Projections indicate that by 2015, one of every 5 teens in

the U.S. will be Hispanic. (U.S.Census Bureau, 2004).

According to the Kansas Accountability Report (2002-2003) on state schools, the

Hispanic dropout rate was 3.1%, African American 2.6%, White 1.3%, Native American

2.5%, and Asian/Pacific Islander 1.3%. The student graduation rate for Hispanics was

70.3%, African American 76.2%, White 90.1%, Native American 78.5%, and

Asian/Pacific Islander 90.8%. In comparison the President's Advisory Commission,

(2003), reported that nationwide, the Hispanic high school drop out rate for 25 year olds

and older subgroups are Mexican Americans at 30.96%, Mexican immigrants at 61.14%,

Puerto Rican 35.08%, Cuban 28.79%, and Central or South American 35.71 %.

Academic Achievement

According to Tsuboi-Saito (2002), the sociocultural research on achievement

differences included various theories such as cultural compatibility (Gallimore &

Goldenberg, 1993; Heath, 1983, 1986), resistance and/or opposition (MacLeod,1987;

Ogbu, 1978; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986) and folk theory (Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi,

1986). First, the cultural compatibility theories maintained that a match between the

culture of home and the dominant culture promotes success. In opposing views, "Cultural

conflict between the child's training in the primary culture and the expectations of the

dominant culture of school is less likely to result in success" (Tsuboi-Saito, 2002, p. 18).

For example, there are cultures with a negative view of achievement that makes a

distinction of the individual as achieving above the ability of the group. The Native American culture follows this belief.

Second, the institutional inequality theory assigns responsibility to schools as often failing to instruct children from cultures that are different. From this perspective, "Lack of achievement is due to social injustice and institutions that preserve inequality, not due to cultural deficiency" (Tsuboi-Saito, 2002, p. 18). The 1954 *Brown v Topeka Board of Education* desegregation legislation of is an example of an educational institution manifesting inequality towards students of color with in their district.

Third, Tsuboi-Saito (2002) and Ogbu (1978) maintained that caste-like status of minority groups, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans, produced low school performance and low adult status. The resistance and/or opposition theories put forward, another explanation for differences in educational outcomes arises. "Due to their group's disenfranchised status, achievement by minority group members can be considered as 'selling out' one's ethnic and cultural identity to the dominant culture and its value system" (Tsuboi-Saito, 2002, p. 18). For example, pejorative terms such as *coconuts* for Hispanic students or *oreos* for African American students both refer to *acting white* and are often "used by peers to resist achievement and oppose the values of the mainstream" (p. 18).

Fourth, Tsuboi-Saito (2002) and Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) proposed that every population develops its own "folk theory" for getting ahead. Tsuboi-Saito commented "School success depends on the role of schooling in people's cultural value system" (p. 19). She further stated,

If in the cultural experience school success is equated with job success, then that population will respond positively towards schooling. If, on the other hand, children observe that adult members of the population do not demonstrate a connection between school success and success in getting and overcoming institutional barriers, then they do not develop a positive concept of schooling as a means of getting ahead (Tsuboi-Saito, p. 19).

Tsuboi-Saito (2002) concluded "The measure of educational aspiration appears to be part of an ethnic sociocultural identity that predicts academic performance" (p. 28). If minority students are seen as *selling out or acting White,* they most likely choose to reject the exhibition of the mainstream cultural attributes. "Students who chose to engage in a task, put forth effort, and persist are more likely to achieve at higher levels. Motivation along with cognitive ability and situational factors is hypothesized to influence achievement" (p. 30).

According to the Education Trust-Ed Watch Online's State summary reports for the State of Kansas (2005), the Hispanic student population of school age children between 5-24, make-up 9% of the public schools' population, and ages 5-18, Grades K-12 made up 10%. The Education Trust noted that of the Latinos in the state of Kansas, 9% were enrolled in public schools K-12, yet, only 2% were participants in gifted and talented programs; 7% are identified as receiving special education services, and 11% had been suspended (data did not differentiate between in-school or out of school suspensions nor length of suspensions). After controlling for social class and other related variables, Hispanics in Grades K-12 tended to have lower grades than their classmates.

Ginorio and Huston (2001) concluded that Latina/o students are underrepresented in challenging AP courses that allow students to earn college credit for high school work in several subject areas. They further found that "Latinas are less likely to enroll in AP mathematics or science than their White or Asian peers" (p. 6). When Latinas do enroll in AP classes they:

Take the same number of or more AP exams than their male counterparts, especially in the language arts, yet they take fewer AP exams than White and Asian girls. Latina/o test taking mirrors the overall gender gap in mathematics and science AP exams in some areas but is less pronounced in others. Latinas test taking is lower as a percentage of the population than that of any other group of girls, as is Latino test taking vis-à-vis other groups of students (Ginorio & Huston, pp. 6-7).

Even though many Latinas bear the burden of the familial responsibilities and obligations, these burdens may not negatively impact a Latinas educational achievement. Ginorio and Huston (2001) reported on a study conducted by the San Diego Public Schools that looked at high achieving and low achieving Latinas in the San Diego City School District and found that high achievers tended to have more responsibility at home than low achievers.

Half of high achievers take care of younger siblings in comparison to 20% of low achievers, and the majority of all Latinas—70% high achievers and 80% of low achievers—also reported paid work experience in addition to family responsibilities (p. 20).

Gender Role Expectations

Throughout history men have shaped "knowledge for women." They decided whether females could attend school or not, and what they could study. Belenky, Blythe, Golderberger, and Tarule's (1997) gender theory discussed women's ways of knowing that is the lens through which women see reality and draw conclusions about truth, knowledge and authority. Belenky and colleagues as psychologists were interested in human development and found that females had more difficulty than males in asserting their authority or considering themselves as an authoritative figure. The researchers began their study of what they termed the gender schema based on growing concerns brought to light from their previous research. The first issue was women's distrust of their own intellectual competence. "We became concerned about why women students feel so frequently of problems and gaps in their learning and so often doubt their intellectual competence" (p. 4). The second issue was women's ways of learning and valuing lessons. We had also become aware of the fact that, for many women, the real and valued lessons learned did not necessarily grow out of their academic work but in relationships with friends and teachers, life crises, and community involvements" (p. 4).

This study described the cultivated ways of knowing that females developed and valued. It also elaborated on the large number of obstacles women must overcome in developing the power of their minds and intellect. They interviewed 135 women to explore their participants' experiences and problems as both learners and knowers. Their study grouped women's perspectives or what the researcher called "knowing" into five major categories. The first was silence, this referred to the position in which women viewed themselves as mindless, voiceless subject helpless to the whims of externals

52

authority. Second, received knowledge, described the lens from which women view themselves as capable of receiving, reproducing, knowledge taken from the external authorities, while simultaneously believing that women were not capable of creating knowledge on their own. Third, was subjective knowledge, the conception of truth and knowledge as personal, private, and intuitive. Fourth was procedural knowledge, a position in which women were invested in learning and apply procedures for gaining and sharing knowledge. Last was constructed knowledge: in this position women viewed all knowledge as contextual experience. They were the creators of knowledge and valued both the prejudiced and actual strategies for knowing.

<div align="center">Marianismo and Machismo</div>

Based on family values, many Latinas are expected to live up to certain cultural gender role expectations. These expectations range anywhere from family care to working to help sustain the family economically, but the most expected gender role is *marianismo,* which is often referred as the other side of the *machismo* coin. According to Gil and Inoa-Vazquez (1996), *marianismo* is about sacred duty, self-sacrifice, and chastity: about dispensing care and pleasure not receiving them, living in the shadows, literally and figuratively, of your men, father, boyfriend, husband, son, your kids and your family" (p. 7). They further stated that *marianismo* is a no win situation (p. 7), because it insists that Latinas live in a world that no longer exists and which perpetuates a value system equating perfection from submission. These gender role expectations are revered among the Latino families and their communities" (p. 7). Today, a Latina's self-

denial is not only the norm but also an expectation in order to live peacefully in many

Latino families. Gil and Iona-Vazquez (1996) concluded that many;

> Latina women end up in this position because the dark side of *machismo*
>
> mandates that men have options and women have duties. It means that a
>
> man's place is *en el mundo*, in the world, and woman's place is *en la casa*,
>
> in the home. It means that your (the Latinas) brother is praised for being
>
> ambitious, while you (the Latina) are discouraged for the same quality.
>
> And it means that first your (the Latina) father, and then your brothers,
>
> then your husband give the orders and you obey them (p. 6).

Family Obligations

Latinas also face familial expectations known as *centrality of family.* Many

Latinas' lives are inherently tied to the family, more so than any other ethnic group in the

United States. Many Latino families have high educational expectations for their

daughters; nonetheless, they are expected to contribute to the family's economic well

being. This may be either paid or unpaid labor. For example, some Latinas might have to

arrive at school late due to the circumstances of her family's need for her to baby-sit

younger siblings due to her parents' work schedule, or they might arrive late to school

because they were helping their parents at their workplace. Many Mexican immigrants

work in areas that require them to work at night (e.g., cleaning offices, restocking stores,

factories, etc.). This forces some Latinas to either sleep late or go directly to school from

their parents' workplace. Either way, it curtails Latinas' ability to participate in many of

their school's extracurricular activities. Ginorio and Huston (2001) postulated, "For many,

family labor often means they must miss their first classes of the day to look after children whose schools start later in the day" (p.19). However, there has been little done in the way of research to investigate how the centrality of family life affects Latinas regardless of the gender roles and responsibilities in most Hispanic families in the United States.

One major responsibility for many Latinas is fulfilling the role of family translator. This occurs because many Latina students are their family's only connection to the English-speaking world. When this happens, many Latina students are forced to miss school and lose time from their learning in order to translate for their parents when needed. This might occur if the parents have an appointment to see a doctor or have an appointment at a social service office. Ginorio and Huston (2001) suggested,

It is possible although it requires further research, that girls and women charged with the maintenance of family ties, shoulder more of the translation responsibilities than male siblings and view their role as integral to the family's well-being, rather than a sacrifice (p.19).

It has been the researcher's experience that these roles cross generational lines also. Some Latinas might have parents who can speak English well enough to get by, but that might not be the case for the grandparents and/or other older relatives which in turn require the Latinas help as translator.

Possible Selves/Self-Esteem

Sadker and Sadker (1994) cited a 1990 study by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) to learn how boys and girls ages 9-15 viewed themselves; the study sample included 3000 children. When the researchers tallied the results, they found a significant self-esteem gap separated boys and girls as they entered into adolescence,

> The self esteem of girls fell the most steeply, total of 38 points. In elementary school 68% of Hispanic girls said they always felt happy about themselves, but this sense of contentment faded, and by high school only 30% said they were always happy with themselves (p. 78).

They further found that the number of Hispanic girls who agreed with the statement, "I feel good about myself when I'm with my family' decreased from 79 points to 38 points" (p. 78). The Sadkers suggested that at the time of puberty, girls were experiencing many changes at once,

> Typically boys reach puberty after they have made the shift to middle school, and so they can cope with one change at a time. The trauma experienced by girls in dealing simultaneously with the metamorphosis of puberty and the adjustment to a new more, difficult school can be seen as a major contributor to the shattering of their fragile self-esteem (p. 79).

Family members who have an effect on Latinas sense of self within the traditional family roles also have a direct influence on them. According to Ginorio and Huston

(2001), a Latina will form the first images of who she can be and what should be

considered realistic and rewarding options for her future self within her family of origin.

"Thus, many Latinas' possible selves are more intrinsically tied to the family than those

of other ethnic and racial groups in the United States" (p. 16).

Group Images

Kao (2000) argued, "Group images of ethnic groups promote conceptions of

success and academic achievement in several ways"(p. 409). First, distinct images of

racial groups work to maintain boundaries between groups and provide rationales for

students to maintain racially segregated peer groups at school. Conversely, the racial

segregation of peer groups forms a climate conducive to the development of racially

distinct ideas about possible selves. Segregated groups also work to maintain racial

differences in conceptions of success because minority youth are more likely to compare

with their same-race counterparts in evaluating the levels of achievement needed to reach

their educational and occupational aspirations. Secondly, a group's images work to affect

the content of possible selves minority youth use to gauge their future orientations, thus

directly affecting conceptions of success. Finally, Kao (2000) argued that the extent to

which group images regarding prowess are identified positively or negatively has direct

consequences on adolescents' focus on hoped for selves versus feared selves.

Schmidt and Padilla (1994) conducted a longitudinal study on sophomores to

investigate the associations among self-esteem, family, challenge and two indicators of

adolescent achievement, high school grades and extracurricular involvement. The

researchers found that family challenges and self-esteem were correlated with one

another and examined the effects of each of these factors on achievement while controlling the other factor. The results also suggested differences in academic achievement and extracurricular participation by race/ethnicity. They found that beyond their role in the prevention of negative behaviors, grades and extracurricular involvement were linked to the development of what might be considered indicators of optimal adolescent functioning.

Larson (1994, 2000) found that youth participation in structured voluntary activities was associated with increased initiative, as indicated by high intrinsic motivation within context of complexity. Grades and extracurricular involvement have been linked not only to positive outcomes during adolescence, but are also considered to be fairly reliable indicators of future well being and success. While participation in extracurricular activates has been linked to long-term resiliency and civic engagement in adult life (Larson, 2000: Schmidt, 1998; Werner, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1992). Throughout the years, self-esteem has received a massive amount of attention in both research and theory. Even though the relationship between self-esteem and achievement has been a major part of previous research, there is little agreement about the type of these associations. It is not clear whether the relationship between self-esteem and achievement is a direct one or whether there are intervening factors such as sense of personal control or family challenge that are not accounted for in previous studies because self-esteem is so widely studied, there are a variety of methods available for measuring it including global self-esteem measures as well as domain specific measures. Research has not yet resolved the question of causality. It is still not clear whether having

high self-esteem leads to high academic achievement or whether good grades lead one to have higher self-esteem.

Summary

To review the resiliency research discussed in this section it is important to talk about the common attributes that encompass resiliency, such as social competence, problem solving, autonomy and a sense of purpose (Bernard,1993; Gordon 1996: Gordon-Rouse 2001), all of which to benefit resilient students. Henry and Milstein's(2004) resiliency model application can help lay a foundation by to promoting a positive focus on students' strengths andincreasing student involvement, ideals easily communicated and shared by all involved in the school. Rutter (1979) found that resiliency had inherent protective factors, which helped to promote achievement among students, enhance personal growth, and increase social contacts.

The sociocultural research discussed, such as Cummins (1995) theory of empowerment, addressed incorporation of several key elements,such as culture and language, minority community educational involvement, pedagogical practices that are sensitive to culture, and assessment of minority students. The next sociocultural theory Herrera and Murry (2005) stressed the challenges of culturally and linguistically diverse students such as adjustments to their new environments. Other research discussed cultural and value conflicts that are part of Hispanic females everyday lives (Vazquez-Nuttal & Romero-Garcia, 1989). The review also elaborated on the dropout rates of Latinos and their failure to return to school once they drop out. Gender theory was expanded upon emcompasing Belenky's (1997) theory on women's ways of knowing as well as a

discussion on *marianiso* and *machismo* which are a big part of Hispanic cultural

expectations.

All of the research discussed in the literature review a indicates a need for more in

depth studies to be conducted on the academic success and educational achievement of

Hispanic females at the secondary level.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the sociocultural experiences, resilience and persistence factors and gender role expectations that contribute to the success of Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates. Through qualitative methods of inquiry, the researcher also explored the lived experiences of Latina high school graduates from a Midwest K-12 public school system. Across the nation, Latina/Hispanic students are dropping out and/or are pushed out of classrooms (Herrera & Murry, 2005) and are quietly fading from the educational system. "Latinas now constitute the largest minority group of girls in the United States, not including those living in the commonwealth of Puerto Rico" (Ginorio & Huston, 2001, p. viii). The perspectives of these voices are (a) Hispanic female high school graduates from an K-12 public school system who are now attending a university, (b) the effects of negative attitudes in academic and social settings, (c) expected cultural and gender roles in traditional Hispanic families for females, and (d) academic success in public schools. Therefore, this study focused on the underlying cultural conflicts and issues encountered by Hispanic female high school graduates in their communities and the K-12 public educational systems.

Research Questions

To examine the sociocultural experiences, resilience and persistence factors and gender role expectations that contribute to the success of Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a university, the following questions were proposed:

1. What are the lived experiences and factors of persistence and resilience that contribute to Latina/Hispanic female academic success?

61

2.   What are the sociocultural and gender role expectations and pressures that impact the success of Latina/Hispanic female students in a K-12 public school system?

These questions focused on experiences that have not been explained or explored in previous quantitative or qualitative research. This chapter is organized into the following sections: (a) collective case study research, (b) research design, (c) pilot study, (d) participant selection, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, (g) ethical issues, and (h) establishing trustworthiness.

Collective Case Study Research

Qualitative research methods have become increasingly important modes of inquiry for the social sciences and applied fields such as education (Marshall & Rossman, 1994). Qualitative research methods represent a mixture of the rational, serendipitous, and intuitive in which the personal experiences and key events are to be understood and analyzed as data (Seidman, 1991). The research method used in this study was a collective case study. According to Shkedi (2005), "A collective study analysis presents and compares between several single case narratives" (p. 21). One of the characteristics of the collective case study approach is "although it deals with several case narratives and presents them collectively, each single narrative is portrayed with its unique features and contexts" (p. 21). The collective case study approach consists of "thick descriptions" of several case studies and includes certain types of comparison between them. When discussing case studies, Creswell (1998) referred to bounded systems that deal with one or more cases through meticulous data collection over time. This bounded system he maintains is put together by both the place and time of interest. The case may involve a

variety of attributes such as individual persons, events, or activities. The case study

approach can incorporate several data collection methods, including interviews,

observations, and written material. Creswell (1998) advocated setting the case within its

proper context, which "involves situating the case within its setting, which may be a

physical setting or the social, historical and/or economic setting of the case" (p. 61). For

the purpose of this study, the focus or context of the case was on the uniqueness of the

targeted respondents' social and historical setting in a K-12 public school system.

According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), "The important events and experiences

in a person's life are told in ways that capture the person's own feelings, views, and

perspective" (p. 12). These events often account for the individual lived experiences and

how a person copes with society, rather than how society copes with the stream of

individuals.

In qualitative methodology, the researcher must set aside prejudgments regarding

the phenomenon being investigated, and preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the

phenomenon from prior experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Qualitative research provides a

means of accessing "unquantifiable facts about the actual people researchers observe and

talk to or people represented by their personal traits" (Berg, 1995, p. 7). Collective case

study research implies a direct concern with understanding experiences as participants

feel or live their them.

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, a collective case study approach was employed. The

goal of the collective case study approach is to uncover the meaning as it is lived or

experienced. A qualitative paradigm was selected for this study because it was appropriate for the research questions and allowed the researcher to discuss issues, problems, relationships, and other phenomena in detail that otherwise could not be explained quantitatively. In qualitative research, the researcher is interested in the process, meaning, and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The potential benefit of qualitative research is that it is personal and rich in descriptions. The strength of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to share the understandings and perceptions (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) of others and to explore how people give meaning and structure to their daily lives. In order to explore the factors that led to academic success among Hispanic females in the Midwest, the issues, problems relationships of resilience/persistence and gender role expectations were the focus of this study's investigation.

Creswell (1998) recommended that qualitative analysis and representation with regard to a case study be broken up into six sections:

1. Data managing; creating and organizing files of data.

2. Reading and memoing; this requires the researcher to read through text, make margin notes, and form initial codes.

3. Describing; describe the case and its context.

4. Classifying; the use of categorical aggregation and establish patterns of categories.

5. Interpreting; the use of direct interpretation and develops naturalistic generalizations.

6. Representing, visualizing; presentation of narrative augmented by tables and figures (p. 148).

Pilot Study

To test the design of this collective case study, a pilot study was conducted with a Hispanic female high school graduate now attending a midwestern university. The respondent was interviewed using the predeveloped interview questionnaire (see Appendix A)**.** The interview questions which included a demographic questionnaire were created based on the areas of interest of the investigation, which were predetermined by the researcher (see Appendix B). To encourage the respondent's participation, the researcher provided general prompts such as "Tell me more," "Why did you say that?" "Explain some more," etc. This was done in order to help the researcher provide a clear transcript of the participant's thought processes. During the interview process, an audio tape recording was made and then transcribed and used for data analysis (see Appendix B).

Data analysis of the pilot study consisted of incorporating some or all of Creswell (1998) four recommendations: categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, establishment of patterns, and naturalisitic generalizations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Creswell's Four Recommendations

Theme	Examples	Areas of Study	Subareas
Pride	Learn and finish high school, you have some pride, I think, I guess as a Hispanic I want to grow, I want to be able to say 'yes' –"I have a career', I have a degree in something, I wanna show something, you know the society, the world that we live in, in my pride, I have.	Sociocultural	Cultural values Possible selves
Accomplishment	You want to accomplish something…	Sociocultural	Possible selves
Persistence/Resiliency	Don't be able to the university was big issue I always thought I need to go there. So I always had that attitude I need to go there and do what I want to do and don't be able to do it I was.	Resilience	Academic achievement
Lived discrimination	And now I have some teachers that just don't have sympathy for Hispanic people…they don't give a damn…oops! Sorry. Some kind of discrimination. I can see people look at me differently….	Sociocultural	Academic achievement

Opportunity	That yes, I think just to get a better life, not live paycheck to paycheck. If have more education you have a better paycheck.	Resilience/Persistence	Cultural and value conflicts
Desire to learn	I don't know my mom was like…you don't need to go to the whole elementary school (process) and to finish elementary school, my mom feel really proud of me. And I was, this…this is nothing….(haha) You can say that I want to learn.	Gender expectations	Cultural values Possible selves

Information gathered from the pilot study provided the researcher with significant insights into the interviewee's thoughts, lived experiences, and factors related to resilience/persistence. While analyzing the pilot study's interview data, the researcher saw some possible patterns and themes within the responses. Some of these themes were pride, accomplishment, persistence, lived discrimination, opportunities, and value-orientated comments toward education. All of these emergent themes were further explored while analyzing the final collective case study data.

After conducting the pilot study, modifications were made to better ensure the effectiveness of the interview questions and protocol. Some of the modifications that were incorporated included:

1. Prompting respondents to be more willing to share a deeper insight to help provide a better view of their lived experiences. This was done to keep the flow of the questions natural and smooth in synchronization and reduce redundancy.

2. The question " What three words would you use to describe yourself as a successful student?" was deleted from the questionnaire. This deletion was replaced with "What words of advice do you have for other Hispanic females who are sharing similar experiences as you did?" This question was added to help the investigator probe for recommendations from the respondents to other Hispanic females who might feel isolated in their experiences.

3. The final modification was to have the final interviews video taped as well as audio taped. This helped the researcher to provide a thick description of the interviewees' responses and to better interpret the respondents' body language and responses.

Selection of Participants

Across the nation, Latina students are dropping out and/or being pushed out of classrooms and quietly fading away from the educational system that is supposed to be their ticket to success. For this study, the focus was on Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a university in the midwestern United States. To examine their lived experiences, resilience, and motivating factors that contributed to their success, Latina--Hispanic females in colleges and universities were investigated.

Because the researcher was studying the phenomena of successful Hispanic females, the questions were geared to provide insight into the lived experiences of the selected participants. This insight enabled the researcher to provide a description of the phenomenological events and the factors that contributed to their successes. The participants were recruited with the help of key informants who had developed a relationship with the targeted participants who fit the study's criteria. A letter of invitation in both Spanish and English was also be utilized (see Appendix C). The letter of invitation explained the participants' role and what they could expect from the investigation. The sample selection involved contacting potential participants through email, telephone, or in person. The initial contact was to establish an interview schedule that was mutually agreeable to both parties. After the initial meeting, the final schedule of interview dates was determined. Selected participants to be involved in this qualitative study were Hispanic female participants who met the stated criteria. This study focused on the lived experiences of Hispanic female high school graduates from a midwestern K-12 public school system. The researcher purposefully interviewed participants until data saturation was reached.

Selection Criteria

The respondent selection was based on the following criteria: (a) that the participants were recent Mexican immigrants born in Mexico and residing in the Midwest, or (b) were Mexican-Americans, born in the United States of Mexican immigrant parents and living in the Midwest. For the purpose of this study recent immigrants are defined as persons who have immigrated to the United States with in the past 5-10 years. In order to

identify participants for the study the researcher sought guidance from two former student advisors to help identify possible participants. After doing so the researcher was directed to several potential respondents and met with them individually. During these meeting the researcher explained the study's purpose. In doing so the researcher elaborated that they were excellent candidates for the study because they met all of the criteria of the targeted participants and most important of all, they were successful Latinas.

The researcher then initiated a discussion with targeted participants to help illustrate that their high school experiences were worth researching because they helped to point out information, advice, and situations that were helpful to other researchers as well as other Latinas. After this introductory phase, the potential participants agreed to be part of the research study.

Selected participants were high school graduates from several different public high schools from within the same midwestern state. Since the researcher is studying the phenomena of successful Hispanic females, questions were geared to provide insight into the lived experiences of the selected participants. For the purpose of this study, *success* was defined as high school graduate now attending a university. This insight enabled the researcher to provide a thorough description of the lived experiences and the factors that contributed to their success.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher followed a set of guidelines for research involving human subjects regulated by the institutional review board (IRB) of Kansas State University. Hispanic female participants who met the above stated criteria were involved in this qualitative

study (see Appendix D). Each participant were sent a letter of invitation available in both English and Spanish (see Appendix D). All participants were also given pseudonyms in order to help preserve confidentiality. The consent forms were stored separately from interview data. All taped recordings, computer disks, and taped transcriptions were stored in a locked file cabinet in the student investigator's office. These files was only accessible to the principal investigator and student investigator. Computer files were stored on stand-alone computers that were password protected. Data files were not transferred nor submitted via email or Internet. All data were coded and the code data were stored separately (see Appendix E).

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Preparing the Interview

The interview process was selected as the procedure to be implemented for this case study. According to Seidman (1991), this process involves conducting a three-step interview focused on life history, details of experience and reflection on meaning. Reflection on meaning includes (a) participant's life history, (b) participant's experiences, and (c) reflections on meaning. The first part of the interview was the gathering of the participant life history. This involved asking the participant to divulge as much information about their life history within the context of the topic.

The second step involves the details of their experience. In order to gather data on the respondents lived experiences, the interviewer implemented the predetermined interview questions. The purpose of this step was to "concentrate on concrete detail of the participants' present experience in the topic area of the study" (Seidman, 1991, p. 11).

This helped develop the narrative needed to collect data for analysis. Participants were asked to reconstruct details of their lived experiences in the form of stories and anecdotes as part of the interview process. The respondents were given the option of having the interview conducted in English or Spanish. Two of the ten respondents requested the interview be implemented in Spanish, while the rest of the respondents chose English. Some code switched between the two languages during the interview, an attribute that is common among bilingual speakers.

The third part of the interview process involved reflection on the meaning. Participants were asked to reflect upon the meaning of their experience. "The term meaning is not one of satisfaction or reward, although such issues may play a part in the participants' thinking; it addresses the intellectual and emotional connections" (Seidman, 1991, p. 12). This helped the participants in making sense because "making meaning requires that participants look at how factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation" (p. 12). The researcher allowed for five days to pass before implementing a follow-up telephone call to inquire whether respondents had more information to share and/or clarify.

This form of open-ended in-depth inquiry, "is best carried out in a structure that allowed both the participant and interviewer to maintain a sense of focus of each interview in the series" (Seidman, 1991, p. 13). Furthermore, the interview process helped create a generous base of data that helped illuminate the researcher's topic.The exact wording and sequence of the interview questions were developed in advance based upon the research questions and the areas of interest. The length of each interview was 90 minutes. Seidman (1991) proposed,

An hour carries with it the consciousness of a standard unit of time that can have

participants "watching the clock" and two-hours seems too long to sit at one time.

Given that the purpose of this approach is to have the participants reconstruct

their experience, put it in the context of their lives, and reflect on its meaning,

anything shorter than 90 minutes for each interview seems too short (p. 13).

The setting for the interview process was in a studio format. The proposed studio

was part of a resource center made available to university faculty and students located on

the researchers' campus of study. By conducting the interviews in a studio it allowed for

no outside interference to occur during the duration of the interview. It also allowed for

the use of technologically advanced audio and video equipment recording instruments to

be utilized by the researcher.

The researcher conducted no more than two interviews a day for a period of five

days. The interview schedule allowed for a 2-hour intermission to take place between

each scheduled interview of each day. This allowed for the researcher to disconnect and

"clear her mind" before performing the next interview.

The setting was as follows: first, the participants sat in front of the interviewer

(researcher); second, the video camera was placed behind the right side of the interviewer

to allow for the video camera to capture full body shot of the respondent. The reason for

this is that the researcher wanted to be able to review the respondents' body language

and/or facial expressions made during the interview by the participants to interview

questions to help at a later time should the need arise. Third, there was a desk or table

sitting between the respondent and researcher. This helped to provide respect for the

other person's personal space boundaries and allowed for a surface to write upon should there be a need.

An audiotape recording was also utilized. The audiotape recorder was placed on top of the desk/table in between the interviewer and interviewee with a microphone attached. This helped the researcher develop an audiotape of the interview and provided the basis for the transcription scripts as well as a tool for the categorical aggregation of data. It also assisted as a memory prompt for the interviewer/researcher. Incorporating both a video and audio record of interviews it provided a double security measure (to help prevent loss of data) of interviews and data collection. All of this was done with the help of the resource center's knowledgeable staff and studio equipment.

The participants were recruited with the help of key informants who had developed a relationship with the targeted participants who fit the study's criteria. Since the researcher is studying the phenomena of successful Hispanic females, questions were geared to providing insight to the lived experiences of the selected participants. This insight enabled the researcher to provide a description of the event(s) and the factors that contribute to their successes.

Protocol Development

First, a preliminary interview protocol was developed to explore the underlying issues encountered by Hispanic females in their cultural communities and educational settings. Second, the protocol was piloted with volunteers as peer debriefers. After piloting the interview questions, the researcher made changes that were deemed

necessary to refine the interview questions. Finally, based on the feedback from peer debriefers, the interview protocol guide was finalized (see Appendix F) .

The Interview Plan

The proposed study consisted of conducting an interview, which contained three parts. The interview plan involved contacting potential participants either through e-mail, telephone, or in person. The initial contact was to establish an interview schedule that was mutually agreeable to both parties. After the initial meeting a schedule of a face-to-face interview dates were set up. The first part of the interview process is the gathering of the participant life history. This involved asking the participant to divulge as much information about their life history within the context of the topic.

The second part was an in-depth 90 minute interview with recent Mexican female immigrants, born in Mexico and residing in the Midwest or second generation Mexican female immigrants, born to Mexican immigrant parents and raised in the United States. The interview transcript of Sonia respondent number 1 has been provided for the readers (see Appendix G).

The purpose of in-depth interviewing was not to test hypotheses or to evaluate (Patton, 1990), but to try to understand the experiences of the participants and the meanings they found in those experiences. In the final reflection, the researcher allowed for five days to pass before implementing a follow-up telephone call to inquire whether respondents had more information to share and/or clarify.

Data Analysis

Qualitative studies can at times be challenging for the following reasons: (a) the researcher must identify his or her case; (b) the researcher must consider whether to study a single case or multiple cases; (c) selection of the case requires that the researcher establish a rationale for his or her purposeful sampling strategy for the case and for gathering information about the case; (d) having enough information to present an in-depth picture of the case limits the value of some case studies; (e) deciding the "boundaries" of a case—how it might be constrained in terms of time, events, and processes—may be challenging (Moustakas, 1994).

To analyze the data, Moustakas (1994) recommended outlining the two descriptive levels of case study approach: In Level I, "the original data is comprised of naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue. In Level II, the researcher describes the structures of the experience based on reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's account of story" (p. 13).

A detailed description of the case and its setting was advocated by Creswell (1998). He recommended four forms of data analysis and interpretation. The researcher incorporated those four recommendations into the proposed study. The first was categorical aggregation. The researcher sought a collection of instances from the data with expectations of emergent relevant themes. The second was direct interpretation, the researcher interpreted or drew meaning from a single instance without looking for other multiple instances. Creswell (1998) stated this was a "process of pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways" (p. 154). The third form was

establishing patterns and looking for similarities and/or correspondence between two or more categories. This correspondence took shape in the form of a matrix, possibly a four by four (or more if need be) grid showing the relationship between categories.

Finally, the researcher developed naturalistic generalizations from the data analysis. These generalizations may help other researchers learn from the proposed collective case study, either for themselves or for application to other similar population case studies. Creswell (1998) recommended taking it a step further and to add description to the case-- "A detailed view of aspects about the case—the facts" (p. 157). The researcher made use of this recommendation because it helped to aggregate the data into categories (categorical aggregation) and collapse them into patterns. This in turn helped develop generalizations about the case in terms of patterns and/or themes and how they compared and contrasted with one another. This step was implemented because it helped the researcher to explore emergent similarities, patterns, and themes within the collected data.

Ethical Issues

Regardless of the exact method used, a qualitative researcher is always faced with a number of issues that arise at different junctures in the research process, such as data collection, data analysis, and data sharing. Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Merriam (1998), and Creswell (1998) set numerous guidelines to maintain the ethical standards of qualitative studies such as:

1. The researcher must protect the anonymity of the participants;

2. The researcher must treat the participants with dignity and respect;

3. The researcher must not engage in any deception about the nature of the study and must explain the purpose of the study;

4. The researcher must get written permission from the participants;

5. The researcher must present the truth when reporting the research findings;

6. The researcher must seriously consider whether or not to share personal experiences with the participants.

When appropriate, the researcher shared her personal experiences with the participants. As a member of the Hispanic/Latina community, sharing of experiences helped put the participants more at ease.

Trustworthiness

In this study, four standards of trustworthiness were met through the techniques described hereafter. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided four main standards for strengthening the trustworthiness of a qualitative study: (a) credibility—the study produces believable findings and interpretations for critical readers; (b) transferability—a sufficiently thick description is produced to enable persons who are interested in transferring this knowledge to their own circumstances to decide whether this is a possibility; (c) dependability—the results of the inquiry can be trusted; and (d) conformability—making sure that the data support the conclusions accurately.

Credibility

The researcher employed several techniques discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to increase the credibility of the study. A qualitative design was employed to obtain information from participants in a natural setting.

Prolonged Engagement

In order to ensure prolonged engagement, "the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the culture, testing the misinformation introduced by distortion, and building trust" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301) is required. To make certain there is prolong engagement, the researcher collected data for five days. This consisted of interview the respondents, conducting a follow-up via telephone and then thoroughly reviewing and analyzing the data collected.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing helps build credibility by allowing a peer, who is a professional outside the context and who has some general understanding of the study, to analyze material, and listen to the researcher's ideas and concerns. The researcher met with two peer debriefers periodically throughout the data collection and analytical process. Both peer debriefers had a background in education having completed their Masters of Education degree and working towards a doctorate in philosophy in curriculum and instruction. The meetings occurred in bi-weekly intervals after each of the researcher's data analyzing sessions, which was done on a weekly basis. A summary of each meeting was recorded in the field notes.

Member Checking

The researcher allowed for five days to pass before implementing a follow-up telephone call to inquire whether respondents had more information to share and/or clarify. This technique helped provide credibility and gave the participants the opportunity to clarify interpretations and provide additional information as needed.

Transferability

This study used thick, rich descriptions of the participants, the settings, and other tangibles not captured on tape. Rich detailed illustrations of qualitative research allows the reader to see if their descriptions fit their own experiences and thus transfer to new situations (Krathwohl, 1998). Researchers (Auerbach & Silverstein 2003, Creswell 1998) also discussed emergent patterns or data saturation. Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) suggested, "In place of the quantitative concept of generalizability we suggest the qualitative concept of transferability of theoretical constructs" (p. 78). The researchers, however, warned that there were many different approaches to these issues. The researchers defined the theoretical concept of transferability as a concept developed in "grounded theory as transferable, in that you can anticipate abstract patterns that they describe to be found in sub-cultures" (p. 87). Furthermore, the researchers stressed that "the specific content of those patterns, in contrast, will depend on the specific subculture being studied" (p. 87).

For the purpose of this study the researcher looked forward to data saturation to bring emergent data to the forefront. When doing qualitative research it is important to discuss data saturation. Creswell (1998) described "to collect interview data to saturate of

to find information that continues to add until no more can be found" (p. 56). All the while the researcher continued to collect and analyze the data. This process of taking information from data and comparing it to emergent categories is called the "constant comparative method" (Creswell, 1998, p. 57) of data analysis.

Dependability

Dependability ensures that if a study were to be replicated using the same type of participants in the same context, the finding would be repeated (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1994). In order to assure dependability, the study's researcher incorporated the following measures recommended by researchers. According to Flick (1998), dependability is "checked through a process of auditing, based on the procedure of audits in the domain of financing" (p. 232). Implementing this process provided an auditing trail that allowed checking for procedural dependability in the following areas:

1. The raw data collection and recording;

2. Reduction of data, the synthesizing of data by summarization of theoretical notes, memos, short descriptions, and the descriptions of cases.;

3. Reconstruction of data and results of synthesis according to the developed categories such as themes, descriptions, and relationships. As well as the findings of interpretations and influences to the reports produced with the integration of concepts and linkage to the existing literature;

4. The processing of methodological notes and decisions made with regards to the trustworthiness and credibility findings' materials concerning concepts of research personal notes and expectation of the participants; and

5. Information about the development of instruments such as but not limited to pilot version and preliminary plans.

Conformability

Like dependability, conformability is communicated through an audit trail. In this study, the audit trail consisted of original transcriptions and audio recordings of the participant interviews. The field notes were included in the audit trail. In order to establish a strong audit trail, the researcher incorporated filed notes. Traditionally, this is interpreted as notes from the field (i.e., classroom observations, respondents interactions with others, etc.).

For this study, it was defined as notes taken during the interview process. Field notes involved identifying the emergent categories, themes, and patterns. It also included theoretical notes in relation to prior literature and research. This inclusion of methodological notes (issues to remember regarding the collective case study approach), as well as personal notes on issues about the participants that the researcher does not want to forget.

Along with the aforementioned, the field notes also included a section for indexing and/or cataloging. This helped to provide the researcher with a strong audit trail that covered the following: (a) What does the researcher already have?, (b) What is needed?, and (c) Where is everything located?

Summary

This study described the sociocultural, resilience/persistence and gender role expectation factors that contributed to the success of Hispanic/Latina females and the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latina high school graduates from a Midwest K-12 public school system attending a university. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the design of the collective case study research. In explaining the research design, the researcher also discussed the ethical issues, participant selection, and the processes of data collection and data analysis involved in this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the study of the lived experiences of 10 young Hispanic women residing in midwestern America. The chapter is divided into several sections. The first section details the demographic data from the 10 participants. The second section paints a personal portrait of each young woman. The final section discusses the findings of the study by themes uncovered during the interview process.

Demographic Information

The demographic information for each respondent was collected at the time of the individual's interview. There were 10 respondents in this qualitative study. All were Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a large Midwestern university. Their average age was 22 years old. Seven of the 10 respondents were born in the United States to immigrant parents; three were recent immigrants to the United States. Three respondents had two siblings, four had three siblings, one had five siblings, one had 10 siblings, and another is an only child. When establishing birth order it was discovered there were two first borns, four second borns, three third borns, and one only child. Five of the respondents had lived in the United States all of their lives, and the rest had immigrated to the Midwest; the most recent immigration was 7 years ago and the latest 14 years ago. A number of the respondents immigrated to the United States from Mexico, more specifically from the states of Zacatecas and Michocan and one from San Salvador, El Salvador.

The university academic standing of the 10 respondents was five seniors, four juniors, and one sophomore. Their academic majors varied with six in education (secondary and elementary), two in the sciences (life and animal), one in marketing and another in architectural engineering. The grade point average of all respondents was 2.75 on a 4.0 scale. There were several respondents who graduated high school with high academic honors such as salutatorian and summa cum laude. Several received monetary awards such as Tilford-Dow, Blue Key Club, and BESITOS scholarships. Others received high academic recognition such as Hispanic Student of the Month as well as Woman of the Year from distinguished organizations such as League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Kiwanis, and American G.I.

All were bilingual in English and Spanish and one respondent also spoke Japanese although she did not consider herself fluent in that language. There were six respondents that worked during their high school experience and some respondents worked two jobs or more in order to contribute to their family's economic well being. Three respondents only worked during summer breaks and one never worked while in high school. And five of the respondents transferred to the university from local community colleges, technical schools, or from another in-state university; the rest of the respondents started their higher education experience at the large Midwestern university where this study took place.

Table 2 presents an overview of the demographic information of the participants. A scan of the table reveals similarities and differences between and among the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Data for Participants 1 Through 10

Respondent identification number/	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pseudonym	Sonia	Mayra	Ivette	Karina	Lizette	Victoria	Marisa	Melinda	Yolanda	Cecilia
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Ethnicity	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic
Age of respondent	23	21	22	20	20	25	20	24	20	24
Number of siblings	5	2	Only child	2	2	2	3	2	3	10
Birth order	First born	Last of three	Only child	Third born	Third born	Second born	Second born	First born	Second born	Second born
Birth place	Meade, Kansas	Garden City, Kansas	Los Angeles, California	Satanta, Kansas	San Salvador	Cahlchihuetes Zacatecas, Mexico	Dodge City Kansas	Garden City Kansas	Michoacan Mexico	Fort Worth, Texas
Time living in Kansas	Entire life	Entire life	14 years	Entire life	12 years	8 years	Entire life	Entire life	7 years	9 years
Graduate of K-12 Midwest	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Where lived before to Kansas?	N/A	N/A	Los Angeles, CA	N/A	San Salvador	Cahichihuetes Zacatecas, Mexico	N/A	N/A	Michoacan, Mexico	Cahichihuetes Zacatecas Mexico

Always lived in Kansas	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Academic standing	Senior	Junior	Senior	Senior	Junior	Junior	Junior	Senior	Sophomore	Junior
Current Academic major	Elementary Education	Life Sciences	Animal Science	Secondary Education	Architectural Engi-Neering	Secondary Education	Marketing	Secondary Education & American Ethnic Studies	Secondary Education	Elementary Education
Academic grade point average	3.5	2.5	3.1	2.9	Did not know GPA	3.1	3.0	2.8	3.5	3.1
Academic honors	Salutatorian & Summa Cum Laude	LULAC Woman of the Year, Kiwanis Woman of the Year, American G.I. Woman of the Year	Blue Key Club	N/A	Hispanic Honor Roll & Student of the Month	Honors recognition in all classes	Dean's List	N/A	National Honor Society & Great Hispanic Leadership	Honors recognition in all classes
Other honors	Blue Key & Scholarships		Scholarships	Class President &	N/A	Overall Academic achievement	N/A	Tilford Dow Scholarship	BESO scholarship	Overall Academic Achievement

				Student Council Officer		recognition and BESO Scholarship		recipient		recognition & BESO Scholarship
Languages spoken other than English?	Spanish & Japanese	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Worked attending high school	Only during summer break	Only during summer break	Only during summer break	Yes	Yes, worked two jobs	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, two jobs	Yes, two jobs
Transferred to this university	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes, from another instate University	Yes from JUCO	Yes from JUCO	No	Yes, from a Technical School

Personal Portraits

This section introduces the reader to summaries of the 10 respondents' life experiences. All 10 of the respondents were very candid and open in their encounters with regards towards their educational experiences both as a high school and as a university student. The portraits were incorporated to provide a snapshot of each respondent's history, family and life. The sources of information for the following personal portraits came from the actual interviews of the respondents. All summaries were kept true to the respondent's interview data. It is the researcher intentions to provide a succinct summary of each respondent and her comparative experiences.

Respondent Sonia Number 1: Determined, Ambitious, Focused Goal Setter

Sonia was born and raised in the midwest where she was her graduating class salutatorian graduating summa cum laude. She identifies herself as a Mexican American. Overall her academic experience was mostly positive. Her high school was in a small rural town in the midwest; it had a student population of 62. Her class was one of the school's largest with 28 people, where only 13 graduated. She commented that two of her female peers were pregnant, some of her male peers went to jail, and the rest just dropped out.

While a student in high school her parents divorced and she decided to take over as the primary caretaker of her younger siblings. This event happened during her freshman year and continued until she graduated from high school. She commented that

she took on this role because she liked it. "I enjoyed it" (personal interview, p. 3). Even though she had added responsibilities at home due to her parents' divorce, she still was able to focus on her education. She always wanted to succeed in her academics. Having grown up in a very close-knit family, she realized that she needed to succeed in order to be a positive role model for her siblings. Early on she realized that she liked to challenge herself. "I'm like okay, I can do this better" (personal interview, p. 4). Another reason she excelled in her academics was because she felt it helped set her apart from her siblings. These efforts did not go unnoticed by her parents who supported all of her academics endeavors as best they could.

At school some of her challenges were focused on her personal life, "for me, as a Latina, it was finding myself" (personal interview, p. 3). She described herself as a loner and one who did not like to conform. "I don't like people telling me what to do and stuff like that" (personal interview, p. 4). Other challenges for her were the role of primary caretaker of her younger siblings, her low self-esteem, and placement in the English as a second language (ESL) program even though she had been identified as 'gifted'.

Sonia's academic successes were acknowledged by few of her high school teachers. She was never encouraged or motivated by any of her teachers, with the exception of one, to attend a university or think about obtaining a higher education degree. She attributes much of her academic success to her desire not to be a burden to her teachers. This was due to her extended family members' previous experience with the school system that she viewed as racist or discriminatory.

She pushed herself to succeed because success makes her "feel good" and she is setting an example for her younger siblings. Even though she did not have a role model in

90

her household to help her in school, she was still encouraged to do well in school. Their high expectations for her helped her "push myself." her parents' high expectations helped her succeed in her academics. "They don't expect me to get bad grades, because if I do they know something is wrong and I'd be yelled at" (personal interview, p. 8). But when discussing the possibility of attending a university with her parents they said "well if you want to do it you're on your own" (personal interview, p. 9).

The factors that contributed to her motivation to graduate from high school were it was a structured routine for her to follow, and it was "the thing to do" (personal interview, p. 10). She used the structure school provided as a survival mechanism to live through her parents' divorce. "Like I said, they separated, got a divorce and so I didn't know any other way to survive. That's just what I was used to" (personal interview, p. 10). She later came to see her graduation from high school and enrollment in the university as a vehicle for independence from her family.

What made Sonia persist to graduate and enroll in a university was a teacher who informed her she was class salutatorian and that she could actually go to college. She later found out her family was very poor, but she could apply for scholarships and financial aid. She was still hesitant to apply to the university because she didn't want to abandon her siblings. She then decided to give college a chance after her teacher encouraged her to do so.

Sonia feels she was more academically successful than her Hispanic peers because she didn't hangout with the wrong crowd and was able to be friends with everybody. She also had high expectations for herself and had good morals and values as well as her strict upbringing. Her parents' expectations were also a factor in her success.

They did not want her to "mess-up" and encouraged her to live up to her full potential. Sonia defines success as being happy, achieving goals and feeling good about it, as well as working hard to achieve them. She further defines her success as going to school and setting an example for her younger siblings.

Sonia experienced some gender role expectation conflicts. She felt the expectations were very traditional such as maintaining the household and doing all the chores that needed to be done. "It was never said it was expected" (personal interview, p. 10). In her household she was exposed to many of the stereotypical *"Machista Mexican"* attitudes and their defined roles of Hispanic females. This helped reshape her view of gender roles being equal, and she decided that men can share in the household work and chores.

Sonia views herself as a successful student because she had no expectations and has had success in academics. She also feels her exposure to many opportunities as a student and her ability to live up to those high expectations brought upon her. She admits she was reluctant to take advantage of such events, but once she was committed, she accomplished all she set her mind to do. As a child she never thought about her future and what it could bring. But she always knew she could make a difference to her family. She did not know what she was going to do.

The factor or characteristic that motivated her to become a successful student was her perseverance, the persons she met throughout her educational experience, the opportunities given to her, as well as her ability to excel in her academics. She views her future as an opportunity to make a difference by becoming a teacher. She attributed much of her success in college to her strong support group and her own high expectations. She

also points out that the positive feedback she received through her educational experience

helped. When she was at a low point, the positive feedback she received made a

difference to her. Praise is what kept her going to be successful and achieve throughout

her educational experience.

Sonia's advice to other Latinas is to keep on trying and don't let labels bring one

down. "If expectations of you are low, just keep them higher every time" (personal

interview, p. 26). Sonia always said, "I can do the same thing this person's doing, if not

better, I'm going to try it and I kept on motivating myself" (personal interview, p. 26).

Respondent Mayra Number 2: Assertive, Outspoken, Focused, Success Seeker

Mayra is a 20-year-old Hispanic female and is the last born out of three children.

She was born and raised in the Midwest. She graduated from a public school system in

the Midwest. Currently she is a senior at a large midwestern university. She is not a

transfer student. Her major is secondary education. During her high school experience

she was a member of the National Honor Society as well as consistently holding an

officers' position in her school's student council. She is a recipient of various

scholarships. She is bi-lingual in both English and Spanish. She worked one job during

high school.

Mayra feels that she did not experience much of the discrimination or biases

because there were other Hispanics that went through the public school system before her.

Her brother was part of this pioneering group. "I think my brother he just kind of paved

the way, so by the time we got around people were kind of just used to us" (personal

interview, p. 4). She feels that the school was just providing programs out of obligation.

"I think that a lot of the programs were just being done so people could say, 'you know we're giving them (Hispanic students) and they're not taking advantage of it'" (personal interview, p. 4). Mayra was very active and involved in extra curricular activities such as clubs and student council. But by doing this her Hispanic peers accused her of trying to be White. "We did it and people would be 'oh you're just trying to be White.' It always went back to that" (personal interview, p. 4). Her peers, some of whom she considered Chicano due to their higher degree of assimilation into the White mainstream culture, were the ones who most often told her that she was not "Mexican" enough.

She struggled with her parents' limited English proficiency and the school's lack of interest to include her parents in school activities. "I think one of the biggest things that upset me in high school and even in middle school was the parents in the school system would assume—they're Hispanic, the parents, they don't know what's going on so they'd never call them (to get involved). They never even made an effort" (personal interview, p. 5). Mayra and a peer took it upon themselves to bring this issue to light and inform the other parents as well as the school that their parents were able and willing to get involved in school activities and events. Her parents' limited English proficiency was also a personal struggle for her. "All they had to go on was my word, and you know, I am doing this and I need this" (personal interview, p. 5).

Mayra feels that her involvement in extracurricular activities shielded her from potential biases and/or discrimination. She still heard comments such as "Oh you're not like them" (personal interview, p. 6) from her White majority peers. Mayra would confront those comments, "I'd be like, what do you mean I am not like them? Like who

is them? I mean it just didn't click!" (personal interview, p. 6). Upon reflection she came to the conclusion that high school would have been easier if there had been Hispanic teachers. "I think another big part is we don't have any Hispanic teachers or anything to help us out. So I think a lot of kids don't feel like they have that connection with anyone" (personal interview, p. 6). Mayra felt her teachers made little or no effort to reach out to the Latino student population in her school. She had no help from her guidance counselor to apply for the state university or others. Neither did she receive any help from her counselor when she was seeking scholarship opportunities.

A challenge she faced with her family was that she was brought up in a very traditional Hispanic household. Even though she feels her father is more open than other Hispanic fathers, she would not consider him *'macho'* "like *no es (he is not) machista* or whatever" (personal interview, p. 7). Mayra still felt there were traditional gender role expectations in her household. Her mother was more rigid when it came to her expectations and fulfillment of the traditional gender role responsibilities. Her mother was always worried about what people would say. "What are people going to say... and about this..."(personal interveiw, p. 8). Mayra realizes that her mother is proud of her accomplishments. Presently her mother encourages her to be more assertive and independent. "Okay, fight for what you want, you know, and do it the right way, because *'no puedes depender de nadien'* (you cannot depend on anyone)" (personal interview, p. 8).

When she returns home to visit, she is aware of the fact that her life could have been very different. She sees her Hispanic peers who are now single parents and just another statistic in society. Mayra realizes that she could never live that life. "I personally

95

tell my mom that there's no way in hell that I'm going to become a statistic and be a single mother, Latina. …There's no way I'm going to allow myself to do that" (personal interview, p. 9). She realizes that with an education her life would be different and better than her former Hispanic high school peers who are now single mothers.

One of Mayra's biggest challenges was living in a household where there was chronic sickness. She learned to live and deal with these daily stressors due to her brother's illness. Her older brother died due to a genetic disease. This experience was very difficult for her. Later when she became conscious that it was interfering with her academics, she took it upon herself to go talk to her teachers. But their response was far from encouraging or understanding "I would go and talk to the teachers and be like 'oh this and this and this is going on' and they'd be like well you still got you homework in, that was just really weird" (personal interview, p. 9).

Even though her parents eventually became more open to her desire to attend college, they still had many expectations of her. They wanted her to go to school, graduate, and then return to her hometown and live her life out there with them. At the same time they reminded her she should never forget that she is a woman and she needs to "watch what you're doing" (personal interview, 10). Her parents' reluctance to allow her to leave home and their insistence for her to attend a local junior college (JUCO) prompted her to sit down and have a serious talk with them. Where as she stated, "I basically had to tell my parents if I don't go to K-State now, you're going to have to pay for all my education. I basically like, lied to them to have that alternative to come here rather than sending me to a JUCO and have to drive 30 minutes everyday" (personal interview, p. 11). Mayra also realized should her brothers have wanted to attend the

university, her parents would have not hesitated to allow them. "But because I was female and I had to stay home and I have to help out with chores and all that" (personal interview, p. 11).

As a Hispanic student Mayra experienced some challenges throughout her school experience. She didn't really have any in elementary school, but eventually some challenges started to manifest themselves in middle school and they got worse in high school. "It's like you go through, grade school is fine, middle school you kind of like begin to experience it, and then you get to high school and it's kind of like being—it's like being in my junior and senior year when it becomes worse just because that's when if you want something you start looking for it. Whether—and that's when people start realizing, oh she wants to step out of the box. Like, what the hell is she doing? So I think that is just one of the struggles you have to face" (personal interview, p. 12).

Another challenge she had was her counselor's lack of support and encouragement for her and her Hispanic peers to attend a higher education institution such as a university. If her counselor did approach them about their future it was just to give them informational pamphlets to attend the local JUCOs. "Even with my counselor she automatically assumed oh, she's this, she's Latina, she's this, and she's going to fall under the statistics. She's not going to want to get a high(er) education, so she'd give me pamphlets to JUCO" (personal interview, p. 13).

Mayra defines success as knowing that she is accomplishing her goals, and not having regrets, and not becoming a statistic of Hispanic female stereotypes. Her motivation to graduate from high school was highly influenced by her family. She was keenly aware of all the struggles her parents constantly faced living to make life easier

for her and her two brothers. "I told my two brothers, Do you think Dad came over and did all the work he did at a feedlot to have me follow in those footsteps?" So that was like my biggest motivation…I think that was just one of the biggest motivations, you know just being educated" (personal interview, p. 17).

Mayra's desire to educate herself and graduate from high school was only a path towards obtaining her university degree. She also recognized that she did have a choice once she graduated from high school to not attend a university but doing so would hinder her quest for a better life. She also felt if she had not chosen not to pursue her college degree it would have been an insult to her parents. Her parents' support for her now as a university student and her realization that she only has one year left to finish her college degree are the two priority motivational factors that continue to inspire her to succeed.

Another motivator for her success in high school and at the university is that is she is a role model for her extended family members such as her nephews. "So I think that's just one of the biggest motivations is to just have my family behind me" (personal interview, p. 19). An additional factor was helping to dispel certain Hispanic stereotypes, such as Hispanics tend to drop out of the school system and Hispanic females tend to become single teenage mothers. "And just proving everyone back home wrong, that knew (assumed) I was going to be pregnant with a kid and all this stuff" (personal interview, p. 19). An added motivator was her appreciation of her being viewed as a positive role model for her younger Hispanic peers in her hometown Hispanic community. "So I think that's one of the biggest motivations and go back and be able to say, I did this and anybody else that wants to do it can do it and it's not just we want to leave home and get

into*'queremos andar de locas'* (want to be wild and crazy) like everybody else thinks"
(personal interview, p. 20).

When discussing why she was more academically successful than her Hispanic
female peers Mayra acknowledges that she had a stronger desire to succeed. Her inner
drive and self-motivation helped to set and accomplish her goals. "I wasn't going to sit
back and say, *"oh no, pues es que"* (well no, I can't because) the teacher doesn't like me
or whatever" (personal interview, p. 21). She took control of her academic future in her
own hands. "You know, get on the internet and search for scholarships…" (personal
interview, p. 21).

Mayra feels that being a Latina in high school is different and is like being in two
worlds. "You're just kind of stuck in this world. Where you look behind you, you have
your parents and you have the traditions and this is what you are supposed to do to make
them happy. And yet you look ahead of you and you're like, I'm in a society where I
have to get an education. I have to do this, if I'm wanting to get anywhere. So I think
that's one of the biggest differences of being a Latina in high school—like having to deal
with all these struggles" (personal interview, p. 23).

Mayra has become conscious that in the long run there is no avoidance of
fulfilling some of the Hispanic gender role expectations. "This is my tradition, (it) tells
me I have to take care of my parents, they did this for me, that's the role I have to play"
(personal interview, p. 24). Mayra discusses her belief that female roles in general are
already ingrained in them at birth. "I think as a whole, females are expected to play that
female role because we have that within us when we were born" (personal interview, p.
27).

She acknowledges her parents recent changes in their gender role expectations. She commented on her father's willingness to cook and clean and his conclusion that compromising and helping each other is better for all. His realization came after her mother started working outside the household. As for the Hispanic cultural view, her opinion is that it will probably never change. "For most cultures especially in ours (Hispanic), because of the whole *'machista'* thing, that's the way things work and that's the way things are going to continue to work" (personal interview, p. 28).

Mayra's view of her future adulthood when she was a child was having a powerful career such as a lawyer. But she admits she just wanted to have a career with a position in society. When asked about her future in 10 years she envisions herself as a student pursing her doctorate in educational psychology and at the same time she sees herself as parent. She does not mention whether her future has room for a husband or not.

Her advice to other Latinas is to never give up. She recommends flipping the role of Latinas and using it to help them achieve their goals. They should also realize that discrimination and biases do exist and that they have already lived through many of them. "From day one I had to deal with all this bullshit so why can't I do it now when it's going to take me somewhere? Keep going and take pride in who you are" (personal interview, p. 36).

Respondent Ivette Number 3: Appreciative, Identity Seeking Survivor

Ivette is a 22-year-old Hispanic female born in Los Angeles, California. She is an only child and an orphan. Her mother died when she was 8 years old. It was then that her father brought her to live in the Midwest and she has resided there since then. Ivette lived

a poverty stricken childhood while in the care of her parents. When she was 17 years old, her father died. At that point she went into the foster care system and was placed with a single White female. As a student in a midwestern high school, Ivette excelled in her studies and she was placed in the Advanced Placement (AP) classes where she was one out of the two Hispanic female students in the class. She had good interactions with her peers and had many friends. Her relationship with her teachers was also positive, but she attributes this to her legal guardian who worked at her school as a counselor.

She questioned whether people at her school viewed her as Hispanic or as White because her guardian was White. She soon realized that people always connected her with her guardian. She feels no one treated her outwardly different because she was Hispanic. Her self-concept and identity is Hispanic. At times she feels uncomfortable if she is the only dark-haired person in the classroom. She comments that she is uncomfortable because she feels people are judging her and might think she is not as smart as her peers.

Ivette always knew she wanted to graduate high school and attend a university. Her desire to do so stemmed from her family's poverty stricken life and her parents' premature deaths. She knew that in order to succeed in life she would have to have an education. Ivette's guardian helped to further encourage her to strive to reach her goals. Her guardian also made it a point to place her in a foreign language school that focused on Spanish language acquisition. Ivette realizes that without her guardian's influence, help, and encouragement, she might not have graduated from high school. At the same time she realized that graduating from high school and obtaining a college degree was a tool she could use to obtain a better life.

Ivette defines success as having set both short and long term goals and achieving them. She feels she is successful because she always made sure she put school first. She kept focused on her goal to graduate from high school and now her success comes from the realization that she is attending a university. Her motivation to graduate from high school was geared toward her future and having a set goal. In her case it was to obtain her doctoral degree in animal science. Early on in her high school experience she knew that she needed to get good grades in her classes. "I knew that I would have to have an excellent GPA from high school" (personal interview, p. 7). She also acknowledges the fact that she is the first member of her family to attend a university. Her main goal was to attend a Midwest university and enter the College of Veterinary Medicine.

One of the challenges she experienced in high school was the lack of Hispanic female peers in her AP classes. Another challenge was her discovery of a learning disability while a student in the university. Aside from these challenges she feels she was more academically successful than her Hispanic female peers because she had perseverance and would not listen to those who told her she could not do it.

Since Ivette did not grow up in a Hispanic household, she feels that she has no conflicting cultural experiences to remember. She attributes this to her upbringing in a White majority household. Her guardian has a dual role in her life as a single parent and as the sole provider and caretaker. She saw her guardian's ability to fulfill multiple roles in her as empowering and motivating. "She was the one that went to work and did everything and it was almost…very empowering to see her be able to do all that by herself" (personal interview, p. 12).

Ivette's tragic past has helped to shape her strengths as well as her goals. It also instilled in her the desire to never have to live that life again. "As a child, I always knew want I wanted be" (personal interview, p. 13). Her advice to other Latinas was to stand up for themselves and to know that Latinas are just as good as everyone else. That the opportunities and chances to succeed are out there and Latinas should take advantage of them.

Respondent Karina Number 4: Accomplished, Career-Oriented Role Model

Karina is a 21-year-old Hispanic female; she is the youngest of three children. She was born and raised in the Midwest. She is a graduate of a midwestern public school system. Currently she is a junior at large midwestern university majoring in life sciences. Her grade point average is 2.5. She received academic honors from organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Woman of the Year, American G. I. Woman of the Year, Kiwanis Woman of the Year, and several academic scholarships. She is bilingual in both Spanish and English. She is not a transfer student.

Karina describes her high school experience as being normal with no trying experiences. "I never felt any challenges or anything in front of me, just because there were so many people around me with the same ethnicity, similar support of me" (personal interview, p. 3). She feels that by having attended a large Midwestern high school it gave her more opportunities and experiences to meet different and new people and more chances at scholarships.

Upon reflection she feels it might have been different because she was in many honors classes in high school and was usually the only Hispanic female in them. She realizes that her honors classes could have had more of her Hispanic peers in them. Karina had a very good relationship with her high school guidance counselor, who also happened to be her high school cheerleading coach whom she viewed as a mentor. This relationship allowed her to receive immediate information about scholarships more readily than others. The Hispanic peers with whom she surrounded herself were just as active in high school activities such as school sport teams and school clubs as she was.

In relation to her life at home she discusses that since both parents worked fulltime she was responsible for much of the household chores. "I learned to do very quickly all the traditional women things…I was the one making supper, doing laundry or helping my mom clean the house and things like that" (personal interview, p. 5). Since she was academically successful she felt pressure from her parents to continue this success especially from her father. "He just had such a strong character. I know he expects a lot from me" (personal interview, p. 6). Her father was one of the driving forces that led her to achieve her goals. If she did not get good grades she had consequences. These usually came in the form of being grounded by her parents. But to her it meant disappointing her parents. She did not want to do that.

Challenges for Karina came in many forms. She felt like she was always competing with other students. "Maybe it's just me, but especially being a Latina woman I always feel the competition. I always feel like I have to do a little bit better that them or I have to one up everything that they do kind of thing" (personal interview, p. 7). In her academics one aspect that posed a challenge for her was the lack of Latinas in her

Advanced Placement (AP) classes. "It kind of strikes me as weird just because we were such a populated…it was 50% Latino and everything else was Caucasian, Asian, and Black" (personal interview, p. 8). She feels her Hispanic peers could have been in her AP classes, but she attributes their absence to the lack of self-motivation on their part.

Challenges with her family manifested themselves when she wanted to have a social life. She describes her parents as being very strict. They would not allow her to go out unless she was with a group of friends or one of her two older siblings. Her parents felt this would cause her and her family needless shame. "It just looks bad when a Latina woman goes out by herself" (personal interview, p. 9). Even though she disagrees with it she still acknowledges the stigma it may cause. Karina encountered some challenges with her teachers. She did not get along with all of them. Her teachers did not challenge her enough. She felt that being challenged would have motivated her to do better in her classes. "When people put challenges in front of me or when I get challenged with anything I kind of feel like I need to take it over" (personal interview, p. 10).

Being a Latina is different because she feels it brings a sense of empowerment with it, but at the same time she feels Latinas are put on a pedestal. At times she finds it difficult to "put both together, that whole independent-you can do whatever they want but yet you need to care for the family and everything" (personal interview, p. 11). She defines success as being happy and having her parents with her.

Karina's motivation to graduate from high school was not only based on her parental influence, but also on her own belief that life would be easier for her. "High school was not the end for me. I felt that high school was the beginning point and that's why-maybe-I feel like I worked so hard in high school just so I could be 'Oh I'm in

105

college now" (personal interview, p. 11). Her motivation to continue to succeed at the university is to prove to others that she can succeed there and be a role model for other Latinos.

As a Latina she concedes that she lives in two worlds. The first is academics and success in that world. The second world is her traditional responsibilities and role at home. "I mean you're living your college life….and then you have your kind of offset life where it's you doing what needs to be done to keep the family together" (personal interview, p. 13). She discusses the gender role expectation and conflicts her parents had as fallouts of their own traditional upbringing. "I think that's just the way they grew up. That's the way it was when they were growing up" (personal interview, p. 16). Karina's definition of gender role expectations is roles that are specifically drawn to either male or female. In order for her to find a balance between the two worlds she surrounds herself with Hispanic peers. She feels this helps her to be successful as well. "I guess you have to look around and find what's like you, I guess, that helps you get through it" (personal interview, p. 17).

As a child Karina saw herself as a career woman as well as a mother. Her future in 10 years is viewed as being married with a career. Her advice for other Latinas is even though there are no positive role models, because they are few and far between, they can still be successful. "Let them know that even though sometimes you can't see that you have somebody or somebody like you hasn't gone on that path it doesn't mean you can't go down that path" (personal interview, p. 21).

Respondent Lizette Number 5: Assertive, Outgoing Risk Taker

Lizette is a 20-year-old Hispanic female is the youngest of three children. She was born in El Salvador, San Salvador and has lived in the Midwest for 12 years. She is a graduate of a public midwestern school system. Her family moved from El Salvador to Canada, then to California before settling in Kansas. She is currently a college junior at a large midwestern university where she majors in architectural engineering. She is not aware of her grade point average. As a high school student she received academic honors such as the Presidential Award and was a member of the National Honor Society as well as the Hispanic National Honor Society. While in high school she worked two jobs. Lizette is bilingual; she is fluent in both Spanish and English.

Lizette feels people thought she was not Hispanic but of the White mainstream culture due to her physical attributes. Her peers were always surprised when they heard her speak Spanish. In her high school classes she was conscious of being the only minority in her classes. Her classes were Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Once peers realized she was a Latina, they began to question her placement in the AP classes. They thought it was a mistake. Her teachers would announce to the class, "Well, I want to make sure that everybody that is supposed to be here is here and if you might have got confused or you're not in the right classroom it's okay, you can get up and we'll help you find the right class that you are supposed to be in" (personal interview, p. 6).

Even though she couldn't prove the announcement was directed at her, she was still uncomfortable with it. "I can't quote that it was directed straight towards me, but I can't help to feel that. Why else would he say it? So that was kind of upsetting" (personal interview, p. 6). This experience drove her to succeed and prove to her teachers that she

belonged in AP classes. "But it just kind of drove me more to prove to him (teacher) wrong and be like I can do it just as good or even better than anybody else" (personal interview, p. 7). Lizette realized early on that she wanted to go to college and that high school was not a difficult task. "I was like it's not that hard to succeed in high school, just go to class, do your work, you know, pay attention and you can do just fine" (personal interview, p. 7). Her peers considered her the 'Americanized Latina' and she remembers agreeing with that. "I was like how come as a Latina I can't do good? How come, just because I'm not American? That should stereotype me? Oh, I have to do bad and I have to do this and I have to cause problems in class. That's just a stereotype not all of us share" (personal interview, p. 8). Because her school thought she was not Hispanic she missed several opportunities to attend informational workshops about scholarships and getting ready for college. She later found out it was due to incorrect student profile information. She never found out why that happened.

Her greatest challenges she faced as a Latina high school student were with her family, friends, and teachers in her high school. Lizette knew early on that she was going to pursue her higher education degree. So she made it a point to educate herself on potential scholarships and get involved in school activities as well as outside community service events. She knew that she needed more than good grades to be accepted into a university. This was hard for her mother to comprehend. "My mom just didn't understand that at all. She's like you got all A's that's all you need" (personal interview, p. 12).

Her mother was very traditional in the Latino sense. This was an obstacle for Lizette when she wanted to take part in community service activities. "She'd be like, 'why do you have to go there? That's no place for a lady!' And so that was a huge

struggle just explaining to her—it's not that I want to go out and be crazy and act a fool in society. It's that is going to help me in the future when I apply for scholarships and for colleges" (personal interview, p. 12). She realizes her mother's apprehensions were due to her traditional Hispanic upbringing. At the same time she became aware that even though she lives in the United States, her life is different due to her family's traditional cultural values, beliefs and expectations. "We're growing up in the US where there are so many different things" (personal interview, p. 14). She also acknowledges that just being Hispanic she is put in a predicament where she has to be better than her non-Hispanic peers. "I always felt that just being a woman and being a Latina, brought me back so many steps that I had to do like twice or triple as much as everybody else to even be at the same level of everybody else. Because I'd always have the stereotypes or something to bring me down. So that was one of the challenges" (personal interview, pp. 14-15).

Other challenges Lizette faced were with friends and school peers. Since she is from El Salvador she is Hispanic, but everyone assumed she was from Mexico. She disliked the fact that many were ignorant of the Latin American countries. Their assumptions that she was Mexican motivated her to educate them on the different countries in Latin America. She did this to help them expand their thoughts and minds about Hispanics. Her Mexican friends thought she was not Hispanic enough. "So I had to prove to the Mexicans that I was Latina enough, you know, because they would always be like, 'Oh she's acting 'White'—just because I was doing something else" (personal interview, p. 16).

Challenges she faced with her teachers in high school were their ignorance of the diverse Spanish speaking countries and their multitude of Spanish language dialects. She

felt her teachers did not know how to communicate with the Hispanic students in order to help them. "I'd go to the teacher and he just doesn't understand and he just doesn't feel like he wants to help me" (personal interview, p. 19).

As a high school student Lizette decided not to fall into the typical cliques or social groups. She made it a point to be become friends with many different students and talk to everybody. By doing this she crossed many social group barriers. She also realized that her Hispanic female peers had no goals for their future and that many would probably get married right out of high school and later become parents, or they would decide just to drop out of school. "They either don't graduate high school or if they do, a month later they get married to a guy and get pregnant and that's it, that's the end of their life" (personal interview, p. 24).

Lizette defines success as persistence and being happy with what you have accomplished. She believes that if your goals are to have a family and one has obtained that goal then they are successful. Having set her goal to attend college at an early age helped her work toward acquiring that degree. "I've been saying this the whole time, *'desde chiquita'* (since I was a little girl) I want to go to college. I want to get a degree. So obviously success to me would mean graduation from college becoming a professional and fulfilling my life *THAT* way" (personal interview, p. 21).

Her motivation to graduate from high school was partly due to her long-term goals. She considered graduating from high school a starting point toward obtaining her goals and academic as well as professional career success. "So like finishing high school to me was one of the first stepping stones of gaining my success, I guess. I want my college diploma that was a major thing" (personal interview, p. 31). Another motivation

was her realization of what her life would have been like had she not graduated from high school. She reflects on the lack of opportunities in her hometown for Hispanics. "My mom used to work as a housekeeper in hotels….or they (Hispanics) can go to the pizza factory and make pizzas….it's not a degrading job or anything but it's not much of a future, you know, if you are a housekeeper you can't really move it on up and you're going to be head housekeeper" (personal interview, p. 34).

Another motivation for her continued success as a university student she credits to her family. They are a constant source of motivation for her. She also feels her involvement in university clubs and groups, especially Hispanic based programs, helps her as well. She feels her involvement helps further positive public perception of Hispanics in the Midwest. "I'm in the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) and we do stuff to educate the campus and to go out on events so people can see that it's not such a bad thing, we can all be happy together" (personal interview, p. 32).

Lizette feels she was more academically successful than her Hispanic female peers because she sought it out more. During her high school experience she felt her Latina peers cared too much about what other peer opinions would be of them. "I think they cared too much about what other people thought of them and what people were going to say. Whether it is their friends, their peers, whether, it be their family" (personal interview, p. 36). She attributed this to a facet of the Mexican culture. 'Because everybody's pretty much Mexican and if you didn't do what everybody else did, '*la gente te triea en boca a boca*' (gossiping about you) they would all say this stuff about you" (personal interview, p. 36). Lizette acknowledges her stronger desire to succeed is what

111

has made her successful. "I think I DID want it more than them. I didn't care what people said because I knew I wasn't doing anything wrong" (personal interview, p. 37).

Being Latina is different for Lizette because she feels that Latinas with the traditional gender role upbringing makes a big difference that sets them apart from their non-Hispanic peers. "A Latina that comes from a family who is very traditional in old ways….it's always going to be different for her because she's going to have to go through all these hardships. She's going to have to push herself and she's going to have to want it more than anything else" (personal interview, p. 38). Latinas have to deal with many issues. "I think it's a huge difference because you not only have to deal with school issues you have to deal with family issues" (personal interview, p. 39)   As a Latina, Lizette acknowledges that she feels she has to be better than anyone else. "You're always going to be two steps behind" (personal interview, p. 40).

Lizette's upbringing was very traditional. Women held a subservient role in her household. "The role of a woman is to be at the house, to clean, to cook, to *'mantener la casa'* (maintain the household chores and responsibilities) that's what I've absorbed from everybody" (personal interview, p. 42). She feels that the genders should have a compromise between the two. "Yes, women are known to do this and to do that, but I think guys can do it too. It shouldn't just be left up to the woman" (personal interview, p. 43).

As a child she never really thought about her pending adulthood because she knew it would eventually occur. "I knew that I would get there, but I always imagined, 'Oh it's so far away' (personal interview, p. 51). Lizette considers herself a successful student. Even though she has had some struggles and conflicts as well as discriminatory

episodes she still wants to continue with education. She also acknowledges that she still

has many traditional issues and conflicts to deal with as a Latina. But these are all

challenges she is prepared to take head on.

Respondent Victoria Number 6: Satisfied, Wise Extrovert

Victoria is a 20-year-old Hispanic female and is the second child out of three. She

was born and raised in the Midwest. She is a graduate of a midwestern public school

system. She received several academic honors as a high school student such as being on

the Dean's List and she received an athletic scholarship in soccer. She is bilingual in

Spanish and English and did not work while in high school. She transferred to a large

Midwestern university from a junior college (JUCO) where she is a junior and currently

majors in marketing.

Her experience in high school was challenging because she was faced with a

sense of not fitting in. "Because I was born in the United States, some of the people who

actually came from Mexico didn't accept me. But the White people didn't accept me

because I WAS Mexican" (personal interview, p. 4). She felt 'torn between the two'

cultures. Victoria felt she had to assimilate to the mainstream White culture for her White

peers to accept her. "I had to interact with the White girls in class because those were the

ones I was talking to" (personal interview, p. 4). She also felt she had to be "Mexican

enough for her Hispanic peers to accept her. Yet be Mexican enough for the Mexicans

who like, (would) want to hang out with us" (personal interview, p. 4). When she joined

113

the high school soccer team she was able to overcome that. "I got to know them and they (other Hispanics) realized I was just like them" (personal interview, p. 4).

Another challenge in high school was with her academics. Since she grew up in a Spanish-speaking household she felt very limited in her English language abilities. She taught herself how to take tests. "I've learned how to take tests but it was really hard at first". She also made a lot of assumptions in her content area schoolwork. "I just started assuming a lot. I read things over and over until I, in my head, thought maybe that's what the meaning was. And I started doing a lot of reading of books in the library and stuff and I guess from there I kind of extended my vocabulary a bit and I started asking a lot more questions" (personal interview, p. 5).

Victoria recognizes that non-White cultures tend to be quieter in class and not ask questions. "I think it's a part of a lot of non-American cultures to be a lot quieter in a classroom" (personal interview, p. 5). So she decided she could not be quiet anymore and started to become active in her learning.

The challenges she faced at home were her father's pressure to do well in school. Her parents were also very protective of her. She had limited freedom to go out socially with her friends. Since she was the only child and a female, her parents would not let her go out socially in high school. She wanted more freedom than her parents were willing to grant her. Her parents were very supportive of her academics. They also supported her extra curricular activities such as school sports and clubs. They approved of her taking part in them. Some of the cultural challenges she faced were the gender role expectations that her parents put upon her. "It's just from, like being old school, and that's how it was back then and that's how my Dad saw it…" (personal interview, p. 7).

Victoria defines success as "someone who truly knows themselves and who isn't changing themselves in any way like to become successful…it's somebody who really has a strong stance and can stay there and have people look up to them in some way or another" (personal interveiw, p. 7). She doesn't see herself as successful at the present time. She is aware that she is not doing anything out of the ordinary. "Right now I don't see myself as very successful yet. I've graduated high school and I'm in college and I'm doing what I need to do. I guess, so many other persons are doing the same thing and I'm not going to see myself as successful until I'm at the top" (personal interview, p. 7).

What motivated Victoria to graduate from high school were the pregnancies of some of her peers. "Seeing other girls with their pregnant bellies walking around my high school and knowing that they were never going to graduate because they were just there to kill time. I didn't want to be that person" (personal interveiw, p. 8). Her desire to make her father proud was another factor. "I wanted to be that person, that my Dad was like, wow, that's my daughter graduating" (personal interview, p. 8). Her father was a really big factor in her motivation to graduate from high school.

What influenced Victoria to become more academically successful was her desire to always get good grades because she felt it helped to boost her self-esteem. 'Like when I got an "A" instead of that "B"…So being academically successful made me feel better and it helped my self-esteem" (personal interview, p. 10). She also did not want to become another statistic by not graduating or to stay in her hometown and have babies or work in the local beef processing plant.

Life as a Latina in the Midwest is different because the recent immigrant students don't see her as Mexican because she was born in the United States, and White

115

mainstream peers didn't see her as American because she is Mexican. "It's different because it's so hard to find your place" (personal interview, p. 14). As a child she viewed her adulthood as a single parent with a powerful career. Her future goals are to obtain her master's degree, work overseas, or live outside the United States. Victoria's advice for other Latinas is to do things for yourself and not get caught up in the Latina world. She believes one should find out how to make both worlds work for you and to use both your Mexican as well as your American worlds. "Use them both and they will get you far" (personal interview, p. 18).

Respondent: Marisa Number 7: Unfaltering, Timid, Prudent Achiever

Marisa is a 24-year-old Hispanic female. The oldest of three children, she was born in Garden City, Kansas. She is a high school graduate of a midwestern public school system. She has lived in the Midwest her entire life. She is currently a senior at a large Midwestern university where she majors in secondary education with a minor in american ethnics studies. She is a recipient of the Tilford-Dow and BESITOS scholarships at her university. She is bilingual, fluent in both Spanish and English languages. She worked during her high school experience.

Her experiences in the Midwest as a Latina were uneventful. Marisa discussed how she was shy, quiet and kept to herself during high school. She did mention that at one point she did have three other Hispanic female friends, but by her senior year of high school all three of them had gotten pregnant and had dropped out of school. Marisa does not view herself as the average Latina, because her parents worked hard to give her

everything she could need. She feels that she was raised half Latina and half American. She acknowledges that she does not know what an average Latina would be. "I don't know what your average Latina is. But whatever it is I don't see myself as that. Just because my parents were always working hard, they've always given us almost everything that we need, you know. They taught us, you know we've been raised, you know like, half Latina and half American to say just there are so many things we strive, more things that we've striven for, that you know getting married at 18, working at the beef packing plant was not an option whatsoever" (personal interview, p. 4). They also encouraged her to finish high school and go to college. "Like the entire time my parents were like you have to go to high school. I mean you have to go to college; you have to go to college. So not graduating high school was not an option. Like they want us to go to college; they want us to get that bachelor's degree, so it was always there. Like from in 5th grade, when I got a "C" in a class, and they wanted to help me raise it up. To my senior year, it was always there. It was never even, I didn't even think about not finishing high school" (personal interview, p. 4).

Socially Marisa did not go out very much during her high school experience. Her parents encouraged her by providing advice about remaining chaste and to respect herself so that others would respect her as well. "I remember when I did start going out I was like 16 years old, and I started actually going out with my neighbor who was White. And we would just go and kind of cruise around the main drag strip of this thing. Every time my parents were just like, my mom would be like *"Mija, tienes algo muy"……* you know, *"tienes un regalo que no te lo quiten"* (my daughter, you have a very special gift, don't let anyone take that away from you). Be careful *"Mija, cuidate, cuidate,* (my daughter be

careful, be careful) every single time like every Friday and Saturday night *"Sin falta"* (without failure or always) they would tell me that" (personal interview, p. 5).

Marisa considers herself very lucky to have been raised in a community with a very large Hispanic population. She notes that both of her parents are immigrants from México. As a Hispanic she did not feel like an outcast in high school because of its large Hispanic student population. Marisa reflected on the fact that she did not feel odd communicating in Spanish throughout her everyday doings because everyone else did as well. Being bilingual was a 'plus' for her, because she found it easier to find employment. Now, as a university student away from her Hispanic community, she does at times feel odd doing so. "I remember walking to the library, past the library. I was on the phone with my Dad. Talking to him in Spanish about and as I hung up my phone, I turned, I just glanced at somebody and they were giving me this really odd look. One was kinda just like you know, what are you speaking? Why aren't you speaking English? kind of thing. That just made me feel really bad. Because I was speaking to a really important person, yet whatever language I was talking in somebody else didn't approve of it" (personal interview, p. 3). She acknowledges she was in complete culture shock with her new surroundings. Her reaction was a resilient one; she looked upon this experience as a learning experience. I just kept on walking; I mean I didn't go back and correct the person or anything. "I just kept on walking, and I was pretty sad and bummed out for a few minutes you know, but then I was just like oh well you know trying to get an education trying to get a better life. You know, just do things you deal with" (personal interview, p. 3).

Her experiences as a Latina in the Midwest have led her to believe that she has been raised to be a responsible person. She attributes this to her household role as being the oldest and was put in charge of her younger siblings. She feels this had made her stronger and more resilient. "I guess for me it's just growing up the oldest in the family being in charge, being responsible that's kind of…I built a hard shell. So it takes a lot for people to try to break me and try to say things that you know. I mean, I don't think I ever thought, 'Oh gosh, I'm gonna give up because I don't see other Hispanics' " (personal interview, p. 3). She now has a strong support system of Hispanic friends. This system is her vehicle to use when she needs to vent or needs words of encouragement to continue in her educational endeavors. She usually talks to her Hispanic support group instead of calling her parents.

Marisa does not feel that she had any challenges while in high school since she was not active in extra curricula activities. She did not participate in sports or school clubs. Since she saw no other Hispanics involved in them she decided not to join them. "Ummm well like ok, for sport I don't remember like there being any Hispanic kids on the team. So I was never ever really motivated to join them (sports) but at the same time you know I kept to myself a lot so that I didn't even really think about getting into my comfort zone" (personal interview, p. 6).

During high school Marisa was very close to her family. She never wanted to go out and be part of the high school social scene. She attributed that to being a self proclaimed loner and her desire to keep focused on her goal of graduating high school. "I just kept quiet and kept to myself, and you know try to follow the path of you know going to classes, like never ditched at all, you know those kinds of things that I don't

know were challenges as a Latina, but they were just things that's the way I did things" (personal interview, p. 6). She did not feel she had any challenges in her relationships with her high school teachers. She feels this was due to her being a quiet and shy student. At home Marisa was in charge of her siblings. She made sure the household chores got done and the dinner was started by the time her parents arrived from work in the evening.

Her motivation to do well academically or get into some form of trouble were the consequences she would have to face. She acknowledges that having been raised to respect and listen to her elders and to make the correct choices were very strong factors in her decisions. "and I guess being raised up with to like listen to our elders you know or whatever authority says to do is what you do. You go to class, you don't talk back to your teachers; you speak unless you raise you hand and they call on you. Those are the kind of things I guess… as a Latina when some kid would talk back to the teacher I was 'oh I can't believe he did that!' if I did that at home I would get slapped. I wouldn't get slapped but I would definitely get in trouble by my parents" (personal interview, p. 6).

Marisa defines success as having her parents be proud of her in whatever she endeavored, having a career and financial security, and having a better feeling about whom she is and her purpose in life. What motivated her to succeed in high school and continues to motivate her as a university student are her parents. Her parents did not tolerate low achieving grades when she was in high school. At the university her parents' support as well as the fact that she is close to graduating is a constant motivating factor. She feels that she was more academically successful than her female Hispanic peers because her parents were strict and she would suffer the consequences if she did not do well academically. Another factor she discusses is her parents' active involvement in her

education (helping with her homework, reading with her) as well as school events. Her parents attended Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and participated in parent–teacher conferences as well. Due to their involvement Marisa shared not graduating from high school was never an idea she entertained. "Because of that I never really even thought of dropping out of high school. I don't remember it once being in my head. Like 'I'm gonna dropout,' that was never an option for me"(personal interview, p. 10) .There were other motivational factors the including her father and his positive influence on her and her desire to be a good role model for her siblings while acknowledging that they, too, were positive role models for her as well. Marisa senses that her upbringing has allowed her to be successful in the dual world she in which lives. "I guess just keeping myself strong with like traditions, being a hard worker but at the same time-sometimes I don't work that hard and get by with what I have. So I don't know; growing up my parents raised us with traditions, to be a hard worker, and stuff like that. Yet, we were also raised to reach for that American dream to get your bachelor degree, get that good job were you don't have to work as hard as they, do that's how we were raised" (personal interview, p. 13).

As a child Marisa viewed her future as a wife, married to a Mexican male, with children and as a happy homemaker relieving the life her mother has. She now sees her future as having obtained her Ph.D. or being a superintendent of a school district and married with children, but not yet knowing how to satisfy both roles of career woman and homemaker. "In a perfect world, I would have like a Ph.D., be superintendent of some school district, having probably married with kids and I don't know how I would be able to balance both things" (personal interview, p. 19). Overall, Marisa acknowledges that

she wanted to graduate from high school to make her father proud and let him know all his hard work was not in vain, a fact of which her mother constantly reminded her. "Like your Dad came to the United States to get a better life and to work hard for you and I was like, but we weren't even born yet, like why did he have to work hard? Because he wanted a better life, like, he wanted a better life and so you have to give him that. Like when you have kids you have to expect a better life for your kids that what you had. Marisa's advice for other Latinas is "to go to college, to finish school" (personal interview, p. 20).

Respondent Melinda Number 8: Dedicated, Shy, Clever Self-Motivator

Melinda had a good experience in high school. She had several Spanish speaking friends who provided a strong support group. Over all high school was a very positive experience for her, "*Si tuve, yo el mas bonito tiempo en high school"* (Yes, I had the most lovely time in high school) (personal interview, p. 3). *S*he felt she was not able to fully participate in the high school experience and its extra curricular activities due to her limited English proficiency. Melinda realized that even though no one told her she couldn't be a part of the schools extracurricular activities, no one told her that she could either. "*Tampoco nadie me dijo; puedes hacerlo*" (But, then no one was telling me that I could participate in them either) (personal interview, p. 3)! She always wanted English speaking friends, but was never able to build friendships with the monolingual English speakers. She was hesitant and felt that she was not ready to *"you know to interact with them"* (personal interview, p. 4).

Melinda experienced an episode of culture shock in the classroom due to how the students interacted with the teachers. The students were outspoken and actually asked questions. She is aware of the different styles of schools and the students' interactions are very different from those in México. She was uncomfortable with the dynamics of the American classroom, since she was not used to it and could never speak up in class. Her past experience in Mexican schools was that students are respectful of the teachers and they only spoke or answered questions when they were spoken to or asked to give an answer. Other than that students would not speak in class. It was not until she graduated high school and is now attending a large university that she is starting to speak out. *"Yo estoy, estoy aprendiendo,* (I am now learning) *that it's ok to speak out."* Melinda realizes that it is not seen as a negative action if she asks for help. *"It's okay to go to the teacher and say, No, I don't understand,"* and to actively engage and participate in class discussions (personal interview, p. 4).

Melinda's life in the United States has shown her that she can still be in touch with the Mexican culture, but at the same time have independence, live away from home and not need a man or be married to do so. She feels she is better able to express herself is changing her way of thinking, and feels she is mentally changing. *"Entonces yo, ahorita me siento que, que puedo expresarme mas de las forma de que estoy ahorita cambiando, mentalmente* (so now I feel that I am able to express myself and I am changing my way of thinking)" (personal interview, p. 4). She feels like she is now allowed to make decisions by herself to be independent.

Her challenges at home were different. Her father is very traditional and has very defined gender role expectations. He was very strict and would not allow her to

participate in school-sponsored activities such as sports, clubs, band, etc. or even school study groups. He said it was not right. That was her biggest challenge at home. Now in college she realizes that she can make her own positive decisions and the gender role expectations do not have to be so defined. She does not agree with her father's desire to be the perfect woman by his standards *"el quiera que yo fuera la mujer perfecta"* (personal interview, p. 5)! Her father wanted her to be very submissive, to cook, clean and take care of the household chores. She realizes that is not the perfect woman her father expects her to be, but that is okay with her. She is still proud and happy with the many different things about her. She feels that her strict upbringing was a positive experience for her. Melinda felt that her strict father and his gender role expectations were a way of protecting her.

Melinda feels that success doesn't have much to do with academics but with how a person behaves. If a person is happy at work and with what they have, then that is success. Melinda considers herself to be a successful student. Her motivation to succeed stemmed from her father. She realizes how much he sacrificed for their family. He did this to help the family progress and gain better lives in the United States. She wants to succeed to show her father that all he struggled for and has accomplished was not done in vain. Her family is very proud of her since they realize she is doing well and is succeeding.

Another motivation to succeed in high school was due to the support she received from her teachers. She felt they were her advocates. But at the same time there were some teachers that discriminated against her because they graded her on her English speaking abilities and not on her content area work. She felt they did not challenge her and were

intimidated by her Spanish speaking ability *and* would tell her *"oh no, es que no sabes ingles* (it's because you don't speak English) (personal interview, p. 8)! This action motivated her to do better and achieve more success in her academics. Melinda felt that she was in school to learn*, "Yo estoy aqui para aprendre* (I am here to learn)*"* (personal interview, p. 8). She has not had such an experience at the university level.

Melinda is resilient because she is a persistent person. Once she had dropped out of school in México and did not like that experience, she resolved never to quit again*. "I quit one time, and I said never, ever again, I will quit"* (personal interview, p. 7)! She graduated from high school because her parents supported her efforts. Her parents were strict and would scold her if they thought it was warranted. Melinda feels that peers who did not graduate from high school did not have enough support from their parents. She admits to always having some form of self motivation. She realizes that she will not always have her school support group or her familial support group to encourage her. In order to achieve goals she must be a self-motivator.

Once she graduated high school, she took a job as a para-professional and another job at the local library. It was at this time she started to question her future since she had an inner desire to succeed. She decided she wanted an education in order to have a more productive and progressive life as well as future. She had decided she was going to take charge of her life and not settle for a dead-end 9-5 job. This decision posed a few challenges for her. She told her parents about her aspiration to attend the state university and they were receptive, but encouraged her to attend the local JUCO instead. Their reasoning was she was the sole economic provider at the time. Melinda's father had traveled to Texas in search of better employment opportunities and had not yet found a

job. Melinda decided she did not want to continue being solely responsible for her family's economic well–being. She called her father to tell him of her decision and he returned home. Because of her decision and her mother's limited English proficiency, her father took the entire family back to Mexico. This action weighed heavily upon her. Her father always wanted her to study whereas her mom did not. Her mother wanted her to get married. She fought many of her mother's rigid gender role expectations, such as a woman should not achieve more than the man of the house. If a woman is educated, then the woman will view herself as equal to the man. Her father concurred with this belief as well. He thought that women should be educated in the traditional ways. *"Porque el tiene esta mentalidad de como es una mujer, y uno tiene que ser como el lo educaron de que es una mujer* (His mentality is that a woman should be educated in the traditional ways and expectations of women like the ones that he was brought up with)" (personal interview, p. 5). Another challenge for her was not being permitted by her parents to participate in any extra curricular activities.

Melinda feels being a Latina is different because she feels that there is still racism and their stereotypical views of Mexicans as "lazy and stuff". She strives to not to project that image of herself and her culture and realized that the stereotypical frame of mind causes barriers for her and others. She is conscious that even though she looks different, she still considers herself the same as everybody else. She does not allow the stereotypes to hinder her in any way. She feels it falls upon her to try and change the stereotypical thoughts of others.

Her thoughts on gender role expectations for Hispanic females is that even though men might be physically stronger at times, it does not make them superior. She

acknowledges that traditionally women and men in the Hispanic culture have always had very defined gender role expectations of each other. Her thoughts on her father's typical gender role expectations are due in part to his upbringing in Mexico. His expectations are very ingrained in both his beliefs and traditional ways. This causes a conflict for Melinda since she now thinks that gender role expectations of women in the Hispanic culture should not exist. *"Cuando vienen mis papas de Mexico, ellos tiene esas expectaciones de la mujer. Y yo, yo no las tengo"* (when my parents visit they come with those expectations, and I do not have those thoughts anymore) (personal interview, p. 11). She is uncomfortable with gender role expectations and feels that it is not a positive role for women in general. *"Pero yo digo, es que no, no esta bien...Por que todos somos*; (but I say no…it is not right, because we are all) capable of doing everything"(personal interview, p. 12). This new view causes conflict with Melinda's parents. *"De que yo ya veo las cosas de otra forma. Y mis papas siguen en esa cultura. Y ahorita vienen y chocamos* (I have a different point of view, my parents continue with the old culture and now that they are visiting…we are clashing/disagreeing)" (personal interview, p. 12).

Melinda feels she is a successful student even though at times she feels overwhelmed. She does not place much importance on grades, but feels she is succeeding because she is learning about life in the US, she is improving her English and she is continuing to get to know herself better. Melinda feels being persistent helps her to succeed. She is cautious about how she views herself and the future. She has not put much thought into how her life will be in 10 years. Her advice to other Latinas is to learn to adapt, get an education and find the perfect woman within themselves and not let their

cultural views and expectations hinder them. They should realize that as a Latina they could do anything.

Respondent Yolanda Number 9: Accepting, Determined, Outgoing Rebel

Yolanda is a 20-year-old Hispanic female. She was born in the state of Chiapas, Mexico; but was raised in the state of Michoacán de Ocampo, México. She later immigrated to the United States. She has been the Midwest for 6 years. She is a high school graduate of a public school system. She currently is a sophomore at a large Midwestern university majoring in secondary education with a grade point average of 3.5.

Her experience with the American school system was negative at first. It was hard for Yolanda because the school that she attended had a very low number of Hispanic students. Her classmates were not very friendly to her. She recalled an incident as student in middle school. "Let's say we were in science class we had, where there are a lot of chemicals and all that stuff and we always work in five per group and we only work for…they wouldn't ask me to or do this, or didn't even put my name on the project…yes, I was kind of ignored, like I wasn't there" (personal interview, p. 6).

Only when she went to high school was she able to find friends and become part of the school and all of its activities. This school had a higher number of Hispanic students and she seemed to be able to fit in more easily. She felt her classmates were more open minded and more accepting of Hispanics. Yolanda commented that she did not feel discriminated against at her high school. She found strength and resilience by invoking her Catholic school education and faith. She remembered her former school

128

teachers-the nuns-saying to them that when a person is mean to them it is due to their own lack of joyfulness in their life. This helped her live through these experiences. In high school Yolanda built a good relationship with the school principal. In her classes she always made it a point to ask questions and always asked for help when she did not understand the class content or lessons. She felt the teachers were obligated to do their job, which was to teach her and her classmates. "Even though some teachers get mad because you ask them again what you have to do, I don't care if they get mad. That's why they get paid" (personal interview, p. 9).

Yolanda always had excelled in her academics by stating; "But I was like when, in high school I was No. 3; at the top." By the time Yolanda got to high school she realized that this new experience required her speak up more and become more proactive in her own learning. "And my first year was horrible. I didn't do anything; so shy and staying quiet, till I got tired of it. *"Y cuando llegué a la"* (when I got to) *high school* I started speaking out and *"no me dejaba"* (I wouldn't let it happen) (personal interview, p. 9).

While in high school she formed her own support group that included members of the National Honor Society of which she was also a member. She took it upon herself to tell her other Hispanic peers no to be timid and shy and to speak up more. "So I really, and, like for some Hispanics, they were like really quiet; they don't speak up, really quiet; don't do this; don't do that. And then that's when things started more willing to do things. If they don't do them, they go on top of the list, so *básicamente* (basically) support each other" (personal interview, p. 10). One of the challenges she faced as a student in high school was her lack of mastery of the English language. She elaborated that she could

read and speak it fluently, but does not feel that she has yet to master the writing of her second language. "Let's say, we're at school, my biggest challenge that still happens, being able to write English. I can speak it, not really well, but I can. I can read it and write it, but it's just like how to put it all together" (personal interview, p. 11).

Another challenge was her home life such as her desire to obtain an education and independence from her family due to the ultra strict household rules and expectations. Even though she loves and respects her parents very much and was very obedient as a child and even now as a young adult, she still has a very independent streak in her personality and she made it well known to her family. "It was just like, if I want to do it, I have to do it. You know, just like one day I'm gonna grow up, and you're not going to be able to be there with me, *cuidándome las espaldas* (taking care of me). Okay" (personal interview, p. 12)?

What further challenged Yolanda and her family was their poverty-stricken life. At 16 years old she took on two jobs to help her family's economic well-being. "So he (father) didn't get enough money, and we were always struggling about money." Her parents did not approve of her doing so. They thought her exposure to life's harsh realities would speed up her loss of childhood innocence as well as put her at risk of physical harm such as rape. "Because they think that I was like they're gonna rape me or *'no, que iba a ver el mundo diferente* (that I would see the world differently). *Que* (that) I was a little girl. *Que ya no tenía inocencia'* (that I would have no more innocence), or little things like that" (personal interview, p. 12). Her actions were viewed as rebellious by her parents and by gaining employment she was considered the 'black sheep' of the family. She told them she was not and that she was doing this for everyone's well being

130

including her own. *"De que me empecé a rebelar*, they started calling me *'la oveja negra de la familia* (black sheep of the family)'. So I was like, 'I'm not'. I was just like, I just want to do things for myself, and I don't like to depend on anybody" (personal interview, p. 13). She reacted by informing them that she felt this is what needed to be done and that she would do it all over again if need be. The other challenge was her parents' lack of acknowledgement and support of her academic success. "And like one time they made me really, really, really upset was I bring my *'placa'* (plaque) that had my name as an honor roll student, and straight A's; that's when I was a sophomore in high school. So *'la traje'* (so I brought it home). I was so happy that I got that, and I gave it to them as a present. And they spoke, and they said, 'okay, *felicidades* (congratulations)'. And they just put it aside" (personal interview, p. 13).

As a child Yolanda reflected on her aspiration to join a Catholic faith convent and lead the life of a nun. Her father was very pleased with her decision, while her mother was not. Yolanda even went as far as deceiving her mother by running away to join the convent. When her mother found out, she went to remove her from the convent and told her that if she still desired to be a nun when she was older then she could do so, but she was not going to allow it to happen at that time because she was only 12 years old. Now as an adult she still is contemplating this calling, but she did not elaborate further on the subject.

The gender role expectations were strongly imposed by Yolanda's father. As she describes a childhood experience she had "It's just like, those things, I don't want to do. Like, *"Yo quiero hacer cosas diferentes* (I want to do different things) And my mom and dad would say, *No, eres una mujer, y eso tienes que hacer, te toca hacer a ti* (No, you are

a woman that's is what you have to do). That's for the guys. *Me gustaba mucho salir a montar a caballo* (I loved to ride horses). No, you're not allowed to do that, you have to go to the kitchen. See what your mom is doing, and what your grandma is doing, and she can teach you what to do. Learn how to make tamales. Okay. So that's where I had to go, to the kitchen and do everything what they told me to do (personal interview, p. 16).

She faced further gender role conflicts when she informed her father she wanted to attend college,*"también no me respaldó* (he shunned her). He responded,*"Si para qué vas a estudiar, si al fin de cuentas vas a andar limpiando pañales. Es el trabajo de las mujeres*. (Why do yo want study? You will only end up changing diapers, that is the job of a woman)" (personal interview, p. 16). She realized her familys' gender role expectations did not include an education. Though she risked losing her familys' love and support she still aspired toward a college degree. Her parents expected her to follow the gender role paths in the same way both of her sisters had.

Yet Yolanda had already started developing her own independent mindset due to her new life in the United States. "Like sometimes I do, like a problem isn't working and I have to go back, but then, just like 5% I think that way. "*Pero* (but)," it's not that I'm breaking with tradition, *"sino que* (it is)" I'm making the women speak out more, for themselves because we need to. We're not made; *"de, no estamos hechos de barro* (we are not made of clay), that we don't feel, that we don't think" (personal interview, p. 18).

Yolanda defines success as having the freedom to be who you want to be and to be able to speak out and not allowing other to control your life. "Uh, be who you want to be; like, be able to' like *'como te digo* (how can I say it)', be able to speak out, *pero* (but) just in simple words, be who you want to be. Don't let anybody make you what they want

132

to make you. You know, uh, talk from your heart. Do things from your heart, *'y no dejar que otras personas te controlen tu vida* (and not allow anyone control your life)" (personal interview, p. 18).

One of the major motivations to graduate from high school was her parent's lack of formal education. She had no desire to be illiterate like her mother and have to obey all of her father's wishes. "I didn't have nobody to explain it to me. And all of a sudden, my mom, she will like, Don't even come to me. Don't even think I can help you with that'. *Ni siquiera sé leer; cómo quieres que te ayude* (I can't even read, how can you expect me to help you). So she always *'nos decía cada rato, que no sabía y que no sabía, y que no sabía'* (she would always say I don't know, I don't know, I don't know). So it was like, okay, I know that I know how to read; I know, I know how to write, but do I really know the information to help my kids to a better life? So that's what made me think that I really want to finish, at least…" (personal interview, p. 19). What continues to motivate her to succeed, as a university student are her experiences with her sisters. Both her older and younger sisters eloped and this event affected her mother very deeply and Yolanda feels she still had not yet recovered from it.

Her experience as a Latina is different because she is very proud of who she is and her national origin. She also loves and embraces diversity. She enjoys learning about other cultures and also in sharing her own cultural experiences with others. She takes pleasure in breaking stereotypes. Some cultural conflicts she lives with are gender role expectations, not following the stereotypes, and challenging traditions. Yolanda has found success in living in two worlds by learning to balance both. She realizes she has to play the role her parents expect her to be as well as succeed in her new life as a college

student. Presently though she feels her parents are slowly becoming more accepting of her new life. Her advice for other Latinas is to believe in yourself and not let others control your life.

Respondent: Cecilia Number 10: Productive, Positive, Assertive Scholar

Cecilia is a 21 year-old Hispanic female born in Fort Worth, Texas, but who returned to live in México when she was 2 years old. Before coming to the United States she lived in Cahichihuetes, Zacatecas, México. She immigrated to the United States to live with her relatives and learn English. Her parents thought is was also a great opportunity for her to also get an American education. She is the second and oldest female of 10 children. She has lived in the Midwest for 9 years and is a graduate from a midwestern public high school. While in high school she received honors recognition in all of her classes for academic achievement and was a recipient of a scholarship. During her high school experience she worked two jobs to help her family that was still living in México. She is fluent in Spanish as well as English. She is now a junior in elementary education at a large midwestern university. Cecilia transferred to the university from a technical college in the Midwest.

Cecilia's high school experience was at first very trying for her. On her first day she was asked to leave school because she lacked proof of vaccination. School officials told her in English, which she could not understand at the time, that she would have to produce a current record or be sent home. She tried in vain to tell them that they were already in transit and had not yet arrived in the mail. Having said that, the school officials

still sent her home. The problem was her guardian (aunt) did not know how to drive and she had no way of getting home other than walking. Since she just recently had moved to the town she was still not familiar with it. But she somehow managed to make it to her home safe and sound. After that experience and a month long bout with homesickness, she decided that she did not want to stay in the United States. Upon reflection she decided that this experience was going to be for her own good and decided to stay and found employment in order to send money home to her parents in México.

Cecilia always knew she wanted to be a teacher. She decided she needed to apply herself more and make better efforts to succeed. *"Tengo que echarle ganas, tengo que seguir adelante* (I have to put in more of an effort and desire to succeed)"* (personal interview, p. 2). She worked and attended high school full time. She was very happy and proud of her accomplishments. Cecilia feels she never had any problems with her high school teachers. She also does not think that she was the victim of any discrimination during her high school experience. She made it a point to build a positive rapport with her teachers. She also had good support system, which included her cousin. Cecilia and her cousin were the only Hispanics in some of her classes. In order to change this they transferred to classes with a larger number of Hispanic students in them. They employed the 'buddy system' in order to get ahead with their studies. After high school graduation she enrolled for classes at the local technical college where she studied computers. She later transferred to the university where she is now a student. She transferred because she was offered a chance at qualifying for a scholarship for future Hispanic teachers.

When discussing gender role expectations she had major influence from her uncle. Since she lived with him and his family throughout her childhood she feels many of her

views were shared by his beliefs even though they were not much different from her own immediate family. Her uncle was hesitant but supported her decision to take a job after school hours. He did so because he knew she wanted to work to be able to send money for her family in México. In the household the chores were divided among the females and the males; the women worked inside doing household chores and the men worked outside in the yard and maintaining the cars in working order. She did have more household chores due to her aunt's insistence. She felt her aunt was very strict with her, more than with her cousins.

Some of her high school challenges were her limited English proficiency and her uncle's reluctance to allow her to participate in high school extra curricular activities such as track and school clubs or study groups. Her uncle felt that women should only be allowed to go to school then come home. *"Por que para el, las mujeres solamente en la escuela y en la casa* (Because for him women should only be at school and I the house)"(personal interview, p. 16). As a Hispanic female she realizes all the obligations she has but is able to set them aside. Her life experiences in the Midwest has been challenging, yet she is able to function with some difficulty in both worlds and fulfill the gender role expectations imposed upon her by her culture. *"Y aunque aqui son otras culturas, las que tiene uno aqui, uno todavia tiene en la mente sus culturas de alla y lo que los papas le han inculcado a uno* (Even though it's another culture here, one still has the cultural mindset of what ones parents has taught them)" (personal interview, p. 12).

When Cecilia first immigrated to the Midwest she still had all the Hispanic gender role expectations ingrained in her, but slowly she began to realize that it didn't have to be that way. *"Entonces yo, cuando me vine para aca, you traia todo en la mente de que yo*

136

tenia que estar en la casa; yo tenia que hacer, yo traia en la mente de que si me casaba,

yo tenia que dedicarme a mis hijos. No tenia que estar en la escuela; tenia que dejar la

escuela, pero emepece a ver; me empezo a cambiar un poquitop or las amistades que

tuve (so when I came here, I still had that mentality that I needed to leave school should I

get married, and dedicate my life to my children; but now my thoughts are changing due

to the influence of my friends) (personal interview, p. 12). She received mixed messages

from both her father and her uncle with whom she lived with. Her uncle's gender

expectations were very traditional, whereas her father encouraged her to succeed in

school and to obtain a degree from a university. Her mother on the other hand was the

opposite of the males in her life. She is steadfast in her gender role expectations and

beliefs.

At one point Cecilia had aspirations to become a nun, she made a conscious

choice not to be like other women and fulfill the gender role expectations that she

experienced in México. *"Yo no quiero estar como las mujeres que estan en México; con*

un monton de ninos, y nomas en la casa. Y el hombre 'disque' trabajando afuera (I didn't

want to be like all the women in México, full of children at home, with the man

'supposedly' working outside of the house) (personal interview, p. 12). Another

conscious decision she made was to learn to live in both worlds; traditional Hispanic and

contemporary middle class White America. She made this decision while in a student in

high school. *"No deseo de dejar mi cultura; todo lo que ellos me had ensenado, pero*

tambien tengo que salir adelante, y no dejar, no dejarme vencer, ni dejar, no ser la

misma persona que he sido en México. No va afectar en nada. No voy a ser tanto

solamente como son las mujeres de aqui, pero tampoco ser como son en México. Tener

un poco de los dos (I don't wish to leave my culture and all that I have been taught, but I still want to get ahead and not give up and still be the person I was in México. And not let that affect anything. I won't just be like the women here but also not like the women in México. I will have a little of both)" (personal interview, p. 12)

Cecilia defines success as when you reach your goals, achieve your dreams. What motivated her to reach her dreams were her parents, her boyfriend, her teachers and professors and the continued support she has from her previous teacher at the technical school she attended. Her high school success was due to her own individual goals she set for herself and confesses that she feels she was very self motivated to succeed.

She feels being a Latina is different because she has more opportunities because she is bilingual. This makes her proud when she is able to help others because she can speak two languages. On the other hand she feels there is a negative side to it as well. She does not feel she has fully acculturated and has not yet had the opportunity to experience life in the Midwest fully, so she feels that hinders her progress and the ability to participate in her class discussions or everyday conversations. Cecilia also has a very strong religious upbringing and faith. When faced with challenges in high school she would always seek out her teachers to discuss her problems. She felt she always had to work twice as hard to succeed in school because of her limited English proficiency and a desire to prove to her teachers that she could be a good student. Her continued motivation was her father. When she felt she could no longer continue, she thinks of him. She does not want to fail and disappoint her father because he never had the opportunities she has had. *"Eso es lo que a mi me ayuda ha sailr adelante, y que si puedo* (That is what has helped me get ahead and know that I can do it)" (personal interview, p. 13).

For her future, she always saw herself as a teacher. Later on in life she saw herself as a nun and working with orphans. Her future always involved working with children. She feels she is successful because she has experienced difficult situations and has overcome them. She realizes that many of her friends have failed to reach their goals and she has fulfilled her own goals. In 10 years she will be married with children with her parents having immigrated to the United States to be with her. Her advice to other Latinas is to stay in school and not to give up no matter what it takes to secure their future.

The personal portraits were provided as a vehicle that allows the reader to become acquainted with the respondents on a more personal level. The portraits elaborated on all of the respondent's high school experiences, such as lived discrimination. It discussed the respondent's reasons and motivations to stay in school as well as the events in their individual family life. Along with the challenges each faced and how they overcame such challenges. They also helped to share the individual respondent's motivations to reach academic successful goals and their contemplation on why they were more successful n their academic career as well as their views on their educational successes and advice for other Latinas.

Thematic Data Trends

In order to more fully investigate the factors of the sociocultural and gender role expectations and the influence of resilience and persistence factors that contributed to the success as Hispanic female high school graduates, each respondent took part in a structured interview with the researcher. The interviews averaged 90 minutes and took place in a Midwestern university's College of Education television studio. The researcher

conducted all interviews used in this study. In order to facilitate and provide consistency, the interviewer followed a predetermined set of questions (see Appendix A).

The interview questions focused on three areas of exploration of the phenomenon of successful Hispanic female high school graduates. The three areas of investigation were sociocultural experiences, resilience and persistence factors, and gender role expectations. After all the interviews were transcribed, the data was coded looking for repeated words and phrases that would indicate areas or themes that were most important to the young women. During the analytical process four themes emerged. These were identified by coding frequently expressed phrases and then collating these similar phrases into themes. The following four themes were identified:

    1. Gender role expectations

    2. Education

    3. Living in two worlds

    4. Future prospects

This section is reported in the following manner. First, the most significant theme—gender role expectations—will be discussed. Relative to this theme is how Hispanic fathers and mothers treat their daughters, the expectation of marriage and motherhood, religious faith, independence from family, breaking stereotypes. Second, the theme of education had the trends of support or nonsupport for furthering these young women's education, employment during high school experience, parents' lack of formal education, and traumatic life experiences. Third, the attempt to live in two worlds uncovered emergent data with an emphasis on the difficulties that arise in attempting to bridge the two cultures to find a balance, language issues, and lack of positive role

models. The last theme, future prospects, represents the center of what these young

women envision their possible selves will be like along with advice for other Latinas.

Table 3 reflects the four major themes and related subthemes.

Table 3: Themes: Gender Roles, Education, Living in Two Worlds, Future Prospects

Themes	Gender role Expectations	Education	Living in two worlds	Future prospects
	❑ How Hispanic parents treat their daughters	❑ Support or non support of education	❑ Difficulties balancing life away from home	❑ Possible selves
	❑ Marriage and motherhood	❑ Employment during high school experience	❑ Language issues	❑ Advice for other Latinas
	❑ Religious faith	❑ Lack of formal education of parents	❑ Lack of positive role models	
	❑ Independence from family	❑ Traumatic life experiences		
	❑ Stereotypes			

The researcher developed naturalistic generalizations from the interview data

analysis. This in turn helped develop generalizations about the study in terms of themes

and how they compared and contrasted with one another. This step helped with the

analysis because it facilitated the researchers' requirement to explore emergent

similarities, patterns, and themes within the respondents' interview data analysis.

Theme 1: Gender Role Expectations

When doing an audit trail on the most used words and phrases in the interviews, it was obvious that gender role was the cause of most of the conflicts that these Latina women faced. They often saw their female peers leaving school to pursue motherhood and marriage or because these girls had become pregnant before they got married. To see their female peers follow this gender role angered many of the interviewees who saw such behavior as confirming the stereotypical vision of a Latina. Many other interviewees expressed that they would not let such stereotyping be applied to them. Victoria and Mayra were most vocal on this point:

> *Victoria*: I didn't want to be that person that was still in Garden City that was going to have babies and work out of IBP. Seeing other girls with their pregnant bellies walking around my high school and knowing that they were never going to graduate because they were just there to kill time. I didn't want to be that person.

> *Mayra*: And I'm like and if for some reason I do fall to become a single mother or whatever at least I have an education, I have something to offer to somebody else. And I think that's something that I like. Like starting from high school girls just started getting pregnant and the fact that I wasn't one of them. I was just like adding onto the package that I already carried on.

These two Latinas were upset to see that their peers seemed to be just wasting time until they had their babies and got married and had more babies. As Mayra said, she was going to pursue her education, and, if by chance she did become a single woman, she

was going to have her education. To Mayra, a woman had less to offer when she was not educated.

How Hispanic Parents Treat Their Daughters

The Latina women interviewed were well aware of the role they were "supposed" to fill. They knew the role expected of them was to become a wife and mother—stay home--clean the house—do your duty—have a husband to support you. Both Ivette and Karina had been raised with the traditional role modeled for them. Ivette, who had lost her parents at an early age, had the opportunity to see a different role for women when a single White woman was appointed her guardian after her parents' death. This is what Karina and Ivette said about Hispanic gender role expectations:

> *Ivette*: Um, I remember back with my grandparents and everything, you know, my grandma was always the one to cook and to clean and everything and um, make sure everything was in order and my grandpa was the one that'd go to work then come home and going to live with my guardian it was interesting because she was the only one. She was a single parent. I was like…she was the one that went to work and did everything and it was almost very empowering to see her be able to do that all by herself.

> *Karina*: Cleaning and cooking. You know, well the ones that I did I feel like it would be cleaning, cooking, kind of just keeping the upkeep of the house. And then I guess also I would include with that like child – you know, raising children and things like that. That's at least what I've always seen as the traditional woman.

This expectation was difficult for all the interviewees. They had to leave that gender role behind in order to become educated—to look beyond what was usually expected of them—this left them feeling torn. Some interviewees stated that they did want to have children later on, but several of the interviewees saw themselves raising children without the benefit of marriage, something they knew would horrify their parents. The following quotes show these women were conflicted over their expected role as Latina women:

Lizette: I definitely want to have a family. Yes I do want a husband because I don't want to raise a kid without a husband. That could lead to a topic right there. But yeah. I do want to be able to hopefully find a person that I do want to raise a kid with and so I do want like the family aspect. You know, the house, car, all that stuff, you know, everything like that. But I also want to be able — I want a career and I want — I'll probably be finished because I'm looking into getting my masters. And so hopefully finish with my masters, already have a career, but still have that career. I don't know if it exists yet like I said that will give me the capability like she said, keep on driving, and keep on going.

Sonia: I can see myself – I don't know if I will be teaching still or not. But I can see myself making a difference. I can see myself working with people and helping them out and making them happy which in turn will make me happy. I think for me success and my goals in life are just to be happy. It's the little things that matter. Like this bachelor's degree that I'm going to get hopefully by the time I graduate – it's going to be nice. But it's the little things, the little memories along

the way that makes the difference to me. And as long as I can live with my

decisions and that I can say, okay, this is the best that I can do at that time – I put

all my effort into it and I'm happy with what came out of it. And to me that's

success. That's where I want to be in 10 years.

Mayra: Doctoral school. I want to go into educational psychology. One kid, maybe.

No husband. My mom would kill me if she heard that. Yeah. I think just keep on

going with my education because for some weird reason I love it.

Victoria: I never saw myself married, ever. I never imagined a wedding. And I

think that's strange for somebody to say that because little girls are always

thinking about weddings. But I never imagined myself—I imagined myself as a

mom but never once like an image of a husband coming into my life. And I

always wanted to be, like I said, a lawyer. Never a doctor. I knew I couldn't be a

doctor. I didn't like teachers very much (chuckle) so I know I can never be a

teacher. Because I always wanted to do something that would make me look

powerful like lawyers on TV. I think TV had a huge influence on how I wanted to

see myself.

For these young women there was some difference in how they saw themselves

fulfilling the traditional roles that had been modeled for them as children. Some wanted

to be married, but not in a marriage like their mothers. They wanted to have careers.

Some expressed that they were not interested in being married, but they would like to

have a child, and others like Victoria had no intention of following that traditional role. She wanted to have the kind of power and prestige and power modeled by mostly White women on television. Those television role models helped her to see the possibilities in her life rather than the limitations. And like her fellow interviewees, there were people who had an impact on their life.

Two of those people were the young women's parents or grandparents. Ivette saw her guardian live a very different life than her grandmother had led—her grandmother had been the caretaker of the family while her grandfather had supported the family. Mayra's mother was supportive of her education, but she still expected Mayra to fulfill the role of wife and mother. Often the fathers of these women supported them vigorously in getting a college education, but these fathers also imposed traditional rules on their daughters such that if the young woman was the oldest child, she was expected to "care" for her siblings; if she was to attend college, their fathers wanted them to go to a junior college and live at home. Such contradictory gender role expectations made it difficult for these women. As they became more educated they became less willing to accept the limitations placed on them by their gender and culture. Instead these Latina young women are having to reconstruct their roles and for some of them that meant completely eliminating anything that has to do with following a prescribed role. The motivation to think outside their prescribed gender roles came from their desire to pursue higher education, while the rest of their peers opted to follow the traditional expectations.

Marriage and Motherhood

As stated in the major theme of gender role expectations the Latina women interviewed were all very conscious of the roles they are expected to fulfill. Several subthemes surfaced such as the expectation of marriage and motherhood, alternative fulfillment of traditional gender roles, independence, and dispelling negative stereotypes. The first of the subthemes explored in this study was how these young women viewed marriage and children in their future plans. These young women have one foot in their culture of origin and one foot in their current culture and to some varying degree (for some of the interviewees more than some other interviewees) have to choose to either follow their culture of origin or follow their new culture. Because these young women are Hispanic, there is a certain gender role expected of them. There is that stereotype of deferring to their man—but these women are experiencing freedom that comes with the acquisition of knowledge.

So an analogy would be that they have experienced a freedom not usually afforded women in their culture so now that freedom has brought up a conundrum for them. How do they go back to their original culture and all those expectations now that they have acculturated into the White mainstream culture? Can they become professional women and not marry, as their culture would have them do? The following quotes show that all those interviewed acknowledged that there were some aspects of their culture that they will have to redefine for themselves. And for some there is no resentment against being in the caretaker role as long as that role has not been forced upon them. Education has afforded these women with the knowledge that they can make their own life choices. Sonia and Mayra offered the best explanations:

Sonia: Because I'm rebellious. And so my gender role for me – like what I expect and what I want from my relationship for myself is that everything is equal and that, yeah, you know, the guy can cook and do dishes and do laundry once in a while and so can the woman. Like, I'm not afraid to play that role. Sometimes I kind of like it. And sometimes it is expected of me. I don't mind taking it as long as people don't force it upon me. Like saying, no, you need to do this. And when they say that I'm like, no I don't and I won't. Because I know I have an uncle like that. Like why are you out here? Why aren't you doing this? Why aren't you doing that? You know, you should treat your men better than what you're doing. He does the macho role a lot. And I see a lot of Hispanics not following that role so much anymore. But I still see at the same time if it's Mexicano/Mexicana together they automatically fit in that role. And you know what? I see it not necessarily as a bad thing because some women they enjoy that. They want that life for them. They want to be the housekeeper. They love their man so much that's the role they want to do. And I think that's fine as long as it's not pushed on them.

Mayra: And yeah, you're going to have those bumps in the road. I mean, life isn't sweet. We know that from day one. I mean just being Latina and being from a different culture and society where we want to believe they accept us but they don't. I mean you've already faced discrimination, you face biases, you face regardless—you know, one, because you're Latina and two, because you're a female. I mean, from kindergarten, preschool, whatever; you've already dealt with

those battles. So yes, when you get older you're going to think I'm stronger, I'm

older, my mental capacity should be a lot more developed and I should be able to

take these on but on the contrary I think the older you get the more you think

about it so the more you bring yourself down. Whereas when you were younger

and you had that mentality of, you know, I can do whatever you want and just

laugh it off. And I think we have to continue to keep that same mentality. From

day one I had to deal with all this B.S. so why can't I do it now when it's going to

take me somewhere? Not only me but my family, my race, in the long-run

because if we all just sit back and watch everybody else do it and everybody just

sit there and let them label us, I mean, they're going to do it. You know, no matter

how many times you fall down you're going to have to get back up because if you

allow yourself to stay down, like she said, nobody else is going to do it for you.

So just keep at it and just think about like, you know, I'm always going to deal

with this. I'm always going to have to deal with this.

Religious Faith

The third subtheme deals with some of the respondents' alternatives to fulfill

traditional roles chosen by their Catholic faith and the desire to join a convent and

become a nun. Since the respondents are very conscious of the gender role expectations

some sought alternative ways to fulfill them. Both Cecilia and Yolanda discussed a

previous ambition they had in their young lives to join a Catholic faith convent and live

out their lives as Catholic nuns. They were aware that this aspiration would make their

fathers very happy. As stated by Yolanda and Cecilia:

Yolanda: "Well like, '*cuando estuve* (when I was in) *en México. I grew up in*

colegio de monjas (in a convent for nuns, schooling) so I always wanted to be a

nun. And my dad was so happy. He said 'you're giving me the best present you

ever can, 'cause I was turning into a nun… at that time I was 12 (years old)".

Cecilia: "Y cuando fui joven, que empece aqui, que vine de México, y me separe

de mis papas, en mi mente estuve ser monja (when I was young and I came here,

and I was separated from my parents I had the notion in my mind to become a

nun). *Pero ser monja, pero trabajar en la escuela"* (to be a nun and work in a

school)."

Cecilia wanted to fulfill this vocation, which would allow her to satisfy their wish

to work and be near children but also perhaps not a feel obligated to bear children. As

Cecilia stated; *"Siempre con ninos, siempre en mi mente estaba con ninos…Yo no quiero*

casarme. No quiero tener hijos" (I did not want to get married. I did not want to have

children).

Independence

The next subtheme that emerged was the hope to gain independence from their

parents and the family. Due to the respondents' strict household rules and responsibilities

imposed on them by their parents, both Karina and Sonia expressed this yearning for

independence.

Sonia: And then after I got to find myself and to lead myself from my brothers and sisters. It was hard at first. I finally got to the level of like okay, I can do this.

Karina: I feel like I worked so hard in school just so that I could be, oh I'm in college now. And to get away from home and things like that. Normal things get away from home. Have freedom.

Stereotypes

The last subtheme in the gender role expectation category is their wish to dispel negative stereotypes. Many of the Latinas interviewed were very bothered by the mainstream view of Latinas who only wish to become teenage mothers and drop out of school or did not belong in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Mayra and Lizette had feelings about this subject.

> *Mayra*: "Just proving everybody back home wrong that knew I was going to be pregnant with a kid and all this other stuff…And so I think one of my biggest motivations is to just bring that (degree) back to home and be like, it can be done. And it can be done positively."

> *Lizette*: "…once they found out that I was Latina, well why is she in this class? Or what is she doing in here type thing. Because I took a lot of advanced classes in high school which – and I was usually the only Latina in them and they'd be like, you know, what's going on here? You know, there must be a mistake."

As discussed earlier in chapter Two, researchers explain how negative stereotypes influence teachers' perceptions of students. "Images of ethnic groups promote conceptions of success and academic achievement…" (Kao, 2000, p. 409). The Latinas in this investigative study were very aware of the group images that their teachers held for them. This awareness only helped to fuel their motivation to succeed academically and not to fulfill those stereotypes and negative expectations that many were holding them accountable to accomplish.

Theme 2: Education

What drove these young women to further their education? Some were fulfilling the dreams of their fathers, some were doing it for their mothers or grandparents, but all were doing it because they recognized that doing well in school meant that they had a better chance at achieving a dream. For some that dream was their own; for others the dream was their family's dream of once and for all rising to the top, recognizing that they had a future and could have any future they wanted. It was for some even an answer to the prejudice they faced as Latina. Even in the United States these Hispanic families were often relegated to lower-level jobs, and life was just about striving to make ends meet. To have their children educated meant that their child might be able to follow the American dream. Following are the quotes from each woman that best shows what motivated them to rise above the challenges to further their education. As Lizette stated, she felt that her motivation was to be different from the Mexican girls who she felt were trapped in their gender role and had no one to motivate them to reach past the expectations for them.

Lizette: So they still kind of have this, you know, well we'll accept her because she's Latina, but we won't fully accept her because she's not Mexican. But her being Mexican, you know, it was just crazy for her to even think that. And I was like, that's not right. You shouldn't think that way. And it was really sad because a lot of girls in Salina— they either don't graduate from high school or if they do a month later they get married to a guy and get pregnant and that's it. That's the end of their life. And ever since I came up here I go back to visit my family sometimes and I'll see people and it's just amazing to see. It's like, wow, you know, she has a kid now or she has this, you know, and it saddens me to think that that's what they think. You know? That's all they think about.

Support or Non Support of Education

The first subtheme under education was some women were pushed by their parents to get education because their parents knew that was the only way to escape the stereotypes. As Marisa reported:

Marisa: I guess, my parents once again. Every time I come home with a "C or D" in a class, you know they would whoop me; not whoop me, they would like still hit me with a belt. First and foremost and then you know probably for the next couple of weeks, they would check up on my homework, like consistently and then they just kind of laid off me. I mean the one thing that my dad just always said, "You have to get me a bachelor's degree. I didn't have the chance to get a bachelors degree and go to college. You have to get me that bachelor degree." So,

153

like now it's kind of like I'm earning the degree for them and for me yeah, to get

a good future but also for them.

Victoria also felt the push from her father who saw her, his daughter, as his

opportunity to have something he felt could never have—a college education. She

recognized the limitations that had been placed on her father through no lack of

motivation on his part—he merely lacked the opportunity. His sacrifices for his family

have motivated her to succeed so that her success can also be his success.

> *Victoria*: My dad. My dad and just how he has always, like, don't stay here, don't
>
> work at the plant. Like leave Garden City. You'll be okay without us. My dad
>
> used to really – like really ever since I was little it was all about education and all
>
> about having good grades. Just wanting–him wanting me to succeed made ME
>
> want to succeed. For me but also for him just because he never had the
>
> opportunity and my dad is one brilliant man. Like he is so smart and I tell people
>
> and they're just like, oh, really, how smart can he be, but he is absolutely brilliant.
>
> And if he would have had the opportunity that I have, he would be 10 times a
>
> better person and 10 times more successful than I am.

Mayra also spoke about the sacrifices that her parents made and about feeling like

she needed to fulfill a dream for them of getting educated. She said that her parents'

experience and what her teachers told her would happen if she didn't further her

education motivated her to make the sacrifice to go on with her education:

154

Mayra: My family was a big one. Just because I saw like the struggles, and everything that my parents were giving up to give us. And it's kind of like—I told my brothers—I was like, you think Dad came over and did all the work he did to work at a feed lot to have me follow in those footsteps? So that was like my biggest motivation. And like hearing it from my teachers, you know, if you don't do this and you don't do this you're going to end up working at a feed lot, or you're going to end up doing this. And it was kind of offensive because it was kind of like, that's what my parents do. That was a dream for them. And yet they're working their ass off to get me where I'm at. And I think that was just one of the biggest motivations was just seeing my parents and them being like, you know, you guys need to do this and you need to do this. And it's kind of like living the American dream for my parents. And I think that was just one of the biggest motivations, you know, just being educated. And my parents have always said as long as you're educated and you're knowledgeable, you'll be able to get ahead in life, and people aren't going to be able to take advantage of you because of that education you have.

For other women, the motivation was larger than that provided by their parents. Inside them was a spirit that pushed them to go beyond the horizons that seemed limited for them. These young women were determined to pursue higher education, even when their guidance counselors in school said they should be happy attending a junior college. For these women the motivation came from a drive within themselves.

Karina: Just—not only my parent's aspect but knowing that there's so much more to it. High school was not the end for me. I felt that high school was the beginning point and that's why—maybe—I feel like I worked so hard in high school just so that I could be, oh, I'm in college now. And to get away from home (chuckle) and things like that. Normal things. Get away from home. Have the freedom. But also just—I've always felt like high school was the taking off point so if I finished that I would be able to do anything kind of thing.

Sonia: I always really pushed myself to strive. Being the oldest you have to be a role model for the younger ones. And that's how I try and see myself. But at the same time, I've always been a person that challenged myself. I'm like, okay, I can do this better. And I always–being raised with so many kids you kind of like want to have your butt out there and say, hey, look at me, too. And so that's the one thing I excelled at. My brother's good at sports, like excellent sports. And the one thing that I was really good at was my grades because I was very detail oriented person, and I tried studying really hard.

Ivette: Just the environment that I was in. Um, and the poverty that I was in, um, no money, clothes, um…just I…just I remember being little and living in studio apartments with four people and just things like that, it was something that I never wanted to go back to.

Employment During High School Experience

Another apparent subtheme related to education is employment during their high school experience. Many respondents worked to help better their family's economic well being. Some felt that this was their responsibility and that they could not ignore it. As stated by Cecilia and Yolanda:

> *Cecilia*: *Y era un poquillo cansado, pero yo sí estaba contenta. Me la pasaba muy bien en el trabajo. Cada dia aprendiendo un poquito más. Y ya era un poco más el dinero que sacaba; que podía mandarle a mi papá. Y ellos contentísimos que tenían algo.* (It was tiring, but I was happy. I enjoyed my job, I learned something new each day. And even though I earned very little, I was still able to send money home to my parents and that made them very happy to have)

> *Yolanda*: So I start working two jobs, *y lo que agarraba en un trabajo* (and what I earned from one job), it was to the house. And my dad will pay, I mean, I give him the money and he will pay the bills…And that's what helped them out...

Parents' Lack of Formal Education

The next emergent subtheme was some respondents' parents' lack of a formal education such as Yolanda and her mothers' illiteracy. One respondent commented on this theme. This comment was related to her mothers' lack of interest and formal education and how she did not want to put her children tin the same predicament hat she was faced with as a child. The disappointment of having no academic support at home proved to be disillusioning for Yolanda at times.

Yolanda: …like my mom, even though that she's always doing what the man

`tells her to do, uh, she only went to school for, through second grade; she can

barely writes or read, "*y* (and)" like I always had trouble; *cuando tenía problemas*

con la tarea (when I had problems with my homework)… So I didn't get any help

from nowhere."

Traumatic Life Experiences

Experiencing a traumatic event during their young lives was another prevalent

subtheme. Two respondents discussed their tragedies while one respondent dealt with the

unfortunate and untimely death of her parents. She later came to view this experience as a

motivating facet toward obtaining an education and not live the life her parents had. For

the other respondent the traumatic experience was a sibling's chronic illness and eventual

death. For this respondent her traumatic life experience seemed to be one of her biggest

struggles, as well as her teachers lack of sensitivity to her circumstances. Karina and

Mayra each had such an events occur.

Karina: Um, well I think, kinda of losing my family. Um, when I moved to

Kansas, my mom died when I was seven and so I was raised by a person I met

when I was 8 years old. Um, and my dad moved to Kansas with me although I

didn't live with him. Um, and I think I think the biggest part especially towards

my later part of college when my dad started getting sick as well, my dad died

when I was 19, was the fact that I wanted to be the first to graduate you know,

college…be able to go to college, graduate high school and be the first to go to

college. I wanted to have that degree. I didn't want to end up like my parents were…

Mayra: "And then like for me I think one of the biggest struggles, too, was one of my older brothers had a genetic disease so I had to deal with all that on top of it. And just to hear. I don't know, it was just really hard to have like—to go talk to teachers and be like, oh this and this and this is going on and they'd be like, well, you've still got your homework in. So I don't know, that was just really weird.

Education, the second major theme had several sub themes as well. When analyzing these interviews it became apparent that language issues, employment during high school experience and parents lack of formal education as well experiencing a traumatic life event were all dominant for several respondents.

Theme 3: Living in Two Worlds

Difficulties Balancing Life Away from Home

Overwhelmingly these women reported that they felt torn between two cultures, and they were looking for a way to bridge that difference. Sonia, for example, cited the fact that when she was at school she hung out with mostly her White friends. When she went home to visit her family, she saw her Latino friends. She remarked that she felt as though she was living in two separate worlds, and that she had grown beyond the world where her family lived. The outcome of her dual world is that Sonia has developed a comfortable feeling with both cultures:

Sonia: So I've never been afraid or felt bad about being Mexican or American. I think I have an advantage though because I am both, because it's easier for me because I can take the role of a White person or a Mexican person. That will be fine, and that's true to an extent, but I mean in high school I was in the middle of everybody. And that's why everybody was [that way] because it was a small school.

Others reported a strong identification with their Latino culture. Others pointed out that it was hard sometimes to have dark skin and hair, because then they were identified as Mexican and sometimes subjected to the prejudice of people who looked down on Mexicans. However, others reported that they took advantage of being both Mexican and Mexican American and they used their dual culture to their advantage. The following quotes are strong examples of how these young women constructed their self-identities:

Ivette: I view myself as Hispanic. Sometimes, and there are times when I do feel a little uncomfortable if I seem to be the only dark haired and dark skinned person [laughter] in a room. Um, it does make me a little uncomfortable sometimes but um, usually I can get along pretty well.

Marisa: I guess for me it's just growing up the oldest in the family being in charge, being responsible that's kind of…I built a hard shell. So it takes a lot for people to try to break me and try to say things that you know. I mean, I don't think I ever thought, "Oh gosh, I'm gonna give up because I don't see other Hispanics. Or because people look at me funny because you know I'm in a class

160

with completely White people, and I'm the only one (Hispanic) there, and I have a different opinion about stuff. So that's just like, I kind of, just shrugged it (weird look) off. What has helped me is definitely having that circle of friends that are also Hispanic so we can vent and blow off steam, and give each other advice; we encourage each other, that's helped a lot.

Lizette: I really wasn't affected much by it at the beginning because people would automatically see me, see the light skin, see the green eyes, you know, my last name isn't—you know, it's Swedish, and so they'd like be oh she's White, you know, and they'd welcome me in. But the moment that they'd see me hanging out —because we had the ESL program at South so a lot of like people who would come from Mexico or people that would need the English as a Second Language would be there and I'd be friends or be seen with a lot of them. And when they'd see me hanging out with them they'd be like, you know, what, that's not right, what's she doing over there? And then they'd hear me speaking Spanish and they'd be like, oh, so she's not American or White or whatever you want to call it. So it was very interesting growing up because it was kind of like a struggle between the two. You know, people who had already known me that for some reason thought I was always White. You know, when they found out that I wasn't, that I was Latina, you know, they'd kind of be like, oh, well, how come we didn't know that? Well they never really bothered—you know, they just kind of put one and two together and like, oh, she's not American. And then for some reason all my classes would always be with—like I was always the minority in my class but

161

nobody really noticed it because they just never categorized me as a minority or as a Latina.

Victoria: I guess do things for yourself. Yeah. Like a lot of Latinas get caught up in a lot of like their world. Because the Latina world is so much different than the White American world. And they get caught up in it and the boys and everything else. And try not to let that keep you from being—like as women, we're so strong and we're capable of so many things. But for a Latina woman and having that other world–like being able to live in two different worlds, you have so much more of an edge over anybody else. Like put that edge to use. Like really try. And I think there's one thing I try to do and my roommates try to do because I live with two Hispanic women–two Mexican women, like a Mexican man and that's what we try to do. Like we use both our worlds to help us and everything. And I guess what a lot of people have to see that even though, you know, supposedly you're not supposed to like White people. You're not White enough to like them. My brother taught me that. But I learned that's okay, you can like White people. Use your—be Mexican and be Mexican American, use them both and they're going to get you far.

For some of these young women it was good to self-identify with both cultures and these women felt as though having a dual identity offered them many more advantages.

Language Issues

The issue of language was an obstacle with which Yolanda was faced. Her struggle to master her second language of English was a difficult challenge for her and one that she still struggles with today.

> *Yolanda:* Let's say, we're at school, my biggest challenge that still happens, being able to write English. I can speak it, not really well, but I can. I can read it and write it, but it's just like how to put it all together.

While others felt that language was an issue, just not for them, the school officials and other parents and their lack of efforts to involve their parents in school activities due to their limited English proficiency was prevalent. Mayra decided to take this issue into her own hands.

> *Mayra:* …the parents in the school system would assume–they're Hispanic, the parents, they don't know what's going on so they'd never call them. They'd never try to make an effort. Like for prom or after prom. You know, my mom would be more than willing to help make something or do something. She's not going to have the communication skills obviously for the most part but I think that's what really upset me is it took that long. It took me and two other people to go into the system and be, you know, our parents are willing to do this and that and if we have to be there in order for them to communicate then we're going to take that further step.

Lack of Positive Role Models

The next emergent subtheme relative to living in two worlds was the knowledge of being a positive role model for Hispanic females and younger siblings and relatives. The respondents' desire to achieve and succeed was not overlooked by either their families and/or their home communities. Two of the respondents were well aware of the importance of their success and goal attainment meant to them and the important people in their lives, as the elaborated on by Sonia and Yolanda.

> *Sonia:* But my little brother, David, he is a high school senior right now. But last year he called me up. He made me cry, like Sonia, I want to go to school. I'm going to major in archeology so I want your help. Dad doesn't have enough money to help me out. He's like; they told me I can't take this college class in high school. That I wasn't ready for it." And he's like, "What do you think"? And I was like, I was "I think you're ready for it. I know you can do it." And he said, "Well if you help me, get in, if you help me choose the classes, all the college classes," and so he did. And he said, "If it wasn't for you I would never think about going to college.

> *Yolanda:* Then, one day that I was coming back, *"pues agarré mi maleta y me despedí, y le dije, "ya me voy* (so I got my luggage and said good bye)" Some of the little friends of my brother told him, *"¿Ya se va también* (she is leaving, as in eloping), like your other two sisters?" So he stands up, and he says, "No, she's going to college." So that's when I realized that he was proud of me for being here. And that's what really pushed me to do, finish right now what I'm doing.

<center>Theme 4: Future Prospects</center>

Possible Selves

When the interviewees were asked where they saw themselves in 10 years and how the themes above colored those expectations, there were some surprising results. There were wide differences in this theme—some young Latina women saw themselves fulfilling the traditional Hispanic expectation of wife and mother, but only after they had reached their educational goals. Others, however, suggested that they wanted to have children, but they would not want to have a husband. Others did not mention becoming mothers or wives in the future; instead these women were intent on furthering their education as far as they could go.

Hence, what is so significant in this study is the fact that these young Latina women feel as though education broadens the possibilities in their lives, but at the time requires that they sacrifice some aspects of their culture in order to be educated. There is thus a conflict for these young women in the fact that their culture of origin makes no allowances for a woman to be independent, but they live in a culture (U.S.) where independence is admired and where independence means success. So for some, education is for building a career, but a career that can be put on hold when it is time to marry and have children. But for others, education is the vehicle to power, prestige and a way out of the limitation imposed upon them because they just happen to be Latina. Here is what the dreams of these women are in response to the question: *How do your see yourself in 10 years?*

Karina: Married. A career. No kids yet.

<center>165</center>

Sonia: I can see myself – I don't know if I will be teaching still or not. But I can see myself making a difference. I can see myself working with people and helping them out and making them happy which in turn will make me happy. I think for me success and my goals in life are just to be happy. It's the little things that matter. Like this bachelor's degree that I'm going to get hopefully by the time I graduate – it's going to be nice. But it's the little things, the little memories along the way that makes the difference to me. And as long as I can live with my decisions and that I can say, okay, this is the best that I can do at that time – I put all my effort into it and I'm happy with what came out of it. And to me that's success. That's where I want to be in 10 years.

Mayra: Doctoral school. I want to go into educational psychology. One kid, maybe. No husband. My mom would kill me if she heard that. Yeah. I think just keep on going with my education because for some weird reason I love it. And I mean no matter how much I come to hate it at times, like she said, I have my bad grade semester, but I kind of like—I see my friends when I go back home, and they're at a full time job and now they have a kid and have all that and I'm like, how do you do it? Like my escape would be going to school or would be doing this. And I think I'm so used to having a life that just keeps going and going and one thing after another that I couldn't just even 10 years from now see myself just sitting there and going to a job coming home and that's it. Maybe when I'm 40 or 50, maybe, because I'm close to retiring. But I think as far as like 10 years, 15

years from now I think I'll still want to continue that same pace, I mean, for the most part to where I'm still trying to get an education or a doctorial or maybe starting on a family or like just going from there.

Marisa: In a perfect world, I would have like a Ph.D.., be a Superintendent of some school district, having probably married with kids and I don't know how I would be able to balance both things. I was talking to a friend of mine and um…I was like yeah, just like in the future we were talking about having kids and it's like, if I have kids and I raise them until my youngest is 5 years old and I have three kids and they are 2 years apart, I'm gonna have no career for 10 years. So then why am I working so hard to not have a career for 10 years but at the same time, like, I see like being an at-home Mom and taking care of the kids and you know being close to them, like will I have that closeness like I have with my Mom now? If I do end up staying working, it's like the working Mom verses the traditional Mexican Mom who stays home with the kids. Like, there's that terror like, how, where am I gonna go, what am I gonna do?

Lizette: I definitely want to have a family. Yes I do want a husband because I don't want to raise a kid without a husband. That could lead to a topic right there. But yeah. I do want to be able to hopefully find a person that I do want to raise a kid with and so I do want like the family aspect. You know, the house, car, all that stuff, you know, everything like that. But I also want to be able—I want a career and I want—I'll probably be finished because I'm looking into getting my masters.

And so hopefully finish with my masters, already have a career, but still have that career.

Victoria: 10 years from now? With a Masters. And hopefully living somewhere other than the United States and working for a company based in the United States. Like I said, I want to do marketing or advertising or just—and I want to do—I really want to work with like trade and what not.

Ivette: Um, I view myself with definitely my college degree, my doctorate; I plan on being the first doctor um, the first Dr. Mendez.

Advice for Other Latinas

The final subtheme relative to the theme of future prospects uncovered by this study is motivating advice for other Latinas who wish to be successful. Yolanda and Cecilia recommended staying in school, never give up and realizing that obtaining a high school diploma as well as a college degree is possible. These words of wisdom were spoken from experiences that all the respondents had throughout their educational careers. The message for other Latinas was to be persistent and resilient and success will come as a reward for their efforts and dedication to their goals.

Yolanda: Just like that little anecdote that we always like to come out; *'porque,'* like, *'cómo toda la gente lo dice, '¡Sí se puede!'* (like the saying goes Yes! It can be done!).

Cecilia: "*Yo el único consejo que les doy es que no, no, nunca dejen los estudios. Como se tome el tiempo que se tome; el esfuerzo que se tome, lo difícil que sea, pero tiene uno que salir adelante. Se tomen los años que quiera, con que, tomen los años que tomen. Pero van a tener un diploma*" (The only advice I have is to stay in school, no matter how long it takes stick to your goals, no matter what it takes and however long. Doing so will help them achieve their diploma).

Data Analysis Matrices

All three phenomena of sociocultural, resilience/persistence, and gender role expectations were further explored as well. The researcher uncovered the aforementioned themes, subthemes, and evidence of the factors apparent in the data. This section was created in order to help facilitate the data analysis for the reader as well as the researcher. It also helped to visualize all the factors that are comparative to one another. This helped to smooth the progress of evaluating which respondent had the majority of dominant themes in her respective educational experiences. This process also helped to identify which factors contributed the most to Hispanic females educational success and resilience/persistence as well as influential sociocultural aspects.

When analyzing the data of the six factors that contributed to the respondents' success, the total number of responses for each factor is shown in Table 4:

Table 4: The Six Factors That Contributed to the Respondents' Success/ Total Responses

Pride	Accomplishment	Resilience/ Persistence	Lived Discrimination	Desire to Learn	Opportunity
101	158	168	81	138	111

It became apparent to the researcher that both respondents Mayra and Melinda had more dominant traits in regard to the following factors: Resilience/Persistence: Mayra (32), Lived Discrimination: Mayra (17), Desire to Learn: Melinda (19), Opportunity: Melinda (16). Of all the respondents, these two participants were above average in comparison with the rest of the respondents. Overall the two respondents that had the most responses to one or more of the factor(s) were Mayra and Melinda. They both were verbal and vocal in articulating their thoughts (see Table 5).

Table 5: Dominant Trends Relative to One or More of the Six Factors

Pride	Accomplishment	Resilience/ Persistence	Lived Discrimination	Desire to learn	Opportunity
Marisa	Cecilia	Mayra	Mayra	Melinda	Melinda
18	24	32	17	19	16

In order to allow the reader to easily report the findings, Table 6 data matrix was developed. The main matrix reveals the codes and number of incidences of each factor evident in the respondents' interview data analysis.

Table 6: Main Matrix

ID #	Respondents	P	A	R/P	LD	DL	O	Total
1	Sonia	14	18	20	14	13	9	88
2	Mayra	12	22	32	17	14	13	110
3	Ivette	2	8	8	3	12	5	38
4	Karina	10	15	17	2	17	13	74
5	Lizette	10	14	15	8	15	10	72
6	Victoria	10	14	16	8	17	10	75
7	Marisa	18	12	16	5	11	8	70
8	Melinda	6	14	12	3	19	16	70
9	Yolanda	4	17	18	15	8	14	76
10	Cecilia	15	24	14	6	12	13	84
	Total	101	158	168	81	138	111	

P= Pride, A= Accomplishment, R/P= Resilience/Persistence, LD=Lived Discrimination, DL=Desire to Learn, O= Opportunity

In order to better explain the data and the emergent themes relative to the comparative factors several additional tables were also developed. They discuss the data and its presence of each of the following six factors: pride, accomplishment, resilience/persistence, lived discrimination, desire to learn, and opportunity.

Pride

The factor of pride was complete with similar characteristics that each respondent exhibited throughout her interview, and, therefore was emergent in the data. Characteristics relative to pride included having a level of value and importance to their own particular efforts and successes. As well as being happy and satisfied, respondents have achieved certain goals in order to make others happy (in most of the respondents data) it was their father and/or both parents) as well as themselves. The data shows that

all respondents were very proud of their successes by having achieved some of their own

personal goals as well as their families. Table 7 demonstrates the number of responses of

each respondent, as well as the total percentages of each factor.

Table 7: Pride

ID#	Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
1	Sonia	14	14%	16%
2	Mayra	12	12%	11%
3	Ivette	2	2%	5%
4	Karina	10	10%	14%
5	Lizette	10	10%	14%
6	Victoria	10	10%	13%
7	Marisa	18	18%	26%
8	Melinda	6	6%	9%
9	Yolanda	4	4%	5%
10	Cecilia	15	15%	18%
Pride Percentage 1=Percentage of individual responses in the theme area Percentage 2=Percentage of total individual responses of the respondents				

Accomplishment

The factor of accomplishment had the second highest number of incidences

recorded (158). It was also full of similar characteristics that were shared by all the

respondents as evident in the data. Qualities such as experiencing the fulfillment of

having something accomplished (for the purpose of this study, graduating from high

school and now attending a university) emerged as well as a goal that has been acquired

that led to their success achievement. Even though some exhibited it more than others it

was still prevalent in the data. The respondents all spoke to this factor whether it was

discussing how they just desired to be something, or to prove people wrong and return to

their hometown with a university degree. All of these wishes were tied into fulfilling the

desire to achieve their goals. Table 8 demonstrates the respondents' individual for each as

well as total percentage for the theme area.

Table 8: Accomplishment

ID#	Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
1	Sonia	18	11%	20%
2	Mayra	22	14%	20%
3	Ivette	8	5%	21%
4	Karina	15	9%	20%
5	Lizette	14	9%	19%
6	Victoria	14	9%	19%
7	Marisa	12	8%	17%
8	Melinda	14	9%	20%
9	Yolanda	17	11%	22%
10	Cecilia	24	15%	29%

Accomplishment
Percentage 1=Percentage of individual responses in the theme area
Percentage 2=Percentage of total individual responses of the respondents

Resilience/Persistence

The factor of resilience/persistence had the highest in number of incidents (168)

documented by the data. This attribute displayed by the respondents was relative to the

exhibition of qualities that lead to holding steadfast to goals despite barriers or obstacles

and the action of achieving those goals. The respondents in this study exhibited this

factor the most. All of them had unmistakable traits of resilience/persistence, some of

which can be attributed to several other underlying aspects. These included wanting to

persevere, achieve goals, or as some respondents stated, "Just wanting it more". What

"it" refers to can be one of several aspects such as competition with peers or overcoming

an obstacle in their path of achievement. Table 9 demonstrates the respondents'

individual responses for this factor as well as total percentage for the factor area.

Table 9: Resilience/Persistence

ID#	Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
1	Sonia	20	12%	23%
2	Mayra	32	19%	29%
3	Ivette	8	5%	21%
4	Karina	17	10%	23%
5	Lizette	15	9%	21%
6	Victoria	16	10%	21%
7	Marisa	16	10%	23%
8	Melinda	12	7%	17%
9	Yolanda	18	11%	24%
10	Cecilia	14	8%	17%
Resilience/Persistence Percentage 1=Percentage of individual responses in the theme area Percentage 2=Percentage of total individual responses of the respondents				

Lived Discrimination

The factor of lived discrimination had the lowest number of occurrences (81) of

all of the six factors as evident in the data. The characteristics in relation to the factor of

lived discrimination were displayed as unfair treatment, prejudice experienced due to the

respondents race and/or ethnic group, as well as the respondents' ability to notice subtle

differences in treatment due to their race and/or ethnicity. Many respondents did not

address discriminatory events or happenings in their educational experience. One can

debate whether the respondents were aware of biases and/or discriminatory events that

they might have encountered. Table 10 reveals the respondents' individual response

percentages for this area as well as total percentage for the theme area.

Table 10: Lived Discrimination

ID#	Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
1	Sonia	14	17%	16%
2	Mayra	17	21%	15%
3	Ivette	3	4%	8%
4	Karina	2	2%	3%
5	Lizette	8	10%	11%
6	Victoria	8	10%	11%
7	Marisa	5	6%	7%
8	Melinda	3	4%	4%
9	Yolanda	15	19%	20%
10	Cecilia	6	7%	7%
Lived Discrimination Percentage 1=Percentage of individual responses in the theme area. Percentage 2=Percentage of total individual responses of the respondents				

Desire to Learn

This factor was the third highest in occurrences (138). The desire to learn factor was evident in the data. Its main trait was just that the apparent desire to learn, the yearning for knowledge, which could be defined as the acquisition of knowledge through education. All of the respondents had several collective aspects. The desire to learn was one of them. All of them wanted to get an education and continue at a university in order to fulfill personal goals, achieve financial security and 'be somebody'. Table 11 indicates the respondents' individual response as well as percentages for each area including the total percentage for the theme area.

Table 11: Desire to Learn

ID#	Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
1	Sonia	13	9%	15%

2	Mayra	14	10%	13%
3	Ivette	12	9%	32%
4	Karina	17	12%	23%
5	Lizette	15	11%	21%
6	Victoria	17	12%	23%
7	Marisa	11	8%	16%
8	Melinda	19	14%	27%
9	Yolanda	8	6%	11%
10	Cecilia	12	9%	14%
Desire to Learn Percentage 1=Percentage of individual responses in the theme area. Percentage 2=Percentage of total individual responses of the respondents				

Opportunity

The factor of opportunity was second least in occurrences (111), as these were manifested in several different trends. The first trend involved a chance, one that offers some kind of advantage to a favorable circumstance that was both beneficial and advantageous to the respondent. This was evident by the relationships that were discussed and the scholarship opportunities as well as knowing when to take advantage of situations that would end positively for them. All of the respondents that shared this factor were cognizant of the value of opportunities, networking, and taking advantage of each situation. Table 12 reveals the respondents' individual response percentages for each this area as well as total percentage for the theme area.

Table 12: Opportunity

ID#	Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage 1	Percentage 2
1	Sonia	13	12%	15%
2	Mayra	14	13%	13%
3	Ivette	12	11%	32%
4	Karina	17	15%	23%

5	Lizette	15	14%	21%
6	Victoria	17	15%	23%
7	Marisa	11	10%	16%
8	Melinda	19	17%	27%
9	Yolanda	8	7%	11%
10	Cecilia	12	11%	14%

Opportunity
Percentage 1=Percentage of individual responses in the theme area
Percentage 2=Percentage of total individual responses of the respondents

Summary

This chapter revealed extensive information. The personal portraits incorporated in the chapter helped to reveal many facets of each individual's personality. The portraits helped to familiarize the reader with each respondent and to relay their collective lives and educational experiences both as high school and university students. The descriptors for each respondent were included to help reveal and distinguish the different personality traits exhibited by each respondent.

The thematic data trends were integrated to order to facilitate and help show the data of the three areas of exploration (sociocultural experiences, resilience and persistence factors, and gender role expectations). This helped to also disclose several subthemes for each major theme. The theme of gender role expectations included how Hispanic parents treat their daughters, marriage and motherhood, religious faith, independence from family, and breaking stereotypes. Education revealed the subthemes of support or non-support towards education, employment during high school experience, lack of formal education of parents, and traumatic life experiences. Living in two worlds

177

involved the difficulties of balancing life away from home, attempting to bridge the two cultures, language issues, and the lack of positive role models. Future prospects uncovered subthemes centered on the visions of possible selves, as well as advice for other Latinas. To further establish the naturalistic generalization from the interview data analysis, the trends helped to delineate the study in themes and provided comparisons for each. The sub themes are products that the data depicted within the four major themes. These helped to document emergent trends and patterns that might have been otherwise undiscovered.

The matrices were created to report the overall findings and share the codes and number of incidences for each relevant factor within the respondents' interview data. The data analysis matrices were also a part of the larger research questions the study was investigating. The research questions helped to uncover the previously discussed four themes and their related subthemes as well as influential factors of the respondents' experiences that became apparent within the data. This assisted in identifying the factors that had contributed most to the respondents' educational success, resilience, and sociocultural aspects in their respective education experiences.

The sociocultural factors that contributed to the successes of the Hispanic female respondents in their educational endeavors and careers were discussed in this chapter. The implications of the results as well as the findings of each research question will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes a discussion of (a) the purpose of the study and an overview of the methodology; (b) research questions, and discussion of the findings,and summary of and significance of themes developed from the interviews; (c) implications for practice; and (d) suggestions for future research.

Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the socio-cultural, resilience, persistence, and gender role expectation factors that contributed to the success of 10 Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a large university in the Midwest. For the purposes of this study, *success* was defined as Hispanic females who graduated from a Midwestern public K-12 school system. The data and conclusions of this study will help administrators and classroom teachers to gain a clearer understanding of the situations Hispanic female students experience that can or did contribute to their failure or success in school.

The respondent selection was based on the following criteria: (a) the participants were recent Mexican immigrants born in Mexico, and residing in the Midwest; or (b) are Mexican-Americans, born in the United States, of Mexican immigrant parents and living in the Midwest. To obtain participants for the study the researcher sought guidance from two former student advisors to help identify possible participants. The researcher was directed to several potential respondents and met with them individually, during which

the researcher explained the study's purpose. All those who met with the investigator agreed to part of the research.

These Hispanic female high school graduates of a midwestern public school system talked about: (a) the effects of the negative attitudes they faced in academic and social settings; (b) the expected cultural gender roles in traditional Hispanic families for females; and (c) resiliency and persistence factors that influenced their academic success in midwestern K-12 public schools. This study used a qualitative collective case study approach with qualitative interviews to gather data that addressed the unique issues affecting Hispanic females.

The goal of this collective case study approach was to uncover the meaning of their lives and experiences. A qualitative paradigm was selected for this study because it was appropriate for the research questions and allowed for a detailed discussion of issues, problems, relationships, and other phenomena that otherwise could not be explained quantitatively. In qualitative research, the researcher is interested in the process, meaning, and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The potential benefit of qualitative research is that it is personal and rich in descriptions. The strength of qualitative research is that it allowed the researcher to share the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people give meaning and structure to their daily lives (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Discussion of the Findings

To examine the socio-cultural experiences, resilience/persistence factors and gender role expectations that contributed to the success of Latina/Hispanic female high school graduates now attending a university, the following questions guided this research. This section begins with a discussion of Research Question 1 and concludes with a discussion of Research Question 2. Taken in combination with the thick descriptions discussed in Chapter 4, these two research questions provided answers to questions asked by the researcher.

Research Question 1

What are the lived experiences and factors of resilience/persistence that contribute to Latina/Hispanic female academic success? This study revealed seven contributing features related to resilience/persistence factors relative to academic achievement of successful Hispanic females. They are:

1. Lived discrimination.

2. Early childhood realization that obtaining an education would lead to a better life.

3. Active involvement in extra curricular activities in their respective school settings.

4. Strict and protective parents.

5. Positive role models for family and other Latinas.

6. Traumatic life experiences.

7. Strong familial/parental support.

When discussing lived discrimination one should consider two variables: racism and segregation. History has shown that segregation and severe racism are associated

with restrictive opportunities for mobility across several generations. However both of these variables either combined or independent of each other can contribute to the lack of opportunities. As defined in Chapter 4, the characteristics relative to the factor of lived discrimination were displayed as unfair treatment or prejudice experienced due to the respondents race and/or ethnic group as well as the respondent's ability to notice subtle differences in treatment due to their race and/or ethnicity. Generational school failure and desertion often resulted from a whole host of interactive societal forces and school experiences that accumulated with time and remain for generations. Many Mexican-origin students have a higher risk of dropping out of school and are more likely to do so if they are a part of an educational institution that has a higher similar population where they are more vulnerable to discrimination.

When investigating lived discrimination, the data were split evenly among the 10 respondents. The data showed those that did experience lived discrimination were 5 of the 10 respondents. The data also showed that 5 respondents did not experience lived discrimination. It can be argued that experiencing lived discrimination is both a contributing and noncontributing factor in the resilience/persistence traits of academically successful Hispanic females in a Midwestern public K-12 school system. In this study the respondents who did experience lived discrimination attributed it to educators' insensitivity toward their lives as discussed by Mayra, who recalled her experience in her family due to her brother's chronic illness. She felt her teachers were oblivious to her situation. It can be concluded that the resilient Latinas in this study experienced some form of lived discrimination. Latinas who do not encounter lived discrimination are just as resilient and persistent as those who did.

Of the five Hispanic female respondents who did not experience lived discrimination the data suggested that their academic experiences were very positive and they felt neither bias nor discrimination toward them. All of the respondents clearly viewed themselves as resilient because of their strong personal traits and interpersonal communications skills. It can also be concluded that all 10 respondents possessed significant resiliency and abilities that allowed them to function in both their academic and their social surroundings.

The second contributing factor the emergent revealed data relative to the resilient/persistent factor was that 9 of the 10 respondents shared the early childhood self realization that obtaining both a high school and university degree would lead to a better, more productive life for them and their families. It can be said that when a person is a the crossroads and faced with making the correct decision, the individual stands alone as to which path to follow. This decision, it can be assumed will influence the future that he or she envisions. Eight of 10 respondent's reported strong parental and familial support for their academic endeavors. This support was invaluable because it provided the structure and encouragement these young women needed to work toward and obtain academic success.

The third contributing factor relevant to resilience/persistence was strong familial/parent support. There is a African proverb that states it takes a village to raise a child. The gist of this saying holds true for Hispanic females. For many education is shaped by two entities, their family and their school communities. A Latina's life experiences are influenced by Latino values, which are traditionally more communally

oriented than the White majority culture. For many Latinas who are at a deeper degree of assimilation, their Hispanic attribution also affects their educational success.

However, strong familial/parental support systems can be used by Latinas to call upon and use as resources for academic achievement. The data in this study further affirmed that strong familial/parental support and ties are a fountain for resources and reasons for Latinas to excel in their educational careers. Therefore, for many Latinas, their sense of possible selves and future goals are more inherently tied to family than are those of their peers who belong to other ethnic and racial groups living in the United States.

The fourth additional factor found was active involvement in extra curricular activities in the respondents' respective school settings. "At the group level, participation in extra curricular activities (such as leadership, student government, and sports) has been reported as facilitating academic success" (Gouveia & Powell, 2005, p. 28). In this study 5 of the 10 respondents described active involvement in extracurricular activities in their respective school settings. Involvement in extracurricular activities helped to boost self-esteem, provided structure and a sense of accomplishment, and reinforced interpersonal communication and leadership skills. The data also showed evidence in relation to positive rapport and influential relationship with a teacher(s) or other adults within the school community. This study found that positive influence led to relationships that provided more opportunities for these young Hispanic women to succeed academically and helped them develop a sense of identity relative to the encouragement received as well as the advice from adults.

The fifth correspondent factor was the presence of strict and protective parents in Latinas households. Several respondents came from a single-family home, there were several who did not. Strict and protective parents, either single or the traditional mother and father household, helped to create an environment that was nurturing, secure, and had a high level of accountability and parental expectations.Seven of the 10 respondents had strict and protective parents. Those who had this type of parenting were held accountable for their academic achievement, home responsibilities, and social setting actions. The strict and protective parents were proactive in their daughter's lives and interests as well as in academics. They helped the young women achieve higher standards and held them accountable for their actions at home, school, and in outside social settings.

The sixth factor related to resilience/persistence among successful Hispanic females was positive role models for both their family and other young Latinas. Others' perceptions of successful Latinas as positive role models did not go unnoticed by this study's respondents. Many of them spoke to this issue as elaborated upon in Chapter 4. When families seek success through education, it leads parents to value education for Latinas as a means to elevate them as well as their siblings and other extended family members. All too often, young people are faced with peer pressure to fit in with the cool kids and pressures from adults to be good kids. For adolescent females who are still shaping a sense of self, their peers hold a very influential role in their success or non success in academics. If more young Latinas are exposed to older academically successful Hispanic females as well as professional Latinas who are or have forged the way towards educational attainment, it can hopefully lead to increased numbers of

Hispanic females graduating from high school and to continuing their higher educational aspiration at a post secondary institution.

Three of the 10 respondents were viewed as positive role models for both their own family (such as siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, etc.) and other younger Latinas within their hometown communities. It can be concluded that the perception as a positive role model was helpful in building resiliency/persistence among the respondents because it held them accountable for their successes and failures and opinions of the community members were important to these respondents.

The final factor pertinent to resilience/persistence factors was the event of a traumatic life experience. A key question that should be posed to those who have overcome a traumatic life experience could be is: what made the difference? This can be asked when discussing the life of Hispanic females who have been faced with adversity and/or challenges. Adversity, challenges and stress can lead to psychological adaptation, attitudinal change and confidence in a person's ability to deal effectively with challenges; such challenges are often called survival mechanisms or strategies which in turn can be linked to past stressful situations and how the individual dealt with them. A resilient Latina can call upon such survival strategies to help her through a challenging life experience, such as those experienced by with several of this study's respondents.

At one point or another people have had what can be considered a form of traumatic life experiences and because views can differ in how a person handles such events. Individuals develop effective coping mechanisms which they draw on when dealing with such traumatic incidents, and those who have a range of coping strategies are more successful in dealing with adversity.

Three of the 10 respondents had encountered some form of traumatic life experience. Such hardships are factors relevant resiliency/persistence because the respondents were forced to cope with the hardship(s) and learned survival skills that aided them in overcoming them.

Research Question 2

What are the sociocultural and gender role expectations and pressures that impact the success of Latina/Hispanic female students in a K-12 public school system? This research question of this study also revealed six more contributing factors related to sociocultural and gender role expectations that impact the success of Latinas academic achievement in a K-12 public school system. They are as follows:

1. Traditional Hispanic households.

2. Living in two worlds.

3. Traditional gender role expectations.

4. Independence from family.

5. Transference of rich Hispanic parental gender role expectations.

6. Outside of home social setting behavior.

When commenting on the traditional Hispanic household and as discussed in Chapter 2, research, identified several cultural and value conflicts for Latinas (Ginorio & Huston, 2001; Vasquez-Nuttall & Romero-Garcia, 1989). For example, Latinas are faced with home environments that tend to nurture dependency and cooperation, have an authoritarian style of parenting, believe that females do not have the need to be educated at the same level as males, and promote *Marianismo* for females. Such conflicts can be

investigated further to discover how they may affect male and female Hispanics differently despite familial responsibilities and the gendered nature of traditional roles in Latino families in the United States. This factor can also be linked to two other features to be discussed in this section: (a) traditional gender role expectations and (b) transference of parental gender role expectations.

All of the respondents were from traditional Hispanic households. Therefore, it could be said that all of the respondents were products of both culture and familial traditions. Both their tradition and culture played a very strong role in the respondents' lives and are major contributing factors to their academic success in a K-12 public school system. This success enabled the respondents to become aware of their expected roles and gendered responsibilities such as maintaining the upkeep of the household and shared responsibility for the rearing of siblings, both of which contributed to the economic well-being of the family members. These traditional beliefs served as preparation for their future role as wife, mother, and homemaker. For 3 of the 10 respondent's this expectation also brought to light the fact that they did not want to necessarily fulfill these cultural expectations of marriage and motherhood.

The second factor discussed is the element of living in two worlds. The need to successfully compete in both cultures is complex. One should consider that the Latina and her life experiences as a minority in her community (with a low immigrant population) is going to be different that those who have not had life experiences in a Latino–majority community (with a high-immigrant population) even though both are aware of the negative perceptions that are related to their ethnicity or national origin.

Such variables can be compounded further by socio-class, racial conflicts, even within other Hispanic groups such as Puerto Ricans and Cubans. The ability to live in two worlds can be called acculturation but not assimilation. This study concurs with findings of researchers Ginorio and Huston (2001) that bicultural Latinas who are able to live successfully in both the Anglo and Hispanic culture have acculturated not assimilated and have been able to hold on to their cultural identity and traditional life experiences. Such Latinas have an advantage both creatively and cognitively over those who have not acculturated. This can determine whether their bicultural experience is affirming or not. If such biculturalism is perceived negatively, it can stigmatize bicultural Latinas. This research, study found like other previous studies (Gandara, 1995; Ginorio & Huston, 2001), found that high achieving Latinas are able to live successfully in both worlds and have a strong bi-cultural identity.

Five of the 10 respondents reported that they lived in two worlds where they had to succeed in both in order to be successful in their life. To succeed in White mainstream America they needed to obtain a good solid education (both a high school degree and higher education degree), while maintaining their traditional Hispanic responsibilities and gender role expectations in their home, their family, and their culture. The data revealed that succeeding in dual worlds was a constant source of struggle for these respondents. This factor caused much strain and pressure within their traditional and academic lives. Some knew they could not fully participate in the educational experience due to responsibilities at home, and this realization resulted in conflicts within the household such as arguments and disagreements with their parents over the traditional Latina expectations of them.

The third feature related to the sociocultural and gender role expectations impacting Latina success is traditional gender role expectations. While there are no single typical Hispanic households, many do share similar traditions and expectations of genders. Historically the Hispanic culture has valued the roles of females as a mother, wife and caretaker. In Latino culture, families highly esteem traditional gendered roles. For Latinas this role centers around the expectation of marriage and motherhood. Even though the level of expectation varies among Hispanic families, the traditional expectations still continue to persist. The data revealed the conscious awareness of these traditional gender roles in their Hispanic culture and their responsibility to uphold them. This awareness was intertwined with their everyday lives. At home, it was a constant struggle to keep their parents happy and yet fulfill their own aspirations academically and socially. One of the respondents viewed this as a caring trait from her parents; others viewed it as oppression. The need for independence from parents and family was another contributing factor revealed by the data with 3 of the 10 respondents'. It can be debated that the respondents felt the need to break out and forge their own way throughout life and not be obligated to fulfill the life their parents wished for them. Their desire to succeed came from this need for independence.

Many Latinas are a major part of their family's dynamics for survival, as well as for economic well-being. Many Latinas are responsible for the familiys' household chores, responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings and contributing to the financial well being of the family. Latino families often weigh decisions based on how they will affect the family as a whole. Decision making relative to education is no different. Hispanic parents will often consider familial needs first thus forcing a Latina to

curtail their own education to help support the family both economically and/or fulfillment of home responsibilities such as caring of younger siblings or providing elder care for grandparents. It can be said that for some Latinas their desire to succeed in academics is to obtain the elusive freedom and independence from these responsibilities. The next factor can also be linked to the previous two factors. Three young women were constantly remind by their parents to "watch what they were doing". All respondents had experienced advice and warnings from their parents in their households. The data revealed that the advice often referred to situations involving males or the Latinas choice of friends and social life. Hispanic parents often view their children's friends and peers as a deterrent keeping them from making the correct decision, which can lead to discord between parents and their children. Overall, this aspect can also be linked to the earlier theme of strict and protective parents. In combination these two themes were elaborated upon by the respondents as a way of keeping them in line in accordance to their parents expectations and holding them accountable for their actions and choices, as well as helping them stay out of trouble.

As also discussed in Chapter 2, there is evidence of cultural and value conflicts of parental transference of gender role expectations. This aspect had two common denominators in the study's data, *machismo and marianismo*. When discussing this feature, one should consider multiple aspects such as promotion of ignorance of sexual matters, rebuking immodesty in girls, promoting machismo in boys, and segregated gender groups. The underlying theme emergent in the data for all parents, is that all had some level of transference occurring in their household and cultural values attitudes.

Machismo and marianismo are two elements that come to mind when discussing Hispanic stereotypes and gender role expectations. *Machismo* been written about so much "both within and outside the Latino community that the word has entered the English language as a synonym for oppressive male supremacy" (Gil & Inoa-Vasquez, 1996, p. 5), but it does have a positive side. This trait can also be viewed as a man being a gentleman, acting chivalrous, as well as being protective of the women in his life. Both sides were variables in some of the respondents' fathers' transference of gender role expectations. Some respondents' mothers valued the Hispanic cultural aspect of Marianismo, the ideal woman. These Hispanic women exhibited characteristics such as a sense of sacred duty, self sacrifice and chastity. They dispensed pleasure and cared for others with no expectation of reciprocity. According to the respondents in this study, their parents all had very high expectations and transference of these two traits.

The data uncovered the belief that many of the gender role expectations involved transference of expectations that their parents had instilled in them by their own upbringing in a Hispanic-rich culture (such as Mexico or El Salvador). Four of the 10 respondents acknowledged the transference of gender role expectations of their parents. The data also showed the connection between the last factor and the influence of at least one parent or both having very strong gender role expectations of them. Three out of the 10 respondents experienced these cultural requirements.

Implications for Practice

To inspire educators to better address the needs of Latinas, this study helped to expose the educational experiences, issues, and life experiences that Hispanic females are faced with every day. By promoting consideration of the Latinas traditional gender role expectations, educational careers, life in two worlds, and their prospective futures, thus encapsulating life and its occurrences, this study can help to better address the needs suggested in Chapter 4. When addressing how educators can better address the needs of Latinas, this study encourages serious, active consideration which will not only help meet the needs of Latinas, but of all Hispanic students as well.

Naasz (2005) found that resilient and non-resilient Latinas tended to define themselves in more individual terms. By maintaining that educators be cognizant in their level of awareness of Latinas' preference of individuality over a group setting and by providing opportunities for resilient Latinas to demonstrate their distinctive strengths and acknowledge their preferences by capitalizing on these preferences this study recommends the following approaches be considered by practioners. **This study suggests other recommendations of previous research (Naasz, 2005) such as assignments such as book reports, art projects, web quests, Internet based research projects, exploration of non traditional careers for females, web design projects, and career and higher education research assignments. All of these suggestions could provide the motivation and opportunity for Hispanic females to excel in academics.**

Classroom teachers can further facilitate academic achievement of all Hispanic and non-Hispanic females by incorporating this study's suggestions into their instructional plans and activities. Educators can also help to promote Latinas individual

193

traits and strengths in a positive light. This can be achieved by providing leadership

opportunities for Latinas to interact in both cooperative and group learning environments.

These ideas help to provide a dual function: (a) reinforcement of Latinas' leadership traits

and (b) exposure to Hispanic females as positive role models for other young Latinas.

The overall suggestions of this study will help educators revisit and reform

policies, practice, and curricula for educators to better serve the Latinas in their

classroom. This study further recommends the reinforcement and expansion of a more

qualified teaching force. It is important to address these issues so that teachers will be

better prepared to meet the needs of their diverse student population. This student

population includes Hispanics, who are both culturally and linguistically diverse. In order

to attract more Hispanic to the teaching profession, the current educational system should

provide incentives and compensation for teachers as reflected by successful student

performance as evidenced by meeting the required adequate yearly performance (AYP)

benchmarks set forth by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2002.

To fulfill this nation's shortcomings, it is this study's recommendation that

colleges of education initiate a nationwide study, of teacher practices, and student

teaching experiences. They can also investigate the current models employed by teacher

preparation programs to better prepare teachers to meet all of their students needs. The

emergent data from this study revealed several areas in the U.S .educational system that

need to be addressed if they are to ensure higher quality teacher preparation programs to

better meet the needs of Hispanic students. The incorporation of a measurement and

accountability system to link teacher quality with student achievement is needed and

institutions of higher education as well as school districts become more aware and active

in their recruitment, preparation and retention of Hispanic educators. Thus creating a need for more collaborative efforts between the United States Department of Education and its counter federal agencies to conduct an investigation of the colleges of education across the nation. The goal should be to study the pedagogy and curriculum used by educators to teach not only culturally and linguistically diverse students but all students to achieve in all content areas at a higher level. The universities across the nation and their colleges of education have an obligation to better prepare and respond to the nations changing demographics and societal needs by following up with their college graduates to ensure that they are achieving optimal results with the tools they are prepared to use in their classrooms. Another recommendation of this study is recognition of teacher preparation programs that have met such standards and that actively contribute to the reduction of academic disparities between Hispanic female students and their peers.

Studies have found that the perception of educational resiliency might encourage educational improvements of students at risk of academic failure. Research has also discussed a framework to help educators identify more effective academic interventions that consider factors that will help promote students' resiliency, such as issues relative to the definition of resiliency, the numerous classic resilience studies that helped to lay the foundation of research in the field, and the examination of recent studies in the emergent area of educational resiliency (specifically on comparative studies among resilient and nonresilient students, backgrounds, as well as school and classroom perceptions). When discussing the issues defining resiliency, it was found that in order to define resilience one must consider the context or approach in which it is being studied. It is important to acknowledge the context in which this phenomenon is being examined before

generalizing the concept of resilience for a broader educational domain. There is a need for resiliency concepts to be fully understood in context before drawing practical implications related to building resiliency in an educational setting.

All of the pioneering classic resilience studies (Waxman, et al., 2003) have identified three constant categories relevant to resilience phenomena. The three categories are difference of individuals in recovery from a trauma, cataloging persons from high-risk groups who have had a better than anticipated outcome, and identifying literature that is relevant to positive adaptation despite traumatic and stressful experiences of an individual.

This study provided the data and information to show the trends that are emeregent of the United States demographics shift within its distinct population. All across the Midwest, classrooms are fast becoming more diverse. This study also found the necessity for an intentional look at pedagogy, curriculum, educational programs, and parental involvement outreach to help maximize Hispanic female students' strengths and talents. Using educational practices that have been historically geared towards the White majority students for past generations is no longer effective for the diverse Hispanic female student population that is infusing Midwestern classrooms today. It is critical that administrators, policy makers, teachers, parent-teacher organizations, and student-focused programs such as advanced placement, international baccalaureate programs and honors classes, as well student clubs, and sports teams to refrain from attempting to make the Hispanic student fit into the old paradigm. New programs that are culturally responsive, inclusive, and proactive will help all Hispanic female students succeed and leave none behind.

This study has implications that address the great challenges that public schools are faced with today. The changing population and the shortfall of educators and administrators who are trained and educated in culturally responsive education only to exasperate the situation. Some of the suggestions for practice that the study revealed are (a) inspiring educators to better address the needs of Latinas; (b) better informing school systems about the cultural facets of the new demographic shift, of which Hispanic female students are part of; (c) mandating that Midwestern schools revisit parent involvement outreach efforts and plans; (d) promoting awareness of Hispanic female students' needs and bringing forth efforts to more effectively mentor, advise; (e) influencing education and career goals; (f) opening up dialogues between Latinas students, their parents, and the schools they attend; and (g) improving identification procedures for potential candidates for advanced placement and honors classes.

Schools can also help to promote curriculum change that is more culturally responsive and proactive in addressing Latinas' educational needs without intensifying the Latinas' sense of alienation and separation from their own culture. Some local school systems may influence or shape a family's relationship by consciously or subconsciously embodying or representing such negative characteristics. Schools desire to become more proactive in encouraging Hispanic parents to be more effectively involved in their daughters' education and well being, which can only prove to be a more constructive practice. These implications also apply to neighborhood area social services as well as state university based community outreach and extension services.

The primary implication for the schools is the effort to lay the foundation for educators to develop and implement supportive environment in school, and classrooms,

as well as effective practices and programs to help make the most of Latinas' strengths and talents.

Implications for Research

The topics of resiliency/persistence, sociocultural factors, and gender role expectations for Hispanic females have been widely ignored and are under-researched. With the changing demographics and the large growth of Hispanics in the United States, this topic is one that requires further exploration in multiple fields such as women's studies, education, sociology, ethnic studies, and economics. Additional research in these areas could lead to more insight into the specifics of this study's findings. Research on Hispanic females' attitudes toward education in the lower grade levels such as elementary and middle school will help to investigate how and when academic goals are decided and/or influenced by external factors in young Latina lives.

This study in concert with Conchas, (2001), identified another focal point for future research on successful Hispanic females can be identifying successful programs and/or models that are evidence based and proven to be more effective with Latinas and helps persuade them to graduate from high school and enroll in an institution of higher education. For example, is there any program available that is considerate of their culture and linguistic diversity? Would current programs at universities such as GEAR-UP and Upward Bound be useful in this venture?

In this study, none of the respondents spoke to or mentioned being part of either of these two programs, yet many schools and universities across the Midwest are part of this federally funded program that specifically targets under represented groups such as

females and minorities in the United States. If success in academics is relative to success in these programs, then further research is needed to better approach Latinas and improve upon their desire to graduate from high school and attend a university. An in-depth study across the nation is required to further explore this dilemma. It could focus on the barriers that both Latinas and their schools face when attempting to communicate these programs and their objectives, as well as improve upon how to better serve this growing population.

Some of the gaps related to research in this area of study are the examination of Latinas throughout their educational careers to help explain this particular group's educational experience and their participation in the United States' public school systems as well as their developing sense of identity and possible selves. Other gaps include but are not limited to studies that add to current research to include comparative investigations of Latinas living in primarily Hispanic communities, such as the Southwestern United States, compared to Latinas residing in historically White majority communities such as those found in the Midwestern United States.

This study also recommends future studies of Hispanic females to investigate the pattern of resilience/persistence in higher education for all females including Latinas; studying the effect of non-nuclear family households such as teenage single parent households and how they influence the educational outcomes of the group. This collective case study also recommends studies on the impact of family, work responsibilities, and the educational participation of Hispanic females along with the identification of mentoring programs and strategies that help to facilitate academic achievement among Latinas.

It would be useful to investigate the most effective types of parental involvement and best practices and what works best for Hispanic parents. Have such programs been implemented by public K-12 schools in the Midwest (Clark, 2002; Mickelson, 2003)? Second, a study that focuses on attitudes of White educators in relation to their Hispanic female students and how they perceive them would also be helpful. As well as further studies conducted on resiliency and persistence factors of Hispanic female students and the external factors that influence decisions they make in relation to their educational aspirations, future, and goals may help inform school and parents regarding ways to encourage and support Latinas to make beneficial decisions. As evidenced by the findings in this study, exposure to influential adults is very valuable to students. Influence can take place in the form of advice on life-changing events, such as which college-bound classes to enroll in as a high school student, or how to become more actively involved in school extra curricular activities such as student council, sports, forensics teams, and how to become part of the National Honor Society. Finally a study on how to become part of the advanced placement classes and honors classes available to them and all students in their respective schools is very important.

An investigative study focusing on the traumatic experiences many new and recent immigrant Hispanic students are faced with when dealing with life in a new country as well as their own personal hardships. Traumatic experiences are one of the many situations that several respondents in this study were faced with; these experiences helped to expose the researcher to resilient and persistent factors that helped them survive and thrive in life as well as in academics. Another focus of research should be on how: mentors and/or mentoring programs impact Latinas and whether they are truly effective.

Another item of research interest could be to investigate the effects of *marianismo* in traditional Hispanic households and how Hispanic females deal with the phenomenon. Does this factor into their gender role expectations, submissiveness, and how they view themselves? Finally, an investigation of the traditional Hispanic male attitudes toward Hispanic female gender role expectations and academic success is another important avenue of research. Are the traditional Hispanic males with the gendered nature and expectations ready to accept an empowered Latina into their households?

Conclusion

The Latina women in this study pointed out the many conflicts that they have had to face living in a dual world. As Hispanic women, they have certain expectations placed upon them. They are limited by cultural rules, and they aren't given the freedom that their brothers or male peers are given. Hispanic females are expected to learn and fulfill the role of caretaker. On the other hand, these young women have been encouraged to further their education, to fulfill the dreams of their father, mother, or grandparents who did not have the opportunity to get an education, and that encouragement has made their life vastly different than some of their high school friends or acquaintances. The fulfillment of the family's dream of breaking the cycle of poverty, their history of low paying jobs, or the elimination of low expectations for themselves from their teachers or counselors have created a conundrum for these young women. They love and honor their culture, but their acculturation into mainstream American culture has caused them to make personal sacrifices. Now they want to continue with the freedom that they have been given by their education. Although this is a source of conflict in their lives for them, all of the young

women spoke optimistically of their future. The interviews showed that these young women have strong self-identities and the motivation to achieve much in life.

The implications from this study can be utilized by educators to create and implement new programs and approaches, as well as to reform identification procedures of programs such as Advanced Placement and Honors and school-sponsored clubs and sport teams to better facilitate and encourage Latinas to become the best that they can be. Historically, a sound educational experience has been the tool used by mainstream America to succeed and get ahead, to build a better future, and to provide security in multiple aspects of life. It is time for the midwestern K-12 public school systems as well as the rest of the United States to focus on better serving the largest and fastest growing ethnic group, the Hispanic population. Latinas, it can be said make up half of this emergent demographic. Latinas, as the evidence revealed, are resilient and persistent and are faced with a multitude of socio-cultural and gender role expectation that shape their lives. Complex variances need to be further investigated and discussed by researchers in order to offer better guidance and academic achievement and to provide a more inclusive educational experience and productive futures for the Hispanic females in the Midwest as well as across the nation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview protocol questions

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Questions:

1) Tell me about your experiences living in the midwest? Give me examples. *Cuénteme sus vivencias en la zona del medio oeste? Déme ejemplos, por favor.* (sociocultural)

2) Describe your life experiences in Midwest; as a Hispanic female/Latina, as a high school? *Describa las experiencias vividas en la zona del medio oeste como hispana o latinoamericana, como estudiante de secundaria.* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence, gender)

3) Describe your experiences as a Hispanic female/Latina high school student? *Describa sus experiencias como estudiante hispana o latina en la secundaria.* Describe the high school you attended. *Describa el colegio en que cursó la secundaria.* (resilience, persistence, gender)

4) Elaborate or describe what were/are your greatest challenges for you as a Latina; as a high school student? (Prompt respondent for more information using these areas of interest: with your peers, academics, your family, with your teacher). *Elabore o describe sobre sus principales desafíos como mujer Latina en/con: la secundaria,(con colegas, con sus estudios, la familia).* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence, gender)

5) How do you define success? *Cómo define su éxito?* (sociocultural)

6) What motivated you to graduate from high school? *Qué la/lo motivó a alcanzar su meta de graduarse en la secundaria?* (resilience, persistence)

7) What continues to motivate you to succeed as a university student? *Qué la/lo sigue motivando para continuar sus estudios en la Universidad?* (resilience, persistence)

213

8) Tell me why do you feel you were/are more academically successful than some of your Hispanic female/Latina peers as a high school? *Dígame a qué se debió o debe su éxito académico, comparado con el obtenido por otras mujeres hispanas o latinas en la escuela secundaria?* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence, gender)

9) How is being a Latina different? *¿En qué circunstancias se siente, como latina, diferente?* As a high school student? *¿Como estudiante de secundaria?* (sociocultural, gender)

10) There are many expectations and conflicts for females in the Mexican culture that others who are not part of the culture do not understand. Tell me, how do you define gender roles? How do you as a Mexican female handle these expectations and conflicts? How do you live in a dual world of Mexican *v* American culture and values, academics, family, and as a successful Latina student? *Hay muchas expectativas y conflictos para las mujeres mexicanas que los que no son de esa cultura no entienden. ¿Cómo define los roles de g énero? ¿Cómo maneja usted, como mujer mexicana, esas expectativas y conflictos? ¿Cómo es la experiencia de vivir en la cultura mexicana v la estadounidense con sus valores, educación, familia y como estudiante latina exitosa?* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence, gender)

11) When you were confronted with barriers/issues in high school, what did you do? Why did this happen? Give specific examples of barriers/issues you have confronted. *¿Cuando se enfrento a un problema o situación difícil en la escuela, qué hizo? Por qué se da/dio esa situación problemática? De ejemplos específicos de esos problemas o situaciones difíciles que ha afrontado.* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence)

12) What, who, or what 'thing' has helped you become a successful student in your personal life, family life, cultural community, high school community? *Qué, quién o qué "cosa" le ha ayudado a ser una/un estudiante exitosa/o? en su vida personal, con su familia, su grupo cultural, su grupo académico?* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence)

13) When you were a child, how did you view yourself as an adult? *Cuándo era niña/o cómo se imaginaba como adulta/o?* (sociocultural, gender)

14) Do you view yourself as a successful student? If so why? *¿Se considera una estudiante exitosa? ¿Por qué?* (resilience, persistence, gender)

15) How do you view yourself in the future, say in 10 years? *¿Cómo proyecta su vida en el futuro, digamos en unos 10 años?* (resilience, persistence, gender)

16) Throughout your whole educational experience what was the one 'thing' that kept you motivated to succeed? *¿En tu experiencia academica que te que te inspiria para sigue adelante?* (resilience, persistence)

17) Is there anything you would like to share that we have not discussed? *Hay algo que le gustaría compartir que no hayamos discutido?* (sociocultural, resilience, persistence, gender)

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Pseudonym:_____

1) Gender: **Female**. Number of siblings_____Ehnicity: Hispanic

2) Age_____ Birth Order_____

3) Birth place_____

4) Length of time living in Kansas?

5) Did you graduate from a K-12 public school system in the Midwest?

6) Where did you live before coming to Kansas? Or have you always lived in

   Kansas?

7) Academic Standing: Freshman_____ Sophomore_____

                            Junior _____ Senior_____

8) Academic Major: _____

9) Academic grade point average_____

10) Academic honors_____

11) Other:_____

12) Do you speak any other language other than English? If so which language?

13) Did you work in while in high school?

14) Did you transfer to this university? Yes_____or No_____

APPENDIX C: LETTERS OF INVITATION

(ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS)

Dear Student(s):

I am asking for your help and participation in conducting a research study on the educational experiences, successes, and academic achievements of Hispanic female graduates of a public school system who are now attending a midwestern post secondary institution. The purpose of this study is to investigate the lived experiences and to explore the resilience and motivating factors that contributed to the academic success of Latina/Hispanic females.

The primary method for data collection will be face to face interviews. This allows the researcher to capture the unique voices of the participants. The interview questions will be made available for participants should they feel the need to read them before starting the interview process. There are no known risks to either the participants or the researcher. Your identify will be protected by implementing the following precautions: a) consent forms will be stored separately from the interview data; b) taped recordings, computer disks, and taped transcription materials will be stored in locked file cabinets in the student investigators office on campus; c) files will only be accessible to the principal investigator and the student investigator; d) data files will not be submitted via email transmission; f) all data will be coded and the sheet with data information will be stored in a separate file cabinet from the consent forms and interview data.

Your distinctive and out of the ordinary experiences will only help to further develop an understanding of how and what Hispanic females experience as students in a

midwestern public school system. I am anticipating your desire to participate in this study.

Should you decide to participate, please contact me at 785-532-6408 or via email

mparra@ksu.edu. I will then contact you at a later date to further discuss the specific

details of the study. Please feel free to contact Dr. Marjorie Hancock at 785-532-5917,

email mhanc@ksu.edu should you have any issues and/or concerns. If you have any

further questions, or want to discuss any aspect of the research with an official of the

university or the Research Involving Human Subjects (IRB) committee please contact:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.	Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcela Parra
Kansas State University
785-532-6408
mparra@ksu.edu

Estimada(s)/estudiante(s):

Por este medio le(s) solicito su ayuda y participación en la investigación que realizo sobre las experiencias educativas, triunfos y logros académicos de las mujeres hispanas graduadas en el sistema educativo público,y que ahora asisten a la secundaria en la zona del medio oeste. El propósito de esta investigación es estudiar las experiencias vividas y explorar la resistencia y motivación que contribuyeron al éxito académico de las mujeres hispanas o latinoamericanas.

Para la recolección de la información tendremos primero entrevistas cara a cara. Eso me permitirá tener acceso a todas las expresiones de las participantes, que podrán leer las preguntas antes de la entrevista. No hay riesgos para las entrevistadas ni para la investigadora. Su identidad será protegida y para ello se tomarán las siguientes precauciones: a) la autorización para la entrevista será guardado en un archivo diferente al de la información que se obtenga en la entrevista; b) las grabaciones en casete, los discos de computadora y las transcripciones de la información serán guardados en archivos, bajo llave, en la oficina de investigaciones del campus; c) los documentos solo serán accesibles para el investigador principal y el estudiante investigador; d) los archivos no serán enviados electrónicamente; f) toda la información será codificada y guardada en un archivo diferente.

Sus experiencias particulares ayudarán a desarrollar un conocimiento mayor del cómo y qué experimentan las mujeres hispanas en el sistema de educación secundaria en la zona del medio oeste. Asumo que tiene interés en participar en este estudio. Si decide hacerlo, la contactaré en pocos días para discutir detalles específicos del estudio. Por favor, si tiene alguna duda, comuníquese con la Dra. Marjorie Hancock, 785-532-5917, o

219

por email a mhanc@ksu.edu o con Marcela Parra, 785-523-6408 por email

mparra@ksu.edu

Si tiene preguntas o desea discutir algún otro aspecto relacionado con la

investigación, y desea hacerlo con un representante del Comité de Investigación con

Participación de Seres Humanos (IRB), por favor contacte a

Rick Scheidt, Chair,
Committee on Research
Involving Human Subjects.
1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University,
Manhattan, KS 66506,
(785) 532-3224,

Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost,
for Research Compliance and
University Veterinarian.
1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State
University, Manhattan, KS 66506,
(785) 532-3224.

De antemano, muchas gracias por su consideración.

Marcela Parra
785-532-6408
mparra@ksu.edu

APPENDIX D: IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL

A=Accomplishment			
Examples	Examples	Examples	Examples
A1.1 And around that time my parents got separated, and so I took the position of head of the household pretty much. My dad worked all the time, and my mom was gone, and so I helped raise my brothers and sisters.	A1.5 And so said that scholarship, you know, a full ride there – because there's no way I would have been able to afford it. It helped me a lot. And then after that I got to find myself and to lead myself away from my brothers and sisters. It was hard at first. I finally got to the level of like, okay, I can do this.	A1.10 And that same teacher in my senior he's like, Angela, look at this, look at this. He said, you're 2 points away from being Salutatorian. Your best friend is right underneath you. You can get Salutatorian if you don't… like keep your grades up. So he's like, keep your grades up. And he said you're going to do something great. And then later he came up – and I was like, what? Like I had no idea I was that high in class. "Whatever , dude" and I was like, and he was like no, seriously, you can do this. And he kind of encouraged me. And I just kind of like, okay, thanks, or whatever. But I really thought about it and I was like, wow, I'm doing it. With all the stuff that was going on in my life I was like, don't worry. And then a couple of months later he's like, all telling me about the scholarship at K State, it's called the Presidential scholarship and they pay for a year of board and your tuition. And then I knew – and I was like,	A1.15 I completed everything I really, reallyset my mind to and I wanted to do.

		"What about this" ?	
A1.2 Well, when I actually took on the big role. And I've always been in their lives. Those are babies I'd always help them with like everything. My mom would be there, and my dad would too, but I took on the parent role because I enjoyed it.	A1.6 But I ended up taking it in high school, and I'm like, wait a minute, I can do this – and take high school classes I can do this, I feel like I can go on to college and do other things.	A1.11 He said if you want to go to college this is your chance …He said this is for you. He's like just try it. Try it. If you don't like it, he's like, all you can say is you tried. And you can come back over here. But if you like it and it's working out for you, he's like, stick with it. He's like you owe yourself that much. And so I did.	A1.16 I liked guiding – I liked being the person that knew what to do and guiding the other people along. And I think that's how I fell into the role of education.
A1.3 But at the same time, I've always been a person that challenged myself. I'm like, okay, I can do this better. And I always – being raised with so many kids you kind of like want to have your butt out there and say, hey, look at me, too. And so that's the one thing I excelled at.	A1.7 But when I hear my little brother, and he's just like, oh, I want to be like Angela. I want to be like Marcus because they're in school and they're having fun. They're going to college and they're learning all this stuff. So that means a lot to me because I didn't have the option.	A1.12 Just because I have right now, like so far I'm along (chuckle). I need to get there. It's almost to the end and you stick with it. Because like this semester has been crazy and I feel like giving up but I have a wonderful support group. I have a scholarship over here and I'm on the Krystalist program.	A1.17 I didn't see it. I just felt like I was going to go out. I was going to have fun and I was going to make a difference. I didn't know in what way I was going to but I always wanted to almost to teach people.
A1.4 And the one thing that I was really good at was my grades because I was very detail oriented person, and I tried studying really hard. It meant a lot to me	A1.8 He said if you can do it then I can do it. That meant a lot because I never thought that anything I'd do – it didn't really dawn on me that	A1.13 I want to be a teacher. I want to make a difference. I want to be that teacher that came up to me, or even the teacher that DID come up to me and say like you can do it. I want to be that teacher that says,	A1.18 And like I got mine – my associates like for security so I could at least say, tell somebody, I have a degree,

to get a good grade. And my parents always recognized that so that helped me out academically	the kids are getting it but now he's like, "I'm going to college".	okay, to everybody in my class – I don't care what their issue is, okay, you can do this. Let's try this. I know you're smart. I don't care if you get good grades or not, you can still do something with your life. I mean……but there is always something out there.	you know? So at least you'll have something there.
	A1.9 Success for me is achieving something that you want to achieve, that makes you feel good. That you work hard for. I don't like things handed to me.	A1.14 Like this bachelor's degree that I'm going to get hopefully by the time I graduate – it's going to be nice. But it's the little things, the little memories along the way that makes the difference to me. And as long as I can live with my decisions and that I can say, okay, this is the best that I can do at that time – I put all my effort into it and I'm happy with what came out of it. And to me that's success.	

R/P= Resilience and Persistence			
Examples	Examples	Examples	Examples
R/P1.1 I wanted to just to be who I was. I didn't want to like, follow any rules of anybody else. I was kind of like a loner. But, I mean, I had my group of friends and everything but	R/P1.7 I can be the most broke person in the world, and as long as I'm happy, that's fine, or people around me are happy. Success for me is achieving something that you want to achieve,	R/P1.13 I didn't know any other way to survive. That is just what I was used to. So I'm like okay, come on, I've got my brothers and sisters to raise. My dad would take my little sister to the babysitter and I'd get	R/P1.19 Just because I have right now, like so far I'm along (chuckle). I need to get there. It's almost to the end and you stick with it. Because like this semester has been crazy and I

I don't know, it wasn't for me. I don't like people telling me what to do and stuff like that. So, I mainly focused on education. And around that time my parents got separated, and so I took the position of head of the household pretty much.	that makes you feel good. That you work hard for. I don't like things handed to me. I mean, it can be anywhere from a scholarship to just people saying, okay, you know here's $100 because you helped me out.	them all dressed and we'd go to school and that was just the thing to do. I didn't know any other way. I was like well I'm just going to finish school and that's what I said. I didn't know if I was going to go to college afterwards.	feel like giving up but I have a wonderful support group.
R/P1.2 I also have a childhood so I didn't want them to be affected by it so I took on a lot for myself.	R/P1.8 Like my parents never said, "Okay, you can't go to college." And they'd just say, "Well if you want to do it you're on your own. I'll support you. If you don't make it then I'll still be here for you." So whether I failed or not – it was almost like – I was expected to fail. It was almost like, okay, you know, if you don't make it, it will be okay, 'mija, just. . .	R/P1.14 And then after that I got to find myself and to lead myself away from my brothers and sisters. It was hard at first. I finally got to the level of like, okay, I can do this. I guess I grew up so fast at college that's when I started losing my childhood. I mean I was pretty responsible but that's when I started finding myself and live.	R/P1.20 And I was like, you know, if I'm the very bottom the only place I can go is up. They can't bring me any farther down. And it's not like I felt sorry for myself or anything like that. Because I really – I mean, my family pushed and pushed all the time for it. It's not like we ever backed down. But it kind of felt like – we were little people because people – you can tell by the way people talk to you certain things.
R/P1.3 Like if it wasn't for my brothers and sisters, I probably wouldn't have made it	R/P1.9 I don't know – all I know is I felt an immense support from them. They never stopped	R/P1.15 But after he died I had a really hard time with it. And my English teacher was like, well look at the world, he's	R/P1.21 I think perseverance. I think there's people that popped in and out of my

through their divorce. And so I think mainly that's what helped me get on the way. Okay, I have to be strong for them.	supporting me.	like, you haven't lost everything. He's like, the reason your grandpa went first is so he could get close to your grandma. And I looked at him and it dawned on me.	life that just told me that yes you can do it or told me no you can't and I just got rebellious and said yeah I can.
R/P1.4 I always really pushed myself to strive. Being the oldest you have to like be a role model for the younger ones. And that's how I try and see myself. But at the same time, I've always been a person that challenged myself. I'm like, okay, I can do this better. And I always – being raised with so many kids you kind of like want to have your butt out there and say, hey, look at me, too. And so that's the one thing I excelled at.	R/P1.10 "Okay, yeah, I want you to graduate," and all that stuff because they both weren't able to. And so they didn't want to put that pressure on me because they know how hard it is. So I think both of their supports were equal. I was like, well if my mom can't do this thing, you know, how can I do it?	R/P1.16 He said, you're 2 points away from being Salutatorian. Your best friend is right underneath you. You can get Salutatorian if you don't like keep your grades up. So he's like, keep your grades up. And he said you're going to do something great.	R/P1.22 I completed everything I really, really set my mind to and I wanted to do. Just keep on trying. Be careful with the labels. If you are ever labeled – like for me I was labeled ESL for a while in school. I was actually a gifted student or ESL. The lower the expectations are just keep them higher every time. Don't fall into that category. I think I do. Every time somebody tried to label me, I thought well maybe I am. But then I kind of looked at, I kind of reflected on it and I'm like, wait a minute, I am not – this person's – I can do the same

			thing this person's doing. It's not better. I'm going to try it. And I kept on motivating myself. I kept on pushing myself because I'm kinda rebellious I don't like to be labeled. I don't like to say you can't do it. And I don't like labels on me. And I know I'll always be labeled.
R/P1.5 And the one thing that I was really good at was my grades because I was very detail oriented person, and I tried studying really hard. It meant a lot to me to get a good grade.	R/P1.11 Because if my mom couldn't do it, and I can do it right now then let me keep on trying. So I kind of push myself I think more than anything. I think that they're supportive. Not saying that I can't do it or – not saying one thing or another. That kind of helped a lot because I always push myself on my own pretty much to do it. But of course they have high expectations. They don't expect me to get low grades, either. Because if I do they know something is wrong, and I'd be	R/P1.17 But I really thought about it and I was like, wow, I'm doing it. With all the stuff that was going on in my life I was like, don't worry.	

	yelled at.		
R/P1.6 And I think the reason I didn't have any experience is because I didn't give them any trouble. I didn't burden them with having them to accommodate me with certain needs or anything like that. And I've seen the frustration with some of my teachers with other students, and I think that's one of the reasons, too, that I push myself is that I didn't want to be one of those students to them.	R/P1.12 I think it was just that was the thing to do. I didn't really have too many friends. I took a job in the summer. It just seemed like a routine for me to follow. Like we've always been structured: "You're going to go to school." "Do this." "One day it will make it easier for you."	R/P1.18 He said this is for you. He's like just try it. Try it. If you don't like it, he's like, all you can say is you tried. And you can come back over here. But if you like it and it's working out for you, he's like, stick with it. He's like you owe yourself that much. And so I did. After he said that I was like, okay, I made a deal with myself as much.	

O= Opportunity	
Examples	Examples
O1.1 I think I have an advantage though because I am both, because it's easier for me because I can take the role of a White person or a Mexican person.	O1.5 I was like well I'm just going to finish school and that's what I said. I didn't know if I was going to go to college afterwards. I mean I kind of wanted to. I'm like, yeah, that would be nice, but I – my senior – by the end of – by the mid of it I was thinking like, okay, I'm just going to work at the convenience store here in town because I've worked there before and I'm going to support my brothers and sisters and help my dad out. That's what I was going to do. And if I wouldn't have got this scholarship I

	would have done that.	
O1.2 You know, all my hard work to get this degree I'm in education to become a teacher – I've got to change – I don't want to change life. That means a lot to me. But my little brother – none of my family has ever thought of going to college, ever.	O1.6 Before I never talked about going to college when I was little. It was like, oh yeah, well I don't know what I'll do so I might have to go to college to get a better job.	
O1.3 He's like you owe yourself that much. And so I did. After he said that I was like, okay, I made a deal with myself as much.	O1.7 I'm like, wait a minute, I can do this – and take high school classes I can do this, I feel like I can go on to college and do other things.	
O1.4 Even though she was really strict, I mean, it was more out of love. Like she didn't want me to mess up. She wanted me to go to my full potential and I understand that now.	O1.8 I think perseverance. I think there's people that popped in and out of my life that just told me that yes you can do it or told me no you can't and I just got rebellious and said yeah I can. I was also blessed with opportunities. I've had so many opportunities that you won't believe	
	O1.9 But people cared enough about me and I had good enough – I network a lot and so in my networking I can count so many opportunities that I would have never dreamed of. I never even thought about and they just come knocking at my door. And I thank God everyday for stuff like that. Like seriously!	

LD= Lived Discrimination		
Examples	Examples	Examples
LD1.1 Over there it's kind of like-- around that time-period we had a certain cop that he kind of over exaggerates on certain	LD1.7 And so they're like, you'll get this much (indicates amount of money) for your dorm. This guy named JB said that from Steward, the representative that came by,	LD1.13 I just had no respect for her because she wanted me to kind of say stuff like my parents were abusive or something to

people because even though it's a small town, people know that certain people can get away with stuff and other people can't.	and I was like okay. I was like, okay, I'll see next year about the scholarship. He's like, I'll tell your counselor about it. And I'm like, okay, great, you know, and never hear about it. And so I never heard it from her actually, ever. And I was told that she had known. And she told my best friend.	me which was never true. She would try to get me to say more. She was like, you're not telling me the whole truth. I'm like, do you want to listen to me talk or not, lady? You know?
LD1.2 Because you know family, they're Hispanic, and they're good in sports you know, kind of soft on the rest, "don't do it again".	LD1.8 Because even though I was Salutatorian of my class my counselor did not approach me the way she should have. And I just feel bad for those kids or even the middle section or under, below or whatever, that don't get any support.	LD1.14 My counselor and I bumped heads. Like she was kind of like the school psychiatrist/counselor so my parents with the whole divorce thing – my school, like they pretty much forced me to go talk to her. And I didn't like it. Like she just – she wasn't very confidential.
LD1.3 Teacher-wise I really had nobody tell me, oh you can go to college, yada yada yada. Like no counselor would ever do that. I went to a counselor and she's like, why don't you try a junior college? Because I went to K State, actually, at that time which – I never dreamed I would go to school here, but I just mentioned it.	LD1.9 And so like that my brother got screwed around a lot in sports. And me, I was kind of like – just – I felt like I wasn't getting anywhere.	LD1.15 He's like, they told me I can't take this college class in high school. That I wasn't ready for it". And he's like, "What do you think"? And I was like, I was "I think you're ready for it. I know you can do it".
LD1.4 I know growing up my brother had trouble with a couple teachers because they were – there were teachers –	LD1.10 And I was like, you know, if I'm the very bottom the only place I can go is up. They can't bring me any farther down. And it's not like I felt sorry for myself or	

you can't really see that they are like racist/prejudice against Hispanics.	anything like that. Because I really – I mean, my family pushed and pushed all the time for it. It's not like we ever backed down. But it kind of felt like – we were little people because people – you can tell by the way people talk to you certain things	
LD1.5 …even my uncle before them, because we all went to the same school. And they told me stories. yeah, they are really prejudiced	LD1.11 We're here to embrace your flag and your culture and we just want to be accepted. Because you can have somebody come from Europe and as long as they're like eccentric, I mean, where their skin color not very, well I mean they're accepted. But the darker your skin color gets the worse it is for you. And especially for Hispanics because we settle for the jobs that are available to us.	
LD1.6 "She's just not stable enough to ever make it. You know, she's got good grades, you know, it's not very hard. And she hasn't been there" and on and on. I mean, just trap it. I mean, she didn't know me very well. She'd only been there like a couple of years, I think.	LD1.12 Be careful with the labels. If you are ever labeled – like for me I was labeled ESL for a while in school. I was actually a gifted student or ESL. The school actually makes more money. Hey let's throw her in ESL and so that's what they ended up doing. I ended up being – like the people that ESL students went to for advice instead of the teacher. Okay, Angela, start reading, take over for the other students.	

P= Pride	
Examples	Examples
P1.1 So I've never been afraid or felt bad about being Mexican or American. I think I have an advantage though because I am both, because it's easier for me because I can take the role of a white person or a Mexican person.	P1.8 Being proud of it. Like before I knew it I was always like, ooohhh. I'd make a joke – I'm half Beaner, half White Trash because it's the lower of the two. I know it's really bad to say but I used to say that because they always call the lower Hispanics Beaners and White Trash, because I didn't want to be like everybody else. I just – and it wasn't like to dog on my culture or anything.
P1.2 For me as a Latina student it was finding myself. In junior high I was kind of like a popular person. I actually had a nice fit little body and everything. I had the nicest looking body at that time. I thank my Mom for that one. But I didn't really like it.	P1.9 I took on the parent role because I enjoyed it
P1.3 I stuck in sports in there for a while. And I did pretty decent at that.	P1.10 I'm so proud of being Hispanic and being an American. Because like right now like with everything going on with immigration-wise and everything or people are finally standing up and saying, hay, you know what, we belong here just as much as you guys do. We're strong. We're a very proud community.
P1.4 I felt kind of responsible. And I know people would say, "oh, you're doing such a good job. I'm so proud of you.	P1.11 Because I came not even expecting to do anything and I had all this success –
P1.5 And the one thing that I was really good at was my grades because I was very detail oriented person, and I tried studying really hard. It meant a lot to me to get a good grade. And my parents always	P1.12 And as long as I can live with my decisions and that I can say, okay, this is the best that I can do at that time – I put all my effort into it and I'm happy with what came out of it. And to me that's success. That's where I want to be in 10 years.

recognized that so that helped me out academically.	
P1.6 He said if you can do it then I can do it. That meant a lot because I never thought that anything I'd do – it didn't really dawn on me that the kids are getting it but now he's like, "I'm going to college".	P1.13 I think positive feedback. I think that it comes in such small packages sometimes. It's not like any rewards, handouts, people telling me, you're doing a good job or like one of my little brothers saying I really want to do this because of you. And I would have never thought that that would come out of their mouths, you know?
P1.7 And even some of that I can see a lot of people in the group kind of lost, like, adapted, like the American culture more than the Hispanic and that kind of like made me feel sad because I always was so proud of mine. So I mean there are different people I share my culture and stuff.	P1.14 Like when I get down something always seems to pop up and say you're doing do good or you made a difference in this person's life and stuff like that. That means the world to me. And I think that's what has kept me going because it's that praise.

DL= Desire to Learn		
Examples	Examples	Examples
DL1.1 I always really pushed myself to strive.	DL1.6 I was like, well if my mom can't do this thing, you know, how can I do it? But then Melba's college algebra, she had a hard time with it and she was only taking like college level, and she never passed it. But I ended up taking it in high school, and I'm like, wait a minute, I can do this – and take high school classes I can do this, I feel like I can go on to college and do other things. Because if my mom couldn't do it, and I can do it right now then let me keep on trying. So I kind of push myself I think more than anything.	DL1.3 Like this bachelor's degree that I'm going to get hopefully by the time I graduate – it's going to be nice.
DL1.2	DL1.7	DL1.12

And the one thing that I was really good at was my grades because I was very detail oriented person, and I tried studying really hard. It meant a lot to me to get a good grade. And my parents always recognized that so that helped me out academically	That kind of helped a lot because I always push myself on my own pretty much to do it.	The lower the expectations are just keep them higher every time. Don't fall into that category.
DL1.3 But I remember this one teacher that made a strong impact and not in a negative way, in a positive way. Because he told me that since I was the Salutatorian of the class that I could actually get a free ride with a Steward Presidential scholarship. Because I thought community colleges were like looked down upon. Even, if you could go to them you didn't go to them. So once I went it was like, ok!	DL1.8 And right now I have a boyfriend and he's just like–he pushes me like so hard. And he goes all out just to help me out.	DL1.13 Every time somebody tried to label me, I thought well maybe I am. But then I kind of looked at, I kind of reflected on it and I'm like, wait a minute, I am not – this person's – I can do the same thing this person's doing. It's not better. I'm going to try it. And I kept on motivating myself.
DL1.4 And I've seen the frustration with some of my teachers with other students, and I think that's one of the reasons, too, that I push myself is that I didn't want to be one of those students to them.	DL1.9 And I was like, you know, if I'm the very bottom the only place I can go is up. They can't bring me any farther down. And it's not like I felt sorry for myself or anything like that. Because I really – I mean, my family pushed and pushed all the time for it. It's not like we ever backed down.	

DL1.5	DL1.10	
For me, my success is going to school here and actually setting an example.	I think perseverance.　I think there's people that popped in and out of my life that just told me that yes you can do it or told me no you can't and I just got rebellious and said yeah I can.	

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE INTERVIEW SONIA RESPONDENT # 1

Interview Subject: Sonia ID # 1 (S#1)

Date April 21, 2006

Interviewed by : Marcela Parra (MP)

MP   Tell me about your experiences living in the Midwest, as Latina, as a Latina high school student?

S#1   In high school…I'm from southwest Kansas so we have a lot of Hispanics.   So it's not so much you need to go over or anything, it's more everybody, it wouldn't matter if your Caucasian or not, they all know the Hispanic culture. They all kinda adopted it.   They have their own culture and what I mean by that is there are some things that people don't really realize they do and stuff that are customs over here and have that. And then we have a mixture of Hispanics.   Like people know some of the words.   Like they know the traditions most of the time; people are really, I don't know, like the ones we carried over here.   So I've never been afraid or felt bad about being Mexican or American.   I think I have an advantage though because I am both, because it's easier for me because I can take the role of a White person or a Mexican person.   That will be fine, and that's true to an extent, but I mean in high school I'm in the middle of everybody.   And that's why everybody was [that way] because it was a small school.

MP   How big would you say it is?

S#1   I think there were 62 people in my high school.   I went to Raleigh, Kansas. And I had one of the biggest classes, and there were 28 people in my class, and they only graduated 13 because some of them were either in jail or got pregnant and dropped out.

MP   Who was thrown in jail and got pregnant?

S#1   The girl that got pregnant -- actually in my class in high school there were two Caucasians and one Hispanic.   However, I think the Caucasians actually stayed in school, and the Mexican girl ended up dropping out.

MP   Why did she drop out?

S#1   I think just because it was easier for her.   Like she still wanted to go to school. I mean, she was actually really a smart student, but I think with just everything that she had to take on because her boyfriend was younger than her and he remained in school. But then he got in trouble, too.   But, they didn't get in trouble for big things.   This wasn't like drugs or anything.   It was just like small petty things.   Over there it's kind of like-- around that time-period we had a

certain cop that he kind of overexaggerates on certain people because even though it's a small town, people know that certain people can get away with stuff and other people can't. And it's not just necessary, it's more like family status. Because you know family, they're Hispanic, and they're good in sports you know, kind of soft on the rest, "don't do it again".

MP   Tell me when you were in high school what were some of your greatest challenges?

S#1   For me as a Latina student it was finding myself. In junior high I was kind of like a popular person. I actually had a nice fit little body and everything. I had the nicest looking body at that time. I thank my Mom for that one. But I didn't really like it. There were too many people. I had a situation where people wanted to be like me, and they were fake. And in high school I kind of broke myself down, and I started wearing baggier clothes. Not baggy as in baggy jeans or stuff but just like warm-up stuff. Like cover myself more because I wanted to be comfortable; I wanted to just to be who I was. I didn't want to like follow any rules of anybody else. I was kind of like a loner. But, I mean, I had my group of friends and everything but I don't know, it wasn't for me. I don't like people telling me what to do and stuff like that. So, I mainly focused on education. And around that time my parents got separated, and so I took the position of head of the household pretty much. My dad worked all the time, and my mom was gone, and so I helped raise my brothers and sisters. And some of them even called me mommy at the time. That's what I did. I dumped school. I stuck in sports in there for a while. And I did pretty decent at that. Not like great, but, I mean, I also have a childhood so I didn't want them to be affected by it so I took on a lot for myself.

MP   How old were you when that happened?

S#1   It was in high school. Actually it started when I was a freshman. Well, when I actually took on the big role. And I've always be in their lives. Those are babies I'd always help them with like everything. My mom would be there, and my dad would too, but I took on the parent role because I enjoyed it. And when she [mom] had left I didn't feel like it was an obligation because I had a choice to go to California and live with my aunt, but I didn't want to leave my brothers and sisters behind so I took the family role. And I think we did pretty good. Like if it wasn't for my brothers and sisters, I probably wouldn't have made it through their divorce. And so I think mainly that's what helped me get on the way. Okay, I have to be strong for them.

MP   You chose to take on that role. Did anybody tell you since you are the oldest that this is what you have to do? Were there any expectations?

S#1   No, actually, I was surprised about that. I think for myself as always I expect to be that person. I know like – I've seen it in the Caucasian culture where families

aren't that close.   And being Hispanic my dad's really like – he's been – I mean, he's not close to his brothers and sisters but he's always kept us as a close family, even though that's not his traditional ways.   And I really respect that, and he's always been a strong person for me.   I felt like if he is still sticking with us and handle it, I should do that also.   I didn't want my brothers and sisters raised by anybody else and stuff like that.   I didn't want to leave them there if something happened, you know, I felt kind of responsible.   And I know people would say, "oh, you're doing such a good job.   I'm so proud of you.   Nobody would ever do that."   And I'm like, "It's not an obligation."   I felt kind of almost bad.   I'm like, "Well, wouldn't you do that, too?"   And people were like, "Well probably not."   And I couldn't believe their response because like I say I grew up in such a tight family culture.   Like I see people now and I'm just like, how can your siblings not get along?   There was a period where I didn't get along with some of my siblings, but by the end of the day, we were brothers and sisters and we love each other and there was nothing that was going to break that bond.

MP   Did you have any challenges within school with perhaps a teacher or a class or an activity or something like that?

S#1   I always really pushed myself to strive.   Being the oldest you have to like be a role model for the younger ones.   And that's how I try and see myself.   But at the same time, I've always been a person that challenged myself.   I'm like, okay, I can do this better.   And I always – being raised with so many kids you kind of like want to have your butt out there and say, hey, look at me, too.   And so that's the one thing I excelled at.   My brother's good at sports, like excellent sports.   And the one thing that I was really good at was my grades because I was very detail oriented person, and I tried studying really hard.   It meant a lot to me to get a good grade.   And my parents always recognized that so that helped me out academically.   Teacher-wise I really had nobody tell me, oh you can go to college, yada yada yada.   Like no counselor would ever do that.   I went to a counselor and she's like, why don't you try a junior college?   Because I went to K State, actually, at that time which – I never dreamed I would go to school here, but I just mentioned it.   After my parents divorced I never thought I would actually go to a university.   But I remember this one teacher that made a strong impact and not in a negative way, in a positive way.   Because he told me that since I was the Salutatorian of the class that I could actually get a free ride with a Steward Presidential scholarship.   Because I thought community colleges were like looked down upon.   Even, if you could go to them you didn't go to them.   So once I went it was like, ok!   I know growing up my brother had trouble with a couple teachers because they were – there were teachers – you can't really see that they are like racist/prejudice against Hispanics.

MP   Did you have the same situation with your teachers?

S#1   No, I think it's because I excelled.   But, he had more difficulty with the language. I mean, he's a boy, he's young trying to find himself, too.   But, he wouldn't cause too much trouble in school, like was bored. He knew the information, and people thought he was dumb pretty much.   And so he had trouble with some teachers, and they really – even my uncle before them, because we all went to the same school.   And they told me stories. yeah, they are really prejudiced.   And I think the reason I didn't have any experience is because I didn't give them any trouble.   I didn't burden them with having them to accommodate me with certain needs or anything like that.   And I've seen the frustration with some of my teachers with other students, and I think that's one of the reasons, too, that I push myself is that I didn't want to be one of those students to them.

MP   Tell me how you define success?

S#1   If   I'm happy that makes me happy.   I can be very loving and giving.   I can be the most broke person in the world, and as long as I'm happy, that's fine, or people around me are happy.   Success for me is achieving something that you want to achieve, that makes you feel good.   That you work hard for.   I don't like things handed to me.   I mean, it can be anywhere from a scholarship to just people saying, okay, you know here's $100 because you helped me out.   If I don't think I deserve that much money or if I didn't work hard enough to earn that scholarship – I don't know, that's not success for me.

MP   So how do you define your success?

S#1   For me, my success is going to school here and actually setting an example. And the only reason I say that is because I wasn't necessarily – you know, all my hard work to get this degree I'm in education to become a teacher – I've got to change – I don't want to change life.   That means a lot to me.   But my little brother – none of my family has ever thought of going to college, ever.   And my brother who is younger than me he went to Liberal (college) for a while and then he went to Hays College.   And he was the only one in the family.   But my little brother, David, he is a high school senior right now.   But last year he called me up.   He made me cry, like Angela, I want to go to school.   I'm going to major in archeology so I want your help.   Dad doesn't have enough money to help me out.   He's like, they told me I can't take this college class in high school.   That I wasn't ready for it".   And he's like, "What do you think"?   And I was like, I was "I think you're ready for it.   I know you can do it".   And he said, "Well if you help me, get in, if you help me choose the classes , all the college classes," and so he did.   And he said,"If it wasn't for you I would never think about going to college."

MP   He got an A?

S#1   He's still in the class but he's doing good.   Like he's got an A average right now. He's improved his grades immensely.   He's a really good student.   He said if

you can do it then I can do it.   That meant a lot because I never thought that anything I'd do – it didn't really dawn on me that the kids are getting it but now he's like, "I'm going to college".   Before I never talked about going to college when I was little.   It was like, oh yeah, well I don't know what I'll do so I might have to go to college to get a better job.   But when I hear my little brother, and he's just like, oh, I want to be like Angela.   I want to be like Marcus because they're in school and they're having fun.   They're going to college and they're learning all this stuff.   So that means a lot to me because I didn't have the option.   Like my parents never said, "Okay, you can't go to college."   And they'd just say, "Well if you want to do it you're on your own.   I'll support you.   If you don't make it then I'll still be here for you."   So whether I failed or not – it was almost like – I was expected to fail.   It was almost like, okay, you know, if you don't make it, it will be okay, 'mija, just. . .

MP   Of your two parents, who was the one who influenced you more and who you felt was more supportive of your going to school?

S#1   I don't know – all I know is I felt an immense support from them.   They never stopped supporting me.   My mom had gone to college, but she didn't finish.

MP   Here or in Mexico?

S#1   She went to college here.   And my dad went to a Vo-Tech (vocational school), and he dropped out because they got pregnant with me and that was after – and they had   wedding expenses and all that stuff and so he wanted to make sure he had a good job before – you know, to support his family and stuff like that.   I can see all of them trying.   I think that's why they didn't finish it.   "Okay, yeah, I want you to graduate," and all that stuff because they both weren't able to.   And so they didn't want to put that pressure on me because they know how hard it is.   So I think both of their supports were equal.   I was like, well if my mom can't do this thing, you know, how can I do it?   But then Melba's college algebra, she had a hard time with it and she was only taking like college level, and she never passed it.   But I ended up taking it in high school, and I'm like, wait a minute, I can do this – and take high school classes I can do this, I feel like I can go on to college and do other things.   Because if my mom couldn't do it, and I can do it right now then let me keep on trying.   So I kind of push myself I think more than anything.   I think that they're supportive.   Not saying that I can't do it or – not saying one thing or another.   That kind of helped a lot because I always push myself on my own pretty much to do it.   But of course they have high expectations.   They don't expect me to get low grades, either.   Because if I do they know something is wrong, and I'd be yelled at.

MP   While you were going through all this what motivated you to graduate from high school?

S#1   I think it was just that was the thing to do.   I didn't really have too many friends.   I took a job in the summer.   It just seemed like a routine for me to follow.   Like we've always been structured: "You're going to go to school."   "Do this."   "One day it will make it easier for you." Whatever.   Like I said, they separated got a divorce and so I didn't know any other way to survive.   That is just what I was used to.   So I'm like okay, come on, I've got my brothers and sisters to raise.   My dad would take my little sister to the babysitter and I'd get them all dressed and we'd go to school and that was just the thing to do.   I didn't know any other way.   I was like well I'm just going to finish school and that's what I said.   I didn't know if I was going to go to college afterwards.   I mean I kind of wanted to.   I'm like, yeah, that would be nice, but I – my senior – by the end of – by the mid of it I was thinking like, okay, I'm just going to work at the convenience store here in town because I've worked there before and I'm going to support my brothers and sisters and help my dad out.   That's what I was going to do.   And if I wouldn't have got this scholarship I would have done that.   It's kind of like I felt like they needed me.   I didn't want to leave them but at the same time I think I needed them and I didn't want to leave them.   And so said that scholarship, you know, a full ride there – because there's no way I would have been able to afford it.   It helped me a lot.   And then after that I got to find myself and to lead myself away from my brothers and sisters.   It was hard at first.   I finally got to the level of like, okay, I can do this.   I guess I grew up so fast at college that's when I started losing my childhood.   I mean I was pretty responsible but that's when I started finding myself and live.   Like I didn't worry about – I was always used to babysitting somebody and taking care of myself for once – that was something new to me.   I never worried about like, okay, Angela, what do you need?   You know?   Are you happy?   Just go shopping.   I always bought stuff for them first and I might get me something small that was on sale.   And now going to college I'm thinking I'll buy me – you know, I give some back to the family though because I want to help them.   I'm like, what do I do?   So I kind of like baby-sit my friends.   Like they call me Big Momma.   But I have nothing else to do and it's also what I was used to.   It took me a while to get use to the change.   I end up liking it, especially afterwards.

MP   Do you think that's a defined gender role in your family or just because your mother left and a role you saw in her?

S#1   Actually I think it was a defined gender role.   It's not one of those – you have to do it – but it was expected of you.   I mean, that's the way it was.   That's why it's seen that's what I've been used to.   I mean, my aunt's rebel.   It's more like – it looks like the man runs the family but in reality it's the woman that's in charge.   It's more like, honey, you can wear the pants in the family but I'll be the one to tell you which ones to wear.   And so that's the way my family was.   Like my mom was the very strict one.   My dad wasn't.   I was more – I mean, my mom would spank us in a heart-attack, you know, if we did something wrong – like boom!   And my dad was just – if he ever spanked us it would be on the bottom and we deserved it.   It was something bad.   But he really wouldn't –

like he was very strict, you know, what he said went, but my mom was like the little – she was – it's almost like little Chihuahua, you know, how they're so tiny and with the big bark?   That's how my mom was.

MP   You mentioned earlier that your counselor told you to think about a junior college or a community college and you were thinking K State.   How did you feel about that?

S#1   My counselor and I bumped heads.   Like she was kind of like the school psychiatrist/counselor so my parents with the whole divorce thing – my school, like they pretty much forced me to go talk to her.   And I didn't like it.   Like she just – she wasn't very confidential.   And like it's a small town still, I mean, you've got to have somebody you can rely on especially at such a young age for me.   I just had no respect for her because she wanted me to kind of say stuff like my parents were abusive or something to me which was never true.   She would try to get me to say more.   She was like, you're not telling me the whole truth. I'm like, do you want to listen to me talk or not, lady?   You know?   So when it came time she's like, well I just don't think – you know, she had told somebody. I had heard it from another source.   You know, "She's just not stable enough to ever make it.   You know, she's got good grades, you know, it's not very hard. And she hasn't been there" and on and on.   I mean, just trap it.   I mean, she didn't know me very well.   She'd only been there like a couple of years, I think.

MP   What made you overcome and persist regardless of the challenges you faced?

S#1   I was so pissed off.   I kinda started believing her.   Like I started believing it. And my English teacher came up to me and my grandpa died and he was so close to me, my grandpa on my mom's side of the family.   And we had tried to bury him in Mexico.   My grandma Lydia was a custodian there.   She had like a wealthy background.   Like she came over here and lost everything.   She started from scratch and she was custodian of the school because she wouldn't learn English and stuff like that.   That's all she knew how to do, that's all the things she could do here, you know?   But after he died I had a really hard time with it. And my English teacher was like, well look at the world, he's like, you haven't lost everything.   He's like, the reason your grandpa went first is so he could get close to your grandma.   And I looked at him and it dawned on me.   And that same teacher in my senior he's like, Angela, look at this, look at this.   He said, you're 2 points away from being Salutatorian.   Your best friend is right underneath you.   You can get Salutatorian if you don't like keep your grades up. So he's like, keep your grades up.   And he said you're going to do something great.   And then later he came up – and I was like, what?   Like I had no idea I was that high in class.   "Whatever , dude" and I was like, and he was like no, seriously, you can do this.   And he kind of encouraged me.   And I just kind of like, okay, thanks, or whatever.   But I really thought about it and I was like, wow, I'm doing it.   With all the stuff that was going on in my life I was like, don't worry.   And then a couple of months later he's like, all telling me about the

scholarship at K State, it's called the Presidential scholarship and they pay for a year of board and your tuition.   And then I knew – and I was like, "What about this." ?   Well he had a conference at our school, an outside meeting that they made kind of all our seniors go to.   So representatives from the financial office from Steward came down and said, hey, this is FAFSA and fill it out, if your family doesn't make enough money.   And I'm like we make that much money.   Come to find out it had zero, you know.   Cause I knew we were like broke, not that broke.   With that many kids what can you with one parent really running the household.   And so they're like, you'll get this much (indicates amount of money) for your dorm.   This guy named JB said that from Steward, the representative that came by, and I was like okay.   I was like, okay, I'll see next year about the   scholarship.   He's like, I'll tell your counselor about it.   And I'm like, okay, great, you know, and never hear about it.   And so I never heard it from her actually, ever.   And I was told that she had known.   And she told my best friend.   Well my best friend mentioned it to me and I was like, well, yeah. She was like, well if Sarah doesn't take it Valedictorian she's like, I'm thinking about going over there, too, and getting the money.   I'm like, ohhh, but I didn't want to take it from my other friends, she was my best friend.   So I was like, I'm not even going to go to Steward because I want my friend to get the scholarship. And then my teacher came up to me and he's like – that same week – and he's like, guess what?   He's like, Sonia, that scholarship's available and you can get it.   And he's like Sarah's going to Massachusetts and he's like you should.   He said if you want to go to college this is your chance I was but my brothers and sisters.   He said this is for you.   He's like just try it.   Try it.   If you don't like it, he's like, all you can say is you tried.   And you can come back over here. But if you like it and it's working out for you, he's like, stick with it.   He's like you owe yourself that much.   And so I did.   After he said that I was like, okay, I made a deal with myself as much.

MP   Did that turn out to be a good decision?

S#1   Oh yeah.   I have to say that Steward County for me – I know it's a community college, but that was like the best experience for me, ever.   And even the teachers were awesome.   A lot of one-on-one experience.

MP   So what continues motivating you now as a university student to succeed?

S#1   Just because I have right now, like so far I'm along (chuckle).   I need to get there. It's almost to the end and you stick with it.   Because like this semester has been crazy and I feel like giving up but I have a wonderful support group.   I have a scholarship over here and I'm on the Krystalist program.   And the BESITOS people they just – it's a wonderful group and they're Hispanic.   Like, if I had culture shock when I came to K State I was this White girl.   I looked white.   I have the hair color that blends in with everybody here, but I was in culture shock. When I came from SW Kansas, Eastern Kansas, it hit me hard.   Like my first year was so hard.   But they are supportive.   I mean, they're Hispanic so I kind

of relate with them.   The culture.   And even some of that I can see a lot of
people in the group kind of lost, like, adapted, like the American culture more
than the Hispanic and that kind of like made me feel sad because I always was so
proud of mine.   So I mean there are different people I share my culture and stuff.
And right now I have a boyfriend and he's just like – he pushes me like so hard.
And he goes all out just to help me out.   Like he's wonderful.   He just got me a
laptop because he got tired of coming to college with me, you know?   But I have
a computer.   I mean, I had nothing.   So he got me a printer and stuff like that
for my birthday.   I was amazed.   And my parents, I mean, I don't know.   I
think I say to myself, because I mean, I want to be a teacher.   I want to make a
difference.   I want to be that teacher that came up to me, or even the teacher that
DID come up to me and say like you can do it.   I want to be that teacher that
says, okay, to everybody in my class – I don't care what their issue is, okay, you
can do this.   Let's try this.   I know you're smart.   I don't care if you get good
grades or not, you can still do something with your life.   I mean……but there is
always something out there.   And my brothers and sisters, because they're still
wanting to go to college.   I see my brother succeeding and I know one of my
brothers, the one at Hays, is having a hard time right now and I'm like, just get,
you know, at least your associate's degree.   I was like, go back to the school or –
because even at Hays right now he's having a hard time with his degree.   Just go
back, take a step back, and at least get your associate's degree and build up
because he was going straight for his bachelor's.   And I'm like just baby steps.
And like I got mine – my associates like for security so I could at least say tell
somebody I have a degree, you know?   So at least you'll have something there.

MP   So tell me when you were in high school there was another Latina at school with
      you?   Why do you feel you were more academically successful than her?

S#1   Because she started hanging out with – I don't think she had high expectations of
      herself and with who she hung out with.   Like I hung out with everybody and
      she did, too, but it was more from the standpoint from what I'm thinking about.
      She had it all.   Like she was at sports and everything but she didn't have that
      extra pressure from people that she really needed.   And she was really – like her
      family was different Hispanic-wise.   Like they were known for stealing stuff and
      not being – like her brothers were always in trouble.   And it wasn't just because
      of the whole Hispanic thing.   It was actually because – I think a lot of it had to
      do with how they were raised.   Like their parents wanted to make sure they got
      everything and so they just kind of let their kids go because they were so strict in
      Mexico that they didn't want that for their kids.   And so I think a lot of like just
      the way we grew up mine was more strict because my mom was like (chuckle),
      _____ there.   And that helped me.   Even though she was really
      strict, I mean, it was more out of love.   Like she didn't want me to mess up. She
      wanted me to go to my full potential and I understand that now.   As a little kid I
      was like why are you pushing me so much?   Give me a break.   But I'm glad I
      had that extra push.   But I think that's one of the reason the other girl didn't
      succeed is because nobody told her she could do it.   I mean they told her that but

244

it's not like they meant it. And I kind of worry, you know, if I didn't get the grades at that time what would really happen to me? Would anybody have cared? Would anyone have come up to me? Because even though I was Salutatorian of my class my counselor did not approach me the way she should have. And I just feel bad for those kids or even the middle section or under, below or whatever, that don't get any support.

MP   So how is being a Latina different for you? Just talk about how is being a Latina different for you in high school.

S#1   Being proud of it. Like before I knew it I was always like, ooohhh. I'd make a joke – I'm half Beaner, half White Trash because it's the lower of the two. I know it's really bad to say but I used to say that because they always call the lower Hispanics Beaners and White Trash, because I didn't want to be like everybody else. I just – and it wasn't like to dog on my culture or anything. I mean I lowered my standards on myself, but I just felt like I was the lower chain and the only way I can go is up. And I don't know why I felt that. I think a lot of it was with all the family issues and stuff like that that I had gone through.

MP   What was your experience like in your community?

S#1   My dad got along with everybody. But our community-wise, like my family – like my brothers were really good in sports. But my dad was kind of a pushover. My dad is one of those guys who can get along with everybody. His friends are everybody but they say Dan will you do this? And they could get him to do it. And so they knew that they could push my family to the side just because, even though we're strong family-wise, it was kind of like when they would gripe my parents would talk but they wouldn't push any further. And so like that my brother got screwed around a lot in sports. And me, I was kind of like – just – I felt like I wasn't getting anywhere. Especially in sports. I know me and my brother played ball for another town – he went to Elk Grove, a town right next to us, he made All Stars in baseball and everything. And in Raleigh they just didn't look at him, like, okay, well you know – you can play or, you know, you're not going to start today, Marcus, but we'll stick you in anyway. And he was one of the better people on the team. And that's the way my family was. Like my uncles are really good and they had to really fight for it. Like they were great and that's why they got us to do that. And no matter how good we were, it was kind of like, okay, well, guys, we're just going to put you right here because there's people that are wealthy or that have a name that need to be out here before you do. And so that's kind of how it was. And I was like, you know, if I'm the very bottom the only place I can go is up. They can't bring me any farther down. And it's not like I felt sorry for myself or anything like that. Because I really – I mean, my family pushed and pushed all the time for it. It's not like we ever backed down. But it kind of felt like – we were little people because people – you can tell by the way people talk to you certain things. But I was like – back to the question. . . I'm so proud of being Hispanic and being an American.

Because like right now like with everything going on with immigration-wise and everything or people are finally standing up and saying, hay, you know what, we belong here just as much as you guys do.   We're strong. We're a very proud community.   We're not here to say we're going to take over the United States. We're here to embrace your flag and your culture and we just want to be accepted. Because you can have somebody come from Europe and as long as they're like eccentric, I mean, where their skin color not very, well I mean they're accepted. But the darker your skin color gets the worse it is for you.   And especially for Hispanics because we settle for the jobs that are available to us.

MP   Let's talk about Hispanics and their expectations and the conflicts that you might experience by growing up or living in two worlds – the Mexican culture which might have been a major influence in your household vs. the American culture which would be your community or your high school. With your relationship with your parents – who expected you to have more of a defined gender role or did you have defined gender roles?   Well let's start off with you defining gender roles. How do you define gender roles.

S#1   Gender roles for me – my family, my sister they've always been really open. When we have family come over from Mexico or from other family we're expected to help cook and do the dishes.   The women are always expected to do it.   It's not ever said but we're just expected to.   You know, bring the guys beer. Let them drink. They can cook outside, we'll go inside.   And it's kind of changed a lot for my family because my mom and I are a lot of like. We're very rebellious.   We're like the ones that, you might be in the kitchen but we're going to be outside with the men, too. We're going to talk just as much.   We might not be the center of attention necessarily but we're going to blend in.   I mean, because it's not a (about) respect for us.   And I see a lot of Hispanics and even some of my family in different parts like I can see the gender roles more there. Like there was a Machista Mexicanos, because, like Macho Mexicans that are like, okay, you're going to cook, clean for me and I'm going to come back from work and the food better be ready.   It better be hot the way I want it.   And you're going to do my laundry(?) and stuff like that.   And lucky for me I'm dating a Mexican guy but he's not a macho Mexican because I told him if you are ever a machista to me it's over.   Because I'm rebellious.   And so my gender role for me – like what I expect and what I want from my relationship for myself is that everything is equal and that, yeah, you know, the guy can cook and do dishes and do laundry once in a while and so can the woman.   Like I'm not afraid to play that role.   Some times I kind of like it.   And sometimes it is expected of me.   I don't mind taking it as long as people don't force it upon me.   Like saying, no, you need to do this.   And when they say that I'm like, no I don't and I won't. Because I know I have an uncle like that.   Like why are you out here?   Why aren't you doing this?   Why aren't you doing that?   You know, you should treat your men better than what you're doing.   He does the macho role a lot.   And I see a lot of Hispanics not following that role so much anymore.   But I still see at the same time if it's Mexicano/Mexicana together they automatically fit in that

role.   And you know what?   I see it not necessarily as a bad thing because some women they enjoy that.   They want that life for them.   They want to be the housekeeper.   They love their man so much that's the role they want to do. And I think that's fine as long as it's not pushed on them.

MP   What was the one thing or who was the one person that helped you become a successful student?

S#1   I think perseverance.   I think there's people that popped in and out of my life that just told me that yes you can do it or told me no you can't and I just got rebellious and said yeah I can.   I was also blessed with opportunities.   I've had so many opportunities that you won't believe.   After the year I was going to graduate K State the dean of students at the college – I was really close to him. We'd be sarcastic all the time because I like to have personal roles with everybody.   I don't care if it's a janitor that works at the school or the dean – I want to know them.   I want to know their name.   I want to be able to talk to them like a normal human being, not just like, yes sir, you know, whatever you need.   I don't like that, you know?   And I like everybody kind of equal role with me. And so we talked a lot. And he told me about the scholarship.   There's a scholarship over here at K State and I was like, noooo, I don't think I could get it.   It's for smart people and you have to be fluent in Spanish.   And I can carry a conversation, I can read and write, but I don't consider myself fluent in the language.   And he's just like try it, just try it.   One day he went to my work. He sat me down and he made me feel out the scholarship.   I said you've got to be kidding?   And he's like, I'm not leaving until you do it.   It took me like over an hour to do it.   And he sat right there with my boss.   And they're both like, you need to do this, da, da, da, . . .   And I filled it out and the next thing I knew I had an interview.   And the interview went so well they're like, you already got it, we can tell you.   We're not supposed to officially say that.   And it was just – I don't know – I would have never known about the scholarship.   But people cared enough about me and I had good enough – I network a lot and so in my networking I can count so many opportunities that I would have never dreamed of. I never even thought about and they just come knocking at my door. And I thank God everyday for stuff like that.   Like seriously!

MP   When you were a child how did you view yourself as an adult?

S#1   I was a child that liked Vicente Fernandez (in Spanish) (chuckle) and I listened to Madonna.   I mean, two different opposite singers that are like that.   And so I wanted to be – I was kind of like the actress role.   I always liked acting and stuff. I would always be singing and I could never sing enough to save my life.   I love to dance and I still do.   I still love to dance and I can dance salsa, merengue, I can dance hip hop, I mean, I love music.   And I think that influenced me a lot. I just – my mom still thinks I'm going to be a dancer or a singer or an actress.

MP   As a child, how did you see your future as an adult?

S#1   I didn't see it.   I just felt like I was going to go out.   I was going to have fun and I was going to make a difference.   I didn't know in what way I was going to but I always wanted to almost to teach people.   Like I liked showing people different things whether it was a dance move or helping them on their homework.   I liked guiding – I liked being the person that knew what to do and guiding the other people along.   And I think that's how I fell into the role of   education.

MP   Do you view yourself as a successful student?

S#1   Yes, I do.

MP   Why?

S#1   Because I came not even expecting to do anything and I had all this success – like all these opportunities that came knocking at my door.   And I fulfilled most of them already.   Like I can't say that I didn't take a leap at one of them.   Whether I was pushed or it was on my own.   I completed everything I really really set my mind to and I wanted to do.

MP   So how do you view yourself in the future, say in 10 years?

S#1   I can see myself – I don't know if I will be teaching still or not.   But I can see myself making a difference.   I can see myself working with people and helping them out and making them happy which in turn will make me happy.   I think for me success and my goals in life are just to be happy.   It's the little things that matter.   Like this bachelor's degree that I'm going to get hopefully by the time I graduate – it's going to be nice.   But it's the little things, the little memories along the way that makes the difference to me.   And as long as I can live with my decisions and that I can say, okay, this is the best that I can do at that time – I put all my effort into it and I'm happy with what came out of it.   And to me that's success.   That's where I want to be in 10 years.

MP   So think about your whole educational experience.   You mentioned a lot of factors that influenced you: your parents, your brothers and sisters.   Your one teacher.   The Dean that helped you get all the – even the counselor.   All those people.   What was the one thing that kept you motivated to succeed(?) ?

S#1   I think positive feedback.   I think that it comes in such small packages sometimes.   It's not like any rewards, handouts, people telling me, you're doing a good job or like one of my little brothers saying I really want to do this because of you.   And I would have never thought that that would come out of their mouths, you know?   Just little feedback stuff here and there.   Like when I get down something always seems to pop up and say you're doing do good or you made a difference in this person's life and stuff like that.   That means the world to me.   And I think that's what has kept me going because it's that praise.

MP   Is there anything you'd like to share that we haven't discussed?   I mean words of advise, wisdom , to other Latinas…….. .

S#1   Just keep on trying.   Be careful with the labels.   If you are ever labeled – like for me I was labeled ESL for a while in school.   I was actually a gifted student or ESL.   The school actually makes more money.   Hey let's throw her in ESL and so that's what they ended up doing.   I ended up being – like the people that ESL students went to for advice instead of the teacher.   Okay, Angela, start reading, take over for the other students.   So I like – I know that there are some people they are labeled special ed and just kind of go beyond those expectations.   The lower the expectations are just keep them higher every time.   Don't fall into that category.   Well I'm a special needs student and I can't do this on my own.

MP   Do you high expectations for yourself?

S#1   I think I do.   Every time somebody tried to label me, I thought well maybe I am. But then I kind of looked at, I kind of reflected on it and I'm like, wait a minute, I am not – this person's – I can do the same thing this person's doing.   It's not better.   I'm going to try it.   And I kept on motivating myself.   I kept on pushing myself because I'm kinda rebellious I don't like to be labeled.   I don't like to say you can't do it.   And I don't like labels on me.   And I know I'll always be labeled.   Like also I know I didn't say this, but on the tests, like they drive me nuts because they'll put Caucasian or they'll put White, not Hispanic, and they'll put like Mexican/American so for a long time I didn't know what to fill out on there.   Because I'm like—they always told us to go by what your dad is.   And so my dad is White, my dad is Caucasian.   And then it always had in parenthesis (not Hispanic).   And I would get so upset.   And then for a long time I was like, well I'm not Mexican/American, I'm American/Mexican because they said that because my dad is White.   And so I just think testing like that just like a simple test something like that gets on my nerves.   So I started marking other.

END OF INTERVIEW