THE TRANSITION OF WOMEN FROM THE CLASSROOM SETTING TO THE

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION SETTING

By

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Abstract

This qualitative case study examined the research exploring how female teachers had perceived their potential challenges in becoming a principal, and how those perceptions actually changed as they made the move from the classroom to the principal's office. The purpose of the study is to investigate how female administrative candidates assessed and better prepared themselves for future work environments. The study is based on data collected from two interviews, one with a superintendent from a traditional school and the other from an online principal. The results of the study indicate that the school administrators had developed an administrative plan that helped them facilitate better transitions from the classroom to the principal's office.

Dedication

This is dedicated to my family and friends who put up with me during my various stages of

stress. Thanks for giving me the support that I needed to get through this.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my mentor, Dr. Jason Ward, and committee members for guiding me through the process of writing this dissertation. Also acknowledged are Capella University and the female principals who helped with the study.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Study

Although education has traditionally been a female profession, this may be because it has historically been one of the few occupations open to women. It was also believed that, traditionally, education was a female profession that was often considered temporary. But despite the large numbers of women filling classroom and school administrator jobs, far fewer women than men consider the possibility of becoming school-based leaders (Eagly, 2001).

According to many researchers, some women who do make the move from the classroom to school administration have reported difficulties in their transition. The barriers reported by these women include, enduring colleagues' negative attitudes towards women, socialization patterns, and some women's own low levels of aspiration. In addition, increased governmental demands for school accountability and increased competitiveness within a district serve to put extra stress on principals, all factors which may keep women from becoming school leaders. Yet, as Harris (Harris, Ballanger, & Growe, 2004) has pointed out, the principalship is a key position in any school district and many women have proven themselves to have both the skills and motivation to lead. Therefore, helping more women enter the echelons of school administration and to fill positions of leadership should be a priority for anyone interested in a more gender-balanced improved public education system.

This study focused on two female administrators and their experiences as school leaders. Specifically, the study examined the experiences of female administrators in a male-dominated arena (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006). It also explored how these female administrators perceive the notion of school leadership. According to Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006),

women principals also stated that they often find themselves struggling with feelings of isolation, time management problems, and other issues that can arise. Browne and Muth goes on to note that, given these ever-changing contexts and ambiguous environments, there has never been a greater need for school leaders to obtain the necessary skills to help sustain their administration long enough to make a difference in the schools they serve.

Background of the Study

As Eagly and Johannes-Schmidt (2001) have suggested, within the educational arena there is an absence of equal female representation in school administration. Even though women constitute 75% of the teaching workforce in the United States, they represent less than 35% of all principalships (Eagly & Johannes-Schmidt, 2001). Nonetheless, available statistics suggest that although women have gained a larger share of school administrative jobs in recent years, they still lag behind in relation to their male counterparts. In fact, according to the American Association of School Administrators (2004), about 13% of the superintendents are women, up 6.6% from 1992. In Michigan the hiring of women administrators increased 12% in 2004 (Michigan Tech hiring guide). However, in the Michigan study, both male and female teachers reported that they would prefer to work with male administrators. In his 1993 study, Gill also suggested that hiring officials believe the public does not always approve of women who go into administration. In addition, Montgomery and Growe (2003) asserted that the ever-changing bureaucratic dynamics of schools can have an effect on school leadership. While Montgomery and Growe's research showed that academics should be at the forefront of a school's mission, often academics come second to other demands, such as paperwork, discipline issues, building safety, parental concerns, and student needs (Montgomery & Growe, 2003). Another reason for the lower numbers of women who transition from the classroom to administration is that they

wage internal warfare as they try to retain their essential female identity while gaining access to the administrator group in their districts.

In other words, female administrators wish to maintain the attitude and behaviors that identify them with other women; however, during the transition to managerial positions, some women have difficulty balancing their feminine identity with a hard-nosed professionalism (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Many researchers have explored this idea of the "traditional" female role while examining why the majority of women occupy low-ranking positions in education (Hoff & Mitchell, 2008). In general, they have concluded that society has conditioned both men and women to believe that women are not as capable of holding leadership position as men, a conditioning that begins in early childhood and goes on to influence the career patterns of both women and men later in life (Hoff & Mitchell, 2008).

Yet becoming a school principal, according to Browne-Ferrigno (2003), is a transformative process and a predictable career pattern for many individuals within the field of education who seek greater responsibility and organizational mobility, and so, logically it would be expected that women would wish to move up the career ladder. Browne-Ferrigno theorize that changing educational careers requires an individual to relinquish the comfort and confidence of a known role – such as being a teacher - to experience the discomfort and uncertainty of a new, unknown role – such as being a principal. This transition from teaching to leading might be made easier with a careful course of instruction, through classroom learning activities and skill development, in which qualified professionals guide the prospective principals (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). By setting up such training organizations, a teacher could then become a principal when she is able to work closely with a mentor in order to develop her personal and professional capabilities. Such mentoring programs may be one of the best solutions to help

women teachers become principals. As Sherman (2005) noted, high-stakes accountability initiatives—such as those from the federal government—mean school administrators are under more stress than ever before. As these and other pressures continue to tax principals, school districts nationwide have responded to these challenges by implementing leadership programs. These mentoring programs are planned interventions designed by districts to ensure that they have a pool of administrative applicants who are ready to enter leadership positions (Sherman, 2005). These stand-alone, district-based programs also help prepare teacher leaders to take on administrative roles by offering them leadership training in areas such as school law, supervision and evaluation, and curriculum development. Moreover, Sherman (2005) added, that depending on the district, some participants should be offered administrative internships and opportunities to obtain administrative licensure through programs at local universities.

Even after female teachers have successfully transitioned to administrative roles, more must be done to keep them in these jobs. Funk (2004) stated that new administrators often find themselves struggling with feelings of isolation, time management problems, and other issues that can arise. They go on to note that, given the ever-changing governmental contexts and ambiguous environments within districts, there has never been a greater need for school leaders to obtain the necessary skills to help sustain their administration long enough to make a difference in the schools they serve (Funk, 2004).

<center>Statement of the Problem</center>

It is not known how and to what extent female teachers perceives the potential challenges of becoming a principal, nor how these perceptions change as they make the move from the classroom to the principal's office. This transition from being a teacher to becoming an educational leader requires a careful balance of knowledge development through classroom

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learning activities and skill development that is guided by qualified professionals (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). School districts and aspiring administrators need to better understand the entire process of role socialization within the present educational context. By better understanding what skills are needed, women will be more prepared to effectively run a school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the nature of two female school administrators' leadership experiences. This study examined how they perceived school leadership as they function within a school based setting. By exploring these two female administrators' leadership experiences, the study has addressed what criterion is needed by other women who wish to become successful school leaders.

This study also looked at women who have obtained leadership positions in the traditional school setting, as well as in an online environment. The data that was collected through interviews and was provided additional perspectives to the culture and times in which these women served as school-based leaders

Rationale

The transitional period for any principal is integral to determining her initial success as a leader; therefore it is vital that administrators and policymakers implement current research to develop mentoring and assistance programs. This study has defined how the subjects' perceived challenges and barriers during the transitional period and how those perceptions were altered as they left teaching to become principals.

The rationale for this study is also supported by the research literature, which suggests that various factors such as faculty support and opportunities played an important role in the academic achievement of these two women and their individual leadership style. According to

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Christenson (2004), teachers and leaders have psychological barriers that can impede them from developing a quality leadership style. For this type of relationship to be established within the school or district setting, other female administrators need to establish and develop programs that will help in her transitions from the classroom to administration.

Research Questions

The aim of the study is to gather data in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What challenges and barriers do women teachers face in their journey to becoming effective school-based leaders?

2. How do women principals perceive their overall leadership experiences within their districts?

3. How do female leaders' individual perceptions of their job change during the transition from being a teacher to becoming a school-based administrator?

4. What is the nature of the leadership experience of female school administrators?

Nature of Study

After evaluating different research methods, it was determined that a case study method would provide the best results for fulfilling this paper's goals. This qualitative method of sampling was utilized to gather the information from two female administrators—one superintendent and one principal—whose administrative experiences range from the traditional to the online setting. In addition, the qualitative data obtained through structured interviews has provided additional depth and specific perspectives from female administrators who have gone through the transitional process. Like in similar studies, the goal of this case study is to examine variables, thereby providing greater understanding of the specific characteristics and circumstances of the subjects who are being evaluated.

Significance of Study

A new female principal's transitional period is essential to her initial success, since what occurs during the first year of principalship may exert a major influence on her subsequent performance (Cabillo, 2003). Therefore, one goal of this dissertation is to increase awareness of the crucial transitional period when women are moving from the classroom to becoming school principals. Additionally, the study will discover how and to what extent female principals perceive that their own attributes, including personality, influence their personal successes as school-based leaders.

To date, it is not known how successful principals navigate their first year or how they interpret their own experiences (Sherman, 2005). It is imperative that new principals learn what skills are necessary to succeed as a leader in today's schools. Female principals should also know how to navigate the transitional period they will face, and districts must understand how to support these new women leaders. It is hoped that this research has provided an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other female principals who have successfully navigated the transitional phase of a new leadership position.

This research will present a different perspective about culture and education. It will also provide an opportunity for others who might be interested in this area to pursue further research that may validate the need for changes in education related to culture. Through teacher and parent education, this research may also promote a more collective learning environment where all staff members, as well as parents, are involved in the school community. This would ultimately affect academic and social areas related curriculum and assessment.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used operationally in this study.

Attachment: Refers to the particular aspects that individuals bring to their role, such as an awareness of their competence or self-worth. Individuals are 'attached' to a role because it enhances their sense of self (Loder & Spillane, 2005).

Barriers: These are blockages or limited opportunities that prevent advancement to higher levels of leadership.

Experienced new principal: This is a woman who is entering a new principalship but who has spent at least one year as principal at a different school (Rodman, 1987).

Inter-role conflict: Role conflicts generally arise when commitment and attachment to roles do not match up. For example, individuals who transition from teaching to administration may find that the commitments associated with administration are incongruent with their attachment to teaching (Loder & Spillane, 2005).

Leadership: This is the guiding vision, passion and integrity used to manage a school staff. In this study, the term "leadership" encompasses the guiding practices utilized by female principals, including envisioning, driving and organizing their campuses for achievement (Crow, 2006).

Leadership mentoring: This is the formal and informal social construction of professional performance expectations, developed through purposeful interactions between aspiring and practicing principals in the context of authentic practice. This interactive mentoring develops collegial relationships, fosters reciprocal learning between expert and novice, expands leadership capacity, and creates a community of practice in which steadily improving role performance is the ultimate goal (Loder & Spillane, 2005).

Leadership style: The leadership style of the principal is how she uses her leadership role, and is based upon her response to specific situations.

Mentor: This person personally oversees, directs and guides the professional development and career of another person.

Role: The perception of role is essential in understanding professional transitions, because transitions are constituted by changes in roles. People typically occupy multiple roles in family and work, and each of these roles entails rights, duties, and constituencies (Loder& Spillane, 2005).

Situated learning: Sometimes called supervised clinical practice or social practice, this is a well-accepted preparation technique for many professions. Situated learning involves the 'embodied, delicate, active, social, negotiated, complex process of participation' in a community of practice. As a strategy for preparing future principals, situated leaning places aspiring school leaders in authentic situations, under the guidance of leadership mentors, where they can apply theories, procedures and skills in classroom settings. (Loder & Spillane, 2005).

Socialization: The process by which an individual trains or adapts to a particular social *or* cultural environment.

Transition: The new principal becomes comfortable with his or her surroundings during this time. The period of time required for a transition varies between individuals. However, for the purpose this study, a transition refers to one school year (Eckman, 2004).

<div align="center">Assumptions and Limitations</div>

The case study method examined the personal experiences of two female administrators. This study will not presume to speak for all women and will not make generalized interpretations. Nevertheless, to clarify the research focus specifically surrounding the construct

of gender, this study focused on female administrators within the two represented school districts. Two experienced female administrators were interviewed, in order to understand their perspectives of the current administrative practices that their districts use.

It is assumed that the participants in the study responded to the interview questions in an honest fashion and that they spoke openly about the challenges and barriers they faced as they became administrators. The researcher also assumes that the sample was representative of the population of female administrators. It was also assumed that both participants were willing to participate in the study and is qualified to hold their positions.

Some of the limitations of this study are related to the qualitative methods employed. For example, the results obtained through the qualitative segments of the study may not be generalizable due to the number of participants included in the study. Also, conducting the study over a longer period of time would have allowed for more comprehensive results, such as being able to examine the benefits and/or drawbacks of being a female administrator. Finally, the interview responses and researcher involvement might also produce a bias in the findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Although teaching is one of the most traversed pathways to the principalship, researchers have paid little attention to the interrelationship between the roles of teacher and administrator, particularly the structural constraints attendant in the transition from being a teacher to an administrator. The transition from teaching to administration can be a stressful and discordant time for women administrators who have spent long tenures as teachers and who value the intrinsic rewards of the teaching profession (Loder & Spillane, 2005). Given that women are more likely than men to transition directly from teaching to the principalship, as well as to spend longer tenures as teachers before making their transitions, this role transition may require time so that they can become familiar with and comfortable in this position.

For those teachers who continually seek greater responsibility and organizational mobility, becoming a school principal is both a career step and a role transformation into new professional responsibilities (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006). Changing one's career orientation from teaching to administration requires socialization into a new community of practice, as well as assumption of a new role identity. This process can be greatly enhanced through field-based learning or internships guided by qualified professionals, and by focused mentoring by veteran practitioners, according to Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2006).

Although attitudinal barriers exist, several research studies point out that female administrators are just as capable as are their male counterparts. Smith and Hale identified the advantages of women in school administration. According to Smith and Hale, women principals have a greater knowledge of and concern for instructional supervision. Also in their research, the

students' academic performance and teachers' professional performance rated higher under women principals, and several supervisors and teachers preferred the decision-making and problem-solving behaviors of women (Smith & Hale, 2002). Finally, women principals placed more importance on the technical skills and organizational responsibility of teachers as a criterion of evaluation than did male principals.

Even though women constitute 75% of the teaching workforce in the United States, they represent less than 35% of all principalships (Loder, 2005). However, the field of school administration is only getting larger. In 2007 the U.S. Department of Labor estimated that 40% of the nation's 93,200 principals are nearing retirement and that those retirements will increase the demand for new principals from 10% to 20 % by 2014. Many school districts across the country have reported severe shortages in the labor pool for K-12 principal positions, with potential candidates citing low pay, job stress and burdensome time commitments as major factors for not applying for leadership positions (Loder, 2005). In spite of this, there is promising news that women's enrollment in educational administration programs have increased so that, as mentioned earlier, women students now outnumber men (Loder, 2005). These trends point to the need for scholars and policymakers to gain a better understanding of the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and external structural constraints associated with women's transition to the principalship.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

Many professors in educational administration perceive that developing the leadership knowledge and skills of teachers is worth the effort, given the perspective that teachers can positively influence their schools. However, when approximately half the graduates of principal preparation programs nationally fail to seek or assume the position for which they were

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professionally trained, the field as a whole should be concerned (Browne-Ferrigno, 2006). Furthermore, developing specialized programs in colleges and universities can help prepare teacher leaders to be more productive and therefore less costly to school districts.

Hackney's research reveals that female administrators lead quite differently from males and that they are gaining some ground in administrative positions and power. But it also shows that many have not been able to make their intended leadership impact because of barriers that keep them from being selected for key leadership roles. Yet women with new leadership styles are desperately needed for successful school reform efforts because of their unique communicative and integrative styles (Funk, 2004). According to Funk, schools and school districts could utilize the unique strengths of women administrators, such as their collaborative and transformation leadership style with a focus on curriculum, instruction and empowerment, to ensure successful changes in education. At this point in time, however, women continue to be underutilized by school boards and superintendents who do not take advantage of the talents of their aspiring and practicing female school leaders to make a real difference in the quality of schooling in our nation (Funk, 2004).

In their research, LaPointe and Myerson show that women administrators tend to have a stronger orientation towards teaching than matters concerning instructional leadership. Female principals generally interact more frequently with students and teachers than do men, and they adapt an egalitarian approach to leadership (Loder & Spillane, 2005). Yet this could also work against new principals as they begin to lead their former teaching colleagues. This is not only the case here in America, states Loder, but also internationally. For example, a study of Israeli women principals shows that women who become principals at the same school where they were once teachers are especially vulnerable to role conflict because of their close ties to teacher

colleagues (Loder & Spillane, 2005). Role stereotypes also affect female school administrators around the world. A 2001 study of female secondary school head teachers in England and Wales indicated that their progression to school leadership was hindered by the common stereotype that women are 'primarily bound up with home, children, and domesticity, and that they will naturally take on a caring or pastoral role in school,' a perception that often translates professionally into teaching (Whitaker & Lane, 1990).

Eagly and Johannsen-Schmidt have identified three reasons for why women are not well represented in administration in comparable numbers to male principals who are also former teachers (Eagly & Johannsen-Schmidt, 2001). The first is the degree of compatibility between the women's career orientation and the demands of the position she holds. This factor describes the extent to which a woman's perceptions of herself are constrained by cultural stereotypes of female behavior. The second barrier is a result of the formal and informal filtering system that organizations use to train and test the suitability of an aspirant for a particular position and that control upward mobility. While some women apparently negotiate the barriers successfully, studies show that, overall, women have less access to informal experiences and socialization processes that facilitate movement through the barriers. The third factor, organizational fit, emerges naturally from the other two. It refers to the congruence between an individual and how the individual reacts in a specific role (Lynch, 1990). Because organizational cultures vary, the ideal administrator in one school or school system may not be the same as that in another. While the structures and attitudes that support male dominance in school administration prevail nationwide, individual schools or school systems may be more or less receptive to the advancement of women.

By studying these three strands of research, and some critical advancement factors that they highlight, districts and superintendents can begin to design new approaches to female advancement. The traditional approach to battling gender-based job discrimination has been affirmative action programs and legal challenges. According to Lynch, a more appropriate approach is emphasizing mentoring (1990). Women administrators often feel they have an extra responsibility to other women who aspire to administration. Yet although female-to-female mentoring is a valuable component of the total approach to female administrative advancement, there are inherent problems with relying solely on this tactic. In 1990, Lynch found that there were inadequate numbers and not enough distribution of female administrators to provide quality mentoring to all female administration aspirants. Secondly, depending on the female-to-female mentoring model, Lynch stated, results in the development of a parallel network for women that does not sufficiently erode the structural barriers and cultural attitude that supports male dominance in school administration.

<center>Strategies, Skills and Leadership Styles of Effective Administration</center>

In the ever increasing accountability in schools it is causing a shift in the leadership models for which principals are being prepared. Within the context of an increased national and local focus on improving school performance and student achievement; there has been a greater emphasis on the role of the school principal as the primary lever (Barber & Myerson, 2007). High-performing schools are often characterized by strong instructional practices and the capacity to improve student learning. However, school leaders need to be more adept in engaging the teachers, and improve the school conditions and other contextual factors.

In the past few years, the focus of the school administrator has shifted from one of management and administration to one that is focused on instruction (Barber, 2007). This has

been reflected in the current expectations of how principals need to be more involved with teachers and the necessary improvements in instruction and curriculum. According to Barber and Meyerson (2007), such principals are able to demonstrate attention to vision building that is developed. All this requires the principal to learn a new and different skill and knowledge base then has been previously required.

Sherman noted that there are many strategies for improving a stand-alone aspiring leaders program in the district where female administrators were interviewed, and this model can be extended to similar programs (Sherman, 2005). First, a more in-depth description of college leadership programs should be provided to eliminate any confusion, clearly stating its purpose and benefits to interested prospective participants, as well as information on how to enter the program. Second, it is crucial that a separate induction program for new administrators be created, so that the purpose of the program for aspiring administrators is not compromised. Third, the district should consider establishing a formal method for specifically recruiting women and minorities into the program, including a selection process that deliberately seeks out those different from the "referent" group. Fourth, interview data makes it clear that program participant's value increased opportunities for networking and discussion between other aspiring administrators, as well as with current leaders in the district (Sherman, 2005).

While the numbers of women in school administrative positions are increasing, the challenges that can present problems for women appointed to these traditional male roles can be many (Smith & Hale, 2002). Among these challenges that female school administrators face in today's educational settings are very different expectations from those who they work with, and the changing school environment. For example, students often tend to view the female administrators as easier to manipulate than their male counterparts. Women tend to value ideas

based on their culture, racial, and moral beliefs, while balking the ideas that are valued by society (Smith & Hale, 2002).

Role Conflict

Role conflict occurs as individuals attempt to balance their family and home roles with their professional roles. Eckman (2004) indicated that dual-earner families or single-parent families are working longer hours than ever and feeling more conflicted. Some studies have found some working women experience mental health issues as they struggle to balance their family needs with the demands of their jobs (Eckman, 2004). Female principals were twice as likely as men to mention the enormity of their workload and the difficulty of "balancing everything." Several other researchers found that, although conflicts between the demands of work and family affect both men and women, women experience greater work-family conflict than do men. More reasonable parameters must be developed for the role of the principal, so that high school principals, regardless of gender, can better manage the simultaneous demands of their professional and personal lives (Eckman, 2004).

Role Commitment

Researchers have also examined the effect of role commitment, defined as the way individuals prioritize conflicting demands of work and relationship, on educational administrators. One study that included two female and forty-eight male high school principals found that a majority of the principals felt their role commitment as high school principals had taken a toll on their families. Eckman (2004) has argued that the myth of the "super principal" has created such unreasonably high expectations for the role that it has become difficult for principals to maintain a balance between the commitment of their professional and personal lives.

Transformational Leadership

According to Gordon, several studies investigated the differences between the leadership styles of men and women. The first type of leadership is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership occurs when a leader engages with a follower in such a way that both parties are raised to higher levels of motivation and morality with a common purpose (Maher, 2007). Transformational leadership has been conceptualized as a leadership style that raises awareness about the importance and value of designated outcomes and promotes development and vision for everyone involved. Transformational leader's exhibit charisma, use examples to focus employee efforts, and treat followers differently but equally, based on follower needs.

Transactional Leadership

The second type of leadership is the transactional leadership style. Transactional leadership, by contrast, is a set of leadership behaviors that tends to emphasize the exchanges or bargains between manager and follower. It focuses on how the current needs of subordinates can be fulfilled. These exchanges can be economic, political or psychological in nature. The primary characteristic that distinguishes transactional from transformational leadership is that there is no lasting purpose that holds the leaders and followers together (Maher, 2007). Transactional behaviors can include contingent rewards, which involve an interaction between leader and subordinate based on the exchange of resources. Many leaders engage in both transactional and transformational leadership behaviors, but do so in differing amounts. Transformational and transactional leadership are viewed as ways to augment the traditionally researched leadership styles of initiating structure and consideration within an organization.

According to Chugh and Shagal (2007), certain studies found that female leaders use words such as 'term-based,' 'involved,' 'participation,' or 'participative' to describe what they see as unique leadership traits of women. Another interesting finding in Chugh and Shagal, congruent with theories on female power bases, is that women do not refer to their own position in the organization or school as a platform for influence, indicating that they do use coercive power. In addition, women leaders tend to build relationships with their employees that are based on trust and respect, which is part of their overall leadership style (Chugh & Shagal, 2007).

In order to create an environment conducive to change, Beyer and Ruhl–Smith (1998) research indicated that a leadership style different from the traditional perspectives must be initiated. For example, the leader of a school in the process of restructuring should examine problems collaboratively with faculty, staff and community; the leader empowers others to seek solutions to problems while he or she exhibits creativity and vision. These efforts are attempts to develop trust throughout the school setting and to serve as a catalyst for successful school restructuring (Beyer & Ruhl-Smith, 1998). They also offer a framework for helping a leader develop the attributes necessary for schools of the future.

In addition, all principals—including female principals—must learn to collaborate with the outside community. Encouraging faculty, staff and students to work together is just the beginning of collaboration. Schools must begin to work more effectively with parents, the business community, universities and the wider educational profession (Beyer & Ruhl-Smith, 1998). Since the improvement programs initiated by a district are often influenced or mandated by the external environment, insight and ideas provided by local groups are essential to understanding, addressing and supporting programs that will serve student needs. Emphasis should be placed on the development of educational programs that reflect community values and

that are, in turn, supported by the local community, which can make a difference in the relationship of the student to the school. Ultimately, this impacts all student achievement and, by association, the principal (Beyer & Ruhl-Smith, 1998).

In designing a school focused on learning for students and the school community, it becomes necessary for schools to build bridges with groups outside the immediate school district. These constituencies express concerns and needs regarding the school setting and so collaboration is a way to address these needs. Collaboration opens the door to additional ideas and support that may be necessary while working towards the improvement of student learning. This support might come in the form of partnerships with university personnel; through parental involvement in school governance; through professional development on behalf of regional labs or the business community; or through state involvement, either because of deregulation or through waivers that offer schools and districts the opportunity to experiment. These factors have contributed to specific success stories of internal and external constituencies that are working together to promote quality learning (Beyer & Ruhl-Smith, 1998).

Moreover, Blasé and Blasé's (1999) body of research on effective schools consistently points to the importance of responsible, assertive and visible in-school leadership when it comes to school success. This is one reason why effective school research relies so heavily on the notion of effective leadership development (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). Researchers such as Blasé and Blasé recognize that today's educational leaders must possess knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that they cannot develop through traditional educational administration curricula. Improving school leadership means finding creative ways to enhance the success of aspiring school leaders and to reform the means by which they are prepared, inducted and supported in their professional work (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001).

Research by Whitaker and Lane (1990), has suggested that educational administrators must focus on maximizing productivity and the morale of the organization. A successful administrator, they say, helps members of the organization determine what should be done, as well as how it should be done (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). When an administrator or policy-making body wants to bring about change in others, the major strategy should be to set goals via a planning process (Manatt, 1981). In order to sustain the highest level of productivity, the administrator should monitor performance and provide feedback.

According to Cheng et.al, the manner in which evaluation occurs has a great deal to do with the morale of individuals in the organization (Chaugh & Sahgal, 2007). They state that evaluation contributes to the productivity of the organization, builds the morale of members, causes systematic planning, and corrects errors that creep into the system. In addition, they make it very clear that evaluation of principals will overcome the sense of bias that now pervades many teacher evaluations (Manatt, 1981).

School administrators must do more than read the recent reports on excellence in education to improve their schools. To become a productive instructional leader, the principal must translate the wealth of research on school excellence into ongoing, school-based development programs that will help teachers deliver classroom instruction that increases student academic achievement (Doggett, 1987). Instructional leaders must exhibit knowledge of learning theory, instructional methods and research. Without a working knowledge of learning theory and research, the principal will be limited in generating discussion among teachers about the art of good teaching. Getting the teachers to help their students appreciate the real value and purpose behind their learning will help the student understand why school is relevant. This will, in turn,

motivate students to become actively involved with the teacher in pursuing learning objectives (Doggett, 1987).

Doggett (1987) stated that instructional leaders need to be visible and observe classes on a daily basis. One of the most important administrative components for promoting school-based staff development among teachers is the quality and quantity of classroom visitations. Yet this may be the least-practiced behavior in today's school setting. Too much paperwork, too many meetings, too many teachers, and not enough time are reasons principals often cite for not visiting and evaluating teachers (Doggett, 1987). Nevertheless, the two actual main obstacles are poor time management and a principal's low self-confidence regarding his or her skills and knowledge about teacher observation and analysis. Doggett concluded that those principals who do a good job of evaluating teachers are visible principals.

Principals should also facilitate positive reinforcement among teachers and students. Every school needs a program for recognizing teacher excellence, and although funds may not be available for financial rewards, the principal can still do much to provide this needed recognition (Doggett, 1987). Praising people in an honest, concrete fashion can be contagious, and giving praise can be as fulfilling as receiving it, particularly when the recipient thanks a teacher who took the time to give the praise.

<div align="center">Effective Mentoring of Administrators</div>

The decision to become a principal actually begins before anyone starts formal training. Any pre-service preparation intended to produce leaders who are able and willing to assume responsibilities for guiding schools must be based on 'qualities that are best measured by past leadership behaviors' and the 'demonstration of the ability to respond to situations that require leadership behaviors' (Zheng & Carpenter-Hubin, 1999). Thus, the identification of prospective

principals by committed leadership mentors within the context of K-12 schools is a key component in the process of transforming teachers into principals (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2006).

Schools and districts play a critical role in leadership development. Districts must continuously evaluate their overall leadership needs. Districts should recruit people who will make strong administrators and provide them with opportunities to learn about and take on new administrative tasks. It is primarily through the confidence and/or credibility built during experience that prospective administrators learn they might contribute as principals and then become committed to solid administrative practices.

Several field-based learning opportunities for prospective principals have been implemented at minimal costs to districts (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2005). These field-based opportunities draw heavily on applied settings while integrating formal and practice knowledge with skill acquisition and dispositional development. These programs can also provide schools and districts with transitional plans to help ease the shortage of school administrators and ensure that the new school leaders are fully ready to accept and pursue administrative responsibilities as they complete their formal preparation. By recognizing the many oft-cited hindrances, most particularly cost, to providing full-time administrative internships for prospective principals, administrators can develop recommendations to help overcome these perceived obstacles.

In Lynch's (1990) research, there is an assumption that school administration is a separate career from teaching, not just an extension of it. Thus, entry into school administration requires a resocialization process. Career socialization for school administrators is, in general, characterized by informality, ambiguity and role conflict (Lynch, 1990). Similarly, women in other types of management face career conflicts that range from total dedication to the job at one

end of the spectrum to maintaining careful boundaries between career and family at the other end, with neither extreme being acceptable in the male corporate culture (Lynch, 1990), and this is also true for women in school administration.

As the work of F. Ortiz illustrates the structural barriers approach to looking at women's advancement. Ortiz views women's advancement as a problem of mobility. There are, according to Ortiz, three types of boundaries that must be crossed. First, there are the hierarchical boundaries that separate various levels in the school organization. These levels are differentiated by formal requirements such as degrees and certifications. Secondly, functional boundaries separate different departments of the school system from one another, such as elementary and secondary principals (Lynch, 1990). Finally, the inclusion of boundaries differentiates individuals by their positions within their organization, relative to the center of power. The third boundary is the most difficult to cross, since bridging it involves negotiating informal processes, a much more difficult task than crossing the formal processes. Advancement, therefore, can be described as a matter of crossing many kinds of boundaries, from the periphery of the organization to the center, from the bottom of the hierarchy to the top. In this interpretation, the biggest problems for women are not the formal, tangible barriers like education or certification, but the intangible, informal ones that require an aspirant to be accepted as "one of us" by those already at the apex of the organization (Lynch, 1990).

Much of the literature on women who have succeeded in administration also focuses on positive factors like family support and encouragement; advanced level graduate study, particularly at the doctoral level; above-average communication and interpersonal skills; and mentoring and networking relationships (Gill, 1993). According to Gill (1993), other research focuses on those factors identified as barriers that keep women from obtaining positions in

educational administration. These factors include poor self-image; lack of self-confidence; lack of aspiration or motivation; lack of support and encouragement; lack of preparation or experience; and the effects of socialization and sex discrimination in hiring practices. Professional socialization also played a key role in determining whether women obtained administrative positions (Gill, 1993).

In today's administrative landscape, relatively few principals have participated in any type of formal mentoring programs as part of their leadership training. A 1998 survey indicated that few districts had a formal induction or mentoring program for new principals. However, when one talks to those principals who have been mentored, the response is usually positive (Educational Alliance, 2003). Those who took part in successful internships praised mentoring as a means for providing aspiring principals with a realistic view of the position and for better preparing them to do the job well.

There is evidence, according to Collins and Pearce (2006), that access to professional mentoring is particularly important for women in senior administrative and management positions and that it helps women succeed and become socialized into administrative positions. While the evidence in Collins and Pearce's research (2006) suggests that men tend to be mentored more often than women, particularly those men in a more senior role, the impact of a female mentor on her female protégée can have a profound effect on her career. Alternatively, a lack of access to mentoring provides a significant barrier to women's advancement. At the senior level, there are increasingly more male mentors than female, presumably because there are fewer women operating in senior management positions. The support provided by senior women for their junior protégées is therefore particularly significant (Collins & Pearce, 2006).

The nature of the relationship between mentor and mentee is a crucial factor influencing the success of mentoring relationships. Informal mentoring arrangements that arise spontaneously and are self-directed, unlike the more institutionalized formal mentoring arrangements, can be more beneficial for mentees then formal arrangements.

Effective models of mentoring often highlight the importance of the mentor's interpersonal qualities, and stress the importance of caring, nurturing, mutuality, and friendship in productive mentoring relationships (Collins & Pearce, 2006). However, the benefits of a mentoring relationship are reduced when the mentor and mentee are too hierarchically distant in the organization, experience and expertise. Therefore, it is suggested that mentoring is much more successful when mentees have easy, close access to their mentor, in order for productive relationships to develop and for effective learning to take place.

Comparatively, Blackhurst examine the barriers that confront new school principals. Although this has been discussed at great length in educational literature, more attention has recently been paid to how principals actually become inducted or socialized into their new roles and cultures. Blackhurst (2000) stated that whether or not new principals are going to meet the challenges before them depends on how well they are socialized into the culture and contexts of their principalship. The socialization of new principals can be defined in many ways. For example, individuals who selectively acquire the knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in the role of school leader (Blackhurst, 2000). Research has shown that principals experience different patterns of socialization and that the district in which they work vastly influences the nature of those experiences.

Individuals engaged in leadership training need the opportunity to develop administrative skills through hands-on learning. A key element in the transformative process of becoming a

principal is having the opportunity to apply newly acquired knowledge of professional practice

during carefully developed and monitored internships (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

As with any new position, there is an abrupt shift in work responsibilities and tasks. N

one study conducted by Loder and Spillane(2003), all the principal's that were interviewed had

at one time or another spent time in intermediate administrative roles before stepping into the

principal position. Intermediate roles like assistant principal helped to prepare individuals for

tasks they would be responsible for as principals, such as scheduling, ordering supplies and

doing the Positions like Assistant Principal's provided the necessary tasks like scheduling and

paperwork helped make the transition smoother. Even with prior administrative experiences,

they could not always prepare women for some of the responsibilities and demands associated

with being a principal. By becoming a principal, men and women found that they assumed

additional responsibilities and demands like managing facilities and the budget (Loder &

Spillane, 2003). Often the focus on managerial tasks hindered them from concentrating on

instructional issues, a role that is consistent with their roles as teachers.

As principal's, women in low income schools and districts often target external resources

to help run extra programs like after-school activities, student internships and other incentives

used for prizes (Loder & Spillane, 2003). This can be extremely valuable when asking for much

needed funds from the community at the school level.

Making the shift from the classroom to administration often proves traumatic for women

who have enjoyed the intimacy of the classroom. Difficult in the sense that some women who

enjoy getting to know the students personally as in the classroom feel that they lose that when

they transition. It was also found that women administrators felt that they compartmentalized

relationships with students, especially when they became increasingly more responsible for school –wide discipline (Loder & Spillane, 2003).

According to Irby and Brown (1998), female principals reported that their relationships with teachers also changed when they became administrators. As the women became school based leaders, they were no longer viewed as colleagues, but as leaders who were responsible for the hiring/firing and evaluating of teachers (Loder & Spillane, 2003). Consequently, some women were viewed as incompatible with teachers after they crossed over to 'the other side."

Loder and Spillane (2003) also stated that becoming a principal resulted in dramatic changes in the professional lives of women. The role of becoming an administrator also required women to assume new roles as partners with varying, and, at times, indistinguishable degrees of influence within their new roles. As teachers, they had both internal and external drive expectations to be attentive to their students. Loder and Spillane (2003) found that these changes were especially difficult for women who generally used maternal metaphors to describe their relationships with the students. In order to alleviate any conflict, many female administrators attempted to 'retain a teacher's perspective'. This strategy included viewing their schools as classrooms, and reclaiming to a certain extent to their teaching practice and stay connected to students (Loder & Spillane, 2003).

In their research, Irby and Brown stated that women are likely to be more serious about their work, more satisfied and self-confident when there are other women in similar positions. Women also tended to view themselves differently when there are other female administrators in an organization. Support groups for women administrators were found to be crucial for their success (Irby & Brown, 1998). Without such support groups, female leader may have limited

opportunities to interact with women colleagues and limited access to women who may effectively serve as mentors, and role models.

Any analysis of the situation that both women and men face as leaders provides a rationale for the differences and similarities between male and female administrators. From the perspective of social role theory of gender differences and similarities, begins with the principle that leadership roles, like other organizational roles, are an influential on leaders' behavior. Additionally, leaders expectations tend to be based on people's categorization of male and female (Eagly, 2001). These expectations do tend to constitute gender roles, which are the shared beliefs that apply to individuals, based on their socially identified gender.

The social role argument states that leadership roles constrain behavior such that the differences are minimal among the inhabitants of the same leadership role. Not only do gender roles spill over to the work settings, but also the leaders' gender identities also constrain their behaviors in a direction that is consistent with their gender role (Eagly, 2001). In addition, the female role is more likely to be incongruent with leader roles than is the male gender role, producing a greater potential for prejudice against female leaders. This type of prejudice tends to produce negative sanctions that can affect other leaders' behavior.

Researchers like Borisoff, have noted other covert forms of sex discrimination against women, which include a lack of support, encouragement and counseling. The lack of formal preparation and the lack of administrative learning experiences have put women at a disadvantage (Borisoff, 1997). Women, more than men, reported a lack of financing as an obstacle to continuing administrative study. In addition, the scarcity of sponsors or mentors is a concern for women because white males traditionally promote other white males. Networking in the current administrative setting is prohibitive, as well. Unlike in the last few years, according to

Borisoff, the development of skills associated with aspiring administrators who have been mentored has grown (Borisoff, 1997). The use of mentors to assist present and future leaders is a powerful tool that can be used to bring about more effective school practice. Mentoring programs have a tremendous potential in all school settings. Structured mentorship programs may be seen as effective strategies to help women and minorities – groups that have few existing support networks to help them find career success (Daresh, 2004).

As should now be clear from the extent of research cited, mentoring is an important tool for preparing qualified principals who can perform effectively in a school setting. In educational literature, there is widespread agreement about the importance of these acting principals as a critical influence in preparing new principals for the principalship (Daresh, 2004). Mentor programs are not new to the educational arena. The use of veteran teachers and leaders as mentors to socialize beginning principals is a common practice in the United States. Within the last 10 to 15 years, more than 20 states have required all beginning principals to engage in formal induction programs of one kind or another, in other words, in a mentoring program.

Certain behaviors predict whether existing principals will make good mentors for new principals. For example, characteristics that mentors should have include: demonstrating leadership qualities, communicating well with others, and being able to think outside the box (Daresh & Playko, 1990). A mentoring program plays a significant role in developing leaders when mentors understand how important it is for mentees to be engaged in ways that enable them to lead. In other words, principals who model good leadership behaviors tend to be effective mentors. Thus, for a mentor program to be effective, it is critical that aspiring principals are able to recognize appropriate leader behavior.

It has been demonstrated in several studies by Weber, Feldman, and Poling (1981) that it is possible for a woman to advance into an administrative career without a mentor. However, a mentor can be helpful, and can significantly advance the timetable for entering the administrative ranks (Weber, Feldman, & Poling, 1981). Part of the role that mentors, teachers, spouses, and others played in the career development of the principals profiled by Weber, Feldman, and Poling was that of helping each of them to visualize themselves in administrative roles.

Sometimes mentoring programs are created without acknowledging the conservative bias of mentoring, in which the veteran passes on the learning to the newcomer (Crow, 2006). Although mentoring can be an important and effective tool for socializing new principals, it must be considered in the context of a complex society. A variety of trained mentors should be available who can provide experiences with diverse students in a range of settings, and who can encourage innovative, culturally sensitive leadership practices. This would be particularly influential and effective for beginning principals.

For women to succeed in acquiring administrative positions in education, according to Whitaker and Lane (1990), mentoring must occur. Principals are particularly well-positioned in the educational hierarchy to assist administrative aspirants. As mentors, principals can even screen the pool of potential candidates and encourage selected individuals to enter the administrative career ladder (Whitaker & Lane, 1990).

Two barriers to successful mentoring programs have been consistently identified in previous literature on the subject. The first is the scarcity of women who occupy appropriate positions in administration to become mentors. Secondly, cross mentoring, when it does occur between male mentors and female protégées, is frequently considered to be of reduced value or importance because of sex role attitude (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). Therefore, women who are

currently in administration must redouble their efforts to mentor other females who wish to enter the administrative ranks.

Whitaker and Lane conclude that women in education are subject to biased social attitudes regarding performance. These social attitudes describe women as "too emotional, not task-oriented enough, too dependent on feedback and evaluations of others, and lacking independence." Clearly, principals who believe this will not readily identify women as potential candidates for administration, especially at the secondary level (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). Even male mentors who support females for the principalships often show a bias against females pursuing secondary administrative positions.

Although increasing the participation of women in district-based aspiring leaders programs will not necessarily produce greater equity, and although there will still be many hurdles left to be address, it nonetheless provides a step in the right direction. Mentoring in educational administration is an area open to further study and where productive changes can be made for the benefit of both men and women who aspire to school leadership positions (Sherman, 2005).

Socialization of Administrators

Any successful socialization or culturalization of principals requires new types of leadership support in schools. What is equally important is how principals interact within school cultures. If the principal and organization can communicate their mutual beliefs and values, then the transition process can be smoother. Understanding transitions also offers new insights into the problem of principal turnover.

Personal and family constraints also present barriers to women who decide to make the transition into administrative positions. Because women have been socialized to experience

achievement and satisfaction vicariously by functioning in a supportive capacity, they often resolve conflicts among family responsibilities, career aspirations, and the perceived characteristics of leadership before attaining their own career goals (Norman, 2003). Leadership positions, such as jobs in educational administration, are sometimes still viewed as incompatible with the female role as a whole. Thus, a woman must choose between an "acceptable" and "unacceptable" female job. However, even if she decides to teach, she is still subject to potential conflict because of the supplementary aspects of a teaching career for women (Norman, 2003).

A major component of any succession process is socialization, where attention is drawn to the aspiring leader and his or her successful socialization. Socialization involves a complex set of human relationships that interact in many ways, and with any socialization process that occurs within the educational setting, there will be an exchange of ideas and culture within the school environment. The socialization of the administrators to the profession or occupation of school administration begins in training or preparation programs (Normore, 2003)

The development and implementation of administrator training programs as a form of professional development for school administrators should help administrators fit into the social system of a school in both a professional and organizational capacity (Norman, 2003). If training programs are not meeting the needs of school administrators, it would seem appropriate that school boards establish better connection between their current training programs and their program expectations. School administrators need to receive ongoing professional development, providing strong impetus to improve existing programs. School boards, therefore, ought to examine more closely the most appropriate training models and experiences for aspiring and practicing school leaders (Normore, 2003). School boards should rethink the content, delivery and outcomes of administration participation programs as they currently exist. Normore (2003)

also states that school boards must ensure that upcoming and practicing administrators have both professional and organizational socialization opportunities.

In the administrative structure of the school system, there are two types of socialization processes that are always at the forefront for administrators: the professionalization and organizational of socialization. The socialization may range from both formal and explicit influences, such as carefully planned formal training programs or working with a mentor, to informal and implicit influences, including unplanned, on-the-job experiences (Normore, 2003).

Professional socialization generally tends to begin in the early stages phase of a school leader's educational career and continues into early job growth and their ongoing development. Professional socialization is an interactive process used to gain knowledge, skills and behaviors needed to participate as a member of a profession (Normore, 2003). It is a dynamic developmental process through which values and norms of the profession are internalized and a professional identity is gained. According to Normore (2003), socialization requires collaboration and mentoring by an experienced professional who will serve as a guide to the new administrator.

Organizational socialization begins upon appointment and is specific to the educational context. Each school has a particular context requiring understanding and integration of a complex array of people, policies, processes and priorities. Researchers like Normore assert that the need to fit into the immediate work environment makes organizational socialization more salient and immediate than the experiences that precede it, no matter how carefully they have been organized (Normore, 2003). Organizational norms consequently tend to replace those learned during professional socialization. School administrators in schools, consequently, have an interdependent relationship with others who work there. Or, in other words, the school

administrator has formal leadership power but depends on those in the school for the power of the group to act.

Socialization of a new or aspiring principal can be viewed as an all encompassing processes by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge and skills and needed to perform effectively in the role of school leader. According to Shakeshaft, studies show that individuals who have had several schools-based experiences prior to assuming the principal role, such as teachers, counselors, assistant principals and other on-the-job leadership training, were more easily socialized into new roles as school leaders (Aiken, 2002). These studies have also determined that principals experience different patterns of socialization and that the district in which they work vastly influences the nature of the experiences. Nevertheless, there have been some important variations in the socialization experiences of women seeking positions as school principals. Some have been influenced by the different stages they've passed through and how they were then supported in different degrees. Others are more influenced by the personal and social context in which they find themselves and by how their own set of values, beliefs, and aspirations influence—and are influenced by—the norms, values and belief structures of organization members (Aiken, 2002).

<div align="center">Transitioning from the Classroom to Administration</div>

The transition from being a teacher to becoming an administrator constitutes a movement from a private role to a public and highly professional role. Although teaching usually involves some type of collaborative effort with other instructors, administrators and parents, being a teacher can entail working directly with students in an intimate space like the classroom, even if they have become teacher leaders (Loder & Spillane, 2003). For the most part, teachers tend to spend much of their time in the classroom working closely with their students.

In contrast, becoming a principal often marks a distinct and abrupt change in perspective, expected behavior. This transition typically results in a divestiture from the role of a teacher to the new role of administrator (Loder & Spillane, 2003). Becoming a principal requires adopting a broader perspective, and readjusting relationships with role partners (e.g. students and teachers). It may also mean having to answer to others in the district and community.

A school based lead is mostly concerned with the school as a whole, rather than just her own classroom. Furthermore, the school based leader is considered to be the school's official representative, this role typically extends beyond the school. School based leader tend to interact more with parents, superintendents, and the local school community more than teachers do (Loder & Spillane, 2003). School based leaders also lose the autonomy and the privacy that they had in the classroom. While teachers primarily teach and deal with individual classroom tasks, the principals assume more challenging work tasks, which derive from managerial and political functions that are incumbent on the position (Lee, Smith, & Cioci, 1993). Managerial functions involve maintaining current organizational arrangements, for example, tasks related to keeping the school running on a daily basis (Loder & Spillane, 2003). Principals tend to spend a considerable amount of time on managerial tasks such as paperwork, budgeting and dealing with district administration. Some studies have documented a common feeling among principals that they spend too much time on managerial tasks at the expense of leadership tasks.

Becoming a principal can also mark an abrupt shift in existing work relationships. Principals are considered middle managers who are both subordinate to bosses while having authority over teachers. Their relationship with students also changes dramatically (Loder, 2003). Principals spend considerably less time with the students than they did as teachers. Further, the relationship between students and principal may decline because they are charged with

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disciplining students while also working carefully with the parents and community. The principals' increased accountability to parents comes in the wake of such developments as the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act. Which gave parents and local community residents the authority to hire and fire principals and also to collaborate with them on school planning and budgeting (Loder & Spillane, 2003)?

The transition to the principalship requires women to trade their sphere of influence from the intimate, private domain of their classroom to the large, public domain of the school. As teachers, the nature of their work revolves around the classroom (Loder & Spillane, 2003). The relatively private space of the classroom allows women to form close relationships with their students. In the classroom, they tend to have considerable autonomy in how they work with students, organize their classroom space and present their lesson plans.

In conclusion, becoming a school principal is a transformative process, a predictable career pattern for many individuals within the field of education, especially women, who seek greater responsibility and organizational mobility. Changing educational careers requires an individual to relinquish the comfort and confidence of a known role – such as being a teacher— and experience the discomfort and uncertainty of a new, unknown role - being a principal (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). The making of a principal is an intricate process of learning and reflection that requires socialization into a new community of practice and assumption of a new role identity. The transition requires a careful balance of knowledge development through classroom learning activities and skills development through situated learning activities guided by qualified professionals. A teacher becomes a principal when the individual's attributes or capabilities and the organization's efforts successfully merge (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

Individuals engaged in leadership training need opportunities to develop administrative skills through active learning activities. According to researchers, effective preparation programs are characterized by significant coherence in curriculum, pedagogy, structure, and staffing, in which the experiential component is viewed as the core, with classroom-delivered curriculum content designed to support and make meaning of the experiential component (Browne-Ferrgino, 2003). Thus a key element in the transformative process of becoming a principal is having the opportunity to apply newly acquired knowledge to professional practice during carefully developed and monitored internship experiences.

Female Perceptions of Leadership

The larger question of how gender issues affect the power and control structure in a school organization has attracted little attention in recent years. The Carnegie Commission on Teaching as a Profession (1986) called for teacher empowerment as a major component in the reform of schools across the country. Conventional thinking would connect the empowerment of teachers with the leadership of their principals (Lee, Smith, & Cioci, n.d.). There is a social dynamic in the development and distribution of leadership and power in schools, however, and these elements do emerge in a gender-neutral environment. Not only is the gender leader of critical importance; so is the gender follower.

A key factor in the perception of female administrators is the male teacher. Male teachers' rate female leadership significantly lowers than their female counterparts, and yet their reports of staff influence, locus of control, and self-efficacy increase under women's leadership (Lee, Smith, & Cioci, n.d.). An explanation of this may be the unfamiliarity of the leadership situation, or that those women do not correspond to the "ideal" conception of leadership that the teaching profession has come to expect. The participatory management style of women may

threaten the autonomy that teachers (especially male teachers) have come to value as an integral part of their jobs. Research that has explored why women do not achieve promotion in schools has uncovered various explanations to account for the low representation of women in leadership positions in education. Once women move outside of the classroom, they find the masculine culture of educational administration hierarchies is firmly entrenched (Limerick & Anderson, 1999).

Women have struggled against a masculine form of leadership for many years. Gender identity has been constructed along with typecasting in today's society (Christman & McClellan, 2007). In terms of securing their positions, women administrators fight the socially constructed norms of leadership. These norms put women at odds with their own gender. Women, for the sake of leadership resiliency, must present themselves as competent leaders who can lead their schools into the future.

Summary

This review outlines the literature regarding the nature of female administrators' leadership experiences. However, there is relatively little research about female principals. Female leaders, like male leaders, can be complex and multidimensional and the existing analysis of their under representation, sex roles or leadership styles is partial, at best. Additionally, there is insufficient analysis acknowledging the intersection of gender and educational organizations. While new research in educational administration is becoming increasingly detailed and defined, it is clear that a specific study of the nature of the experiences of female principals in a male-dominated arena also merits attention. The study that the author is hereby proposing would add to this body of literature.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research is designed to explore the nature of the experiences of two female administrators and their insights into school leadership. A balanced approach to district training involves the implementation of performance assessment, opportunities for mentoring and improving the socialization process, and periodic monitoring of women administrators. The purpose of the following chapter is to provide a summary of the choice of research design, definitions of the setting and participants, the data collections methods, and the analysis of the resulting data. The perceptions of the two female administrators on their transition from the classroom to administration will be explored through a survey and followed up by individual interviews.

Statement of the Problem

It is not known how and to what extent female teachers perceives the potential challenges of becoming a principal, and how those perceptions change as they make the move from the classroom to the principal's office. This transition from being a teacher to becoming an educational leader requires a careful balance of knowledge development through classroom learning activities and skill development that is guided by qualified professionals (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). School districts and aspiring administrators need to better understand the entire process of role socialization within the present educational context. By better understanding what skills are needed, women will be more prepared to effectively run a school.

Purpose of the Study

As the cited research has shown, a new principal's transitional period is critical in determining her initial success as a leader, therefore it is important for administrators and policymakers to implement current research in the mentoring and assistance programs. This study will define the subjects' perceived challenges and barriers during the transitional period and how those perceptions were altered as they left teaching to become principals.

Research Questions

The following research questions reflected the direction of the research and the review of literature:

1. What challenges and barriers do women face in their journeys to becoming effective school-based leaders?

2. How do women principals perceive their overall leadership experiences within their districts?

3. How do female leaders' individual perceptions of their jobs change during the transition from being a teacher to becoming a school-based administrator?

4. What is the nature of leadership experience of female school administrators?

Research Design

By using a case study approach, the researcher will be able to gain a more accurate account of teacher perceptions, practices and the quality of the training programs. This study will examine district transitioning programs and identify the essential components that might prove valuable when creating future transition programs. It is expected that this study will validate the generally accepted transition model, which will advocate change through community

involvement, instructional beliefs, program design, cultural diversity, and district evaluation of all female administrators.

The researcher wishes to broaden the existing knowledge base by adding to the literature about female administrators. First, the study will provide insight into the existing leadership experiences of female principals as experienced in their specific school settings and social constructs. In addition, the research will seek to identify and address professional and personal challenges that are unique to women who are transitioning from the teaching role to an administrative role. Finally, the study will consider existing mentoring programs and evaluate which are most effective and why, in hopes that future programs will be designed with the researcher's findings in mind.

Panel of Experts

The researcher submitted both the interview and survey questions to a committee of experts. They were chosen for their experiences in educational administration. Since the interview and survey questions had never been used prior to this study, the committee was selected to determine if the questions were appropriate for the study. The questions have been revised so that they are understood and accepted by the participants.

Sampling Design

The researcher interviewed two women who have made the transition from teacher to administrator, and who represent both the traditional school setting and the online setting. This study will also explore what motivates these two women in their careers and how they made their transition from teaching to administration.

Individual Participants

The unit of analysis for this study will be creating case studies of two female administrators. Each of the selected administrators meets the following criteria:

1. Is female.

2. Serves as a school administrator.

3. Has undergone the transition from the classroom to administration and acquired the skills necessary for school leadership.

Interview

The purpose of the interviews is to gain qualitative data from those who have undergone the experience of becoming first-time female assistant principal or principal. To better understand the experience and perspective of each of these administrators, the researcher will conducted individual interviews at a local public library. Each interview has been audio taped and transcribed. Participants were selected from a group of acquaintances who gave their consent to be interviewed. No personal information has been shared with others.

Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy of the measurements and is based upon the judgment of the researcher. To test the validity of the interview questions, this researcher submitted the questions to a panel of experts. The panel of experts provided feedback and guidance on the interview. Field notes relating to each question were taken during the interview process.

Data Collection

Data was collected over a six week period. Two school leaders took part in a thirty-two question interview. The initial collection of background information about the participants' education and professional experience was gathered from this questionnaire. The

second method of gathering information was through individual interviews with the school

administrators. Field notes were taken during the interview. The third method of data collection

was transcribing the recorded interviews. Both participants had access to the transcriptions to

clarify or add any information.

Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative data was collected through interviews with the participants. The purpose of

the interviews was to gain data from the two women who have undergone the process of

becoming school administrators. Each interview was audio taped and transcribed. Participants

were a superintendent from a traditional school and the other was a principal from an online

school. No personal information was shared and the participants were given the opportunity to

review the transcriptions before publishing. Both interviews were held at a local public library.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher emailed letters to the participants asking for their informed consent. Both

participants in the study were assured of privacy and anonymity. The nature of the research was

fully explained in the consent form. It clearly delineated that participation was voluntary and that

participants could decline to participate. By completing, signing and returning the consent form,

the participants gave their informed consent.

The administrators were then asked to participate in an interview. An identifying number

was assigned to each survey and interview to ensure confidentiality. The researcher did not

infringe on the rights of the participants. To minimize the fear of risk, each subject was assured

that no one, other than specified colleagues and professors with whom the researcher discusses

results and conclusions would have access to the results, unless given prior permission to do so;

all identities of the subjects have been kept confidential throughout the entire study.

Limitations

This study focused on issues faced by study participants. The views of the participants are not reflective of all female administrators across the country. There are probable issues and concerns that the interviews did not address. In addition, the participants may not have been completely honest or forthcoming in their answers.

Summary

This chapter was designed to describe the methodology and techniques used to gather the necessary data for this research. It includes the design of the two case studies, the criteria used to select the participants and site for this research, and an explanation of the qualitative methods that were used to gather and analyze data.

CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION, DATA ANALYSIS, AND SUMMARY

This case study investigates the perceptions of two female administrators about their rise from the classroom setting to an administrative setting. The purpose of this study is to identify the nature of these two female school administrators' leadership experiences. This study examines how the women perceive school leadership as they function within a school-based setting. By exploring these two female administrators' leadership experiences, the study addresses the question of what criteria are needed by other women who wish to become successful school leaders.

Data Collection

The data presented in this chapter came from recorded interviews with two female administrators, which took place on November 6, 2010. No follow-up interviews were scheduled but transcriptions were emailed to the participants, who then made revisions and sent the corrections back. The names of those interviewed for this report were not used, including the names of the schools and the districts. One interviewee is a female administrator from a traditional school, and the other is from an online school. Both women were interviewed, face to face, in a public library. Finally, in order to generate the categories and properties for the final data, the investigator read each transcript several times to identify similarities and trends among the participants' responses.

Properties and Categories

Each participant was interviewed at local public library. After each interview had taken place, the recorded interview was then transcribed to be used as data for this study, and after sifting through all the information, a system of categories and properties was developed. As a result, some underlying themes from the interview were identified.

When organizing the data, each theme was given a color code and name, which resulted in the use of mnemonics as a representation for the title of each category and property. For example, the category Challenges and Barriers is abbreviated as CB. As with any organizational process, the data involved needed to be arranged into the properties under each of the categories. Each category was given a color, while each property was double color-coded to identify the properties that related to their specific categories. A property like Understand and Relate is color coded red-blue to represent the category Challenges and Barriers, whose color is red. Through this process, the organizational procedure eased the process of identifying which properties are related to which categories. With each additional property that related to the selected category must contain the color selected as the support the transcriptions related to the dominant category. Once each of the categories had been identified, each received a definition. Each specific definition evolved from the interview notes and transcripts. When the categories and properties were defined, each property was supported by the appropriate transcription from the interview to provide support that evolved from the properties and categories. Support for the research questions came from each of the categories.

The following legend is a summary of the data that resulted from the interview transcriptions. The legend designates what each category and property has been defined as.

Legend of Categories and Properties

Category1: Challenges and Barriers (CB) Red

Definition: The ability to meet and overcome any difficulties that can arise in educational administration.

Property: Understand and relate to a variety of obstacles that can shape effective school-based leadership. (UR) –Blue-Red

Definition: The ability to perform the various duties and responsibilities related to the position.

Category2: Leadership Qualities (LQ) – Green

Definition: The qualities that any leader has developed and utilizes in their positions.

Property: Vision and assertiveness (VA) –Yellow-Green

Definition: The ability to create an obtainable vision and being able to implement that vision

Category3: Individual Perceptions (IP) – Orange

Definition: The ability to perceive one's role in their job

Property: Responsibilities (R) – Orange-Red

Definition: Any jobs not specifically outlined in the contract

Category4: Leadership Experience (LE) – Blue

Definition: The ability to communicate with both the community and staff.

Property: On-going beliefs (OB) – Blue-Green

Definition: Developing a set of defined beliefs and the communicating of those beliefs to the staff and community.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1:

What challenges and barriers do women teachers face in their journey to become effective school-based leaders?

Participant 1 stated that with any new job there is always a lack of self-confidence. When she started as an administrator thirty years ago the field was dominated by men and it seemed to be a closed society and a good old boys club. She found that was difficult to overcome and did not like it. She also stated that in the field of educational administration, it isn't who you know

but what you know. Educational administration is a difficult political field, according to Participant 1, and she tries to avoid any unnecessary political issues.

The biggest influence in her choice to become an administrator was the salary involved. Participant 1 had a large family to support and needed to get a good paying job. In her old district, she was a regular teacher but had added responsibility that wasn't reflected in her paycheck. She eventually went back to school and got her Master's degree in Educational Administration. Participant 1 also stated that she had the necessary experience for her job but not the education needed to get the higher salary.

In her previous district, Participant 1 stated that she had several positions assigned to her. Participant 1 stated that she was a regular teacher, resource director with a big case load, assistant principal at a middle school, and eventually ended up as a principal at an alternative high school. She felt that the district, to a certain extent, took advantage of her and her abilities. She also felt that she had little or no support while she was working in these various duties. Participant 1 she felt that her strong work ethic helped her through all her past and current positions.

Participant 1 went on to describe her leadership style as visionary. She firmly believed that the vision that she had established in her district would make it into a successful district. Participant 1 also stated that she experienced no barriers in settling into her new role as superintendent, due to the fact that she had had similar jobs in the past. She felt that the community perceived her very well, but also conceded that she had to work very hard to achieve that perception.

When Participant 2 started in education seven years ago, the number of female administrators was beginning to grow. As she started to take on more responsibility at her

school, she went back to school to get her Master's degree in Educational Administration. Participant 2 felt that educational administration was the route she wanted to go in her career, although she also said that educational administration can be very political in nature, and that she tries to avoid any political confrontations that can arise in her job.

Participant 2 feels that her leadership style is transformational. She gears her actions so that she increases the awareness of what her vision and beliefs are. Participant 2 also tries to be proactive in optimizing not just teacher performance, but also professional development within her school. She also believes that having open communication with her teachers is vital, and she communicates her goals and expectations to her staff via daily emails.

Participant 2 feels that she does get support from her superintendent. She also credits her strong work ethic in helping her move forward in her leadership. Participant 2 said that she hasn't really had any barriers in her move to becoming an administrator. Like Participant 1, Participant 2 also feels that the community perceives her well but that she has worked very hard to achieve that.

Category1: Challenges and Barriers (CB) Red

Definition: The ability to meet and overcome any difficulties that can arise.

Property: Understand and relate to a variety of obstacles that can shape effective school based leadership. (UR) –Blue-red.

Definition: The ability to perform the various duties and responsibilities related to the position.

Category3: Individual Perceptions (IP) – orange.

Definition: The ability to perceive one's role in their job.

Property: Responsibilities (R) – orange-red

Definition: Any jobs not specifically outlined in the contract. Analysis of Category 1

Analysis of Category One

Category 1 directly relates to Research Question 1, which states: What challenges and barriers do women teachers face in their journey to becoming effective school-based leaders? This was supported by both participants, who believed that the individual challenges and barriers only helped define how they ran their perspective school and school district. The research indicates that their past jobs as teachers with extra responsibilities worked to build the necessary skills in their leadership roles.

Analysis of Category 3

Category 3 also relates to Question 1 through individual perceptions of school-based leaders. Since the participants felt their individual perceptions played a role in becoming an administrator, it was one of many key factors that helped them become leaders. The participants also commented that without going through and learning the different aspects of teaching, they would not have the perspective of what needed to be done to become a school-based leader.

Question 2:
How do women principals perceive their overall leadership qualities within their districts?

Participant 1 felt that having a core set of principles to work with was the key to running a district properly. Having a vision for how things would run and being very passionate about that vision was very important to her. She said that by being clear in that vision left no room for doubt amongst the staff on how the vision needed to be carried out. Also, she said, it is important to establish a set of beliefs that can be followed by all in the district. Participant 1 also stated that she makes it clear to the staff during staff development training how she is planning to carry out her beliefs and vision for the district. She also said that she expected all the staff to share in the

vision that she has set up for the district. She stated that she tries to hire teachers who agree with her vision and beliefs for the district and then uses that data-driven information to measure how the staff is doing and what the students are learning. Participant 1 said that once she has taught the staff on how she wants to run the district, they then can essentially run themselves with little guidance.

Participant 1 stated that an important quality for any successful women leaders is having a strong belief system in place, and the courage to move forward with any plan or program that needs to be implemented. She also stated that motivational author Steven R. Covey's basic tenets for successful male and female leaders are qualities that she has tried to incorporate into her leadership style. She felt that being assertive was essential to running a school or district. Participant 1said that she is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in or to move forward in the programs she wants to implement. She said that by listening to the staff and their ideas, she has created a better working environment. Participant 1 stated that she is currently mentoring a couple of female teachers and is encouraging her teaching staff to become teacher leaders. She has found that, through mentoring, other women can become empowered to successfully lead within their schools and districts.

Participant 2 stated that her strongest leadership qualities were a strong work ethic and an ability to keep a sense of independence while running her school. Like Participant 1, Participant 2 felt that having a clear vision and mission were vital to running a successful school. She also felt that clearly communicating with parents and staff provides for a strong structure in which the school can run. Participant 2 said she has a desire to succeed and that a strong leadership quality is what all female administrators should possess. She also felt that by being committed to continual learning, students and staff can go a long way to improve the school in areas that need

improvement. Finally, Participant 2 said that being an assertive leader that is willing to admit to mistakes are also key qualities.

Category2: Leadership Qualities (LQ) – green

Definition: The qualities that any leader developed and utilizes in their positions.

Property: Vision and assertiveness. (VA) – Yellow-green.

Definition: The ability to create an obtainable vision and being able to implement it within that vision.

Category3: Individual Perceptions (IP) – orange.

Definition: The ability to perceive one's role in their job.

Property: Responsibilities (R) – orange-red

Definition: Any added jobs not necessarily outlined in the contract.

<div align="center">Analysis of Category 2</div>

Category 2 also addresses and supports question 2, which states, how do women principals perceive their overall leadership qualities within their districts? It addresses how the two female participants deal with both their jobs and personal transitions within the educational field. Both participants also address their individual qualities and category 2 provides that support. Also the participants took an active role in providing current and pertinent development to their staff so that they can then translate that information to the students and classroom.

<div align="center">Analysis of Category Three</div>

Category 3 also helps in the support of question 2. It provides support in the fact that both women had clear visions and missions that they communicate that to their staffs. Both participants' individual perceptions of their jobs are also important in how their teachers see the running of the school and district. Once the staff has a clear understanding of the mission and

vision, the individual perceptions change and they can then become more empowered and take ownership in the school.

Question 3

How do a female leader's individual perceptions of her job change during the transition from being a teacher to becoming a school-based leader?

The biggest influence on Participant 1'sinfluence to becoming a school-based leader was the salary. Participant 1 stated that she had a large family to support and needed to get a job that could support all of them. Before becoming a superintendent, Participant 1 was a regular teacher with added responsibilities that wasn't reflected in her paycheck, she said. She eventually went back to school and got a Master's degree in Educational Administration. Participant 1 stated that she had the experience to be a school leader but lacked the education.

Participant 1's perceptions about her job changed when she had the responsibilities added to her teacher duties. At her old school she was the SPED Director, Assistant Principal over discipline, and a travelling teacher. Participant 1 felt that she gained her knowledge and expertise over the time she spent in those areas. She went on to suggest that any woman who wants to move into administration should be on various committees such as the curriculum committee, should facilitate new ideas for the school, and generally put her into a position to get noticed.

Before becoming a school leader, Participant 2 was also a teacher with added responsibilities, although she didn't have a big family to support. Participant 2 felt that in order to move forward with her career with becoming an administrator, the way to gain more experience was from being on various committees and doing other jobs. For example, she was a lead teacher in the English Department, was on the curriculum committee, and served as a class sponsor. Participant 2 also went back to school to get her Master's degree in Educational

Administration. While working on various committees, Participant 2 worked with other teachers and leaders and gained valuable knowledge from them. She felt that this was beneficial in her decision to become a school-based leader.

Participant 2 said that in order for her to grow as an educator, she felt that she needed to pursue various avenues and one of them was becoming a school-based leader. She also noted that if a woman wants to become an administrator, she needs to develop skills that will help her and others grow as well. Participant 2 said that networking with other female leaders and getting their perspectives on their jobs was also extremely beneficial. She felt any successful school leader needs a good role model, either male or female, who demonstrates crucial information on how to run a school and program well.

Category3: Individual Perceptions (IP) – orange

Definition: The ability to perceive one's role in their job.

Property: Responsibilities (R) – orange-red

Definition: Any added jobs not necessarily outlined in the contract.

Category4: Leadership Experience (LE) – blue

Definition: The ability to communicate with both the community and staff.

Property: On-going beliefs (OB) – blue-green

Definition: Developing a set of defined beliefs and the communicating of the beliefs to staff and community.

<div align="center">Analysis of Category 3</div>

Category 3 helps support and address Question 3, which states: How do a female leader's individual perceptions of her job change during the transition from being a teacher to becoming a school-based leader? Participants 1 and 2's perceptions are based on the experiences they had

while they were teachers. The participants also felt that as they pursued their educations their perceptions about how to deal with unusual situations changed.

<div align="center">Analysis of Category 4</div>

Category 4 also provides support for Question 3. Both participants in the study had been lead teachers at one point before becoming school-based leaders. They felt that growth helped them both personally and professionally to make better decisions on how things need to be run. In their experience, both Participants 1 and 2 said that mentoring modeled correct teaching strategies to help teachers be successful.

Research Question 4

What is the nature of the leadership experience of female school administrators?

Participant 1 found that the community's ignorance of school policies was frustrating. People in the community got angry at any changes that were being made but didn't come in and ask for clarification on these changes. The district is the only form of government in her community and so the parents tend to get suspicious of any government entity and governmental control, she said.

Participant 1 also stated that not being afraid to stand up for what you believe in and to move forward can go a long way with both the parents and community, and that her strong work ethic kept her going through all the issues that arose in running a school district. Participant 1 incorporated a Principal Based Leadership style based on Stephen R. Covey form of leadership. She stressed that being very clear in what you believe and what you want will help you in becoming a strong leader.

Participant 2 found, that unlike Participant 1, the community was very knowledgeable about school policy and other items associated with the school, and that the parents had a very hands-on approach to their children's education. Staff, teachers and parents all practice excellent communication, she said. Of course, there were times when a miscommunication had occurred and had negative effects, but were worked out satisfactorily. Participant 2 felt that the community, both online and outside the school, has accepted her but she still has to work hard to maintain that acceptance.

Category4: Leadership Experience (LE) – blue

Definition: The ability to communicate with both the community and staff.

Property: On-going beliefs (OB) – blue-green

Definition: Developing a set of defined beliefs and the communicating of that belief.

Analysis of Category 4

Category 4 helps support and address Question 4, which states: What is the nature of the leadership experience of female school administrators? Both participants said that any woman who wants to become an administrator needs to stand up for what she believes in and must have a vision in place so that when she assumes the role of a school-based leader, she can be prepared for the job. She also needs to be clear in how she wants the staff to perform, in order to ensure the students are successful.

Summary

In this case study, I investigated the leadership experiences of two female administrators, in an effort to determine the leadership assumptions that have been part of the careers of a female superintendent and a female online principal. After reviewing the material, it became clear that

both administrators had similar experiences in obtaining their jobs. For example, both worked as regular teachers with added responsibilities and went on to pursue Master's degrees. The interviews also reveal that both participants have dealt with their different situations similarly, as well as in different ways.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The study's findings, presented in this chapter, are a compilation of the thoughts, feelings and opinions of two female participants negotiating their roles as school administrators. Although a number of their comments revolve directly around their perceptions of their leadership style and education, their oral contributions are certainly not limited to their particular areas. They also spoke about what drove them to become administrators, from personal to professional concerns, and about what has helped them succeed in their career, among other things.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings presented in this chapter reflect the interpretations and constructions of a female researcher. They are also tainted with a certain level of subjectivity that any researcher brings to a qualitative study, particularly a female researcher who aspires to become a school-based leader in the future. Consequently, the findings and interpretations presented here are open to additional interpretations and meanings by others. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the findings presented here reflect the perceptions and opinions shared by the participants themselves, in their own words. The views of these women have not been compared against the expressed views of other individuals who interact with the participants regularly in their school or district contexts. They do, however, allow for analysis of common data or themes across the research settings, and specifically, among the two female participants in a similar leadership position. The findings in this research should serve as an additional contribution to, rather than a standard for, the complex world of educational administration. Thus, the purpose of this study is to understand how women make the transition from the classroom setting to an administrative setting.

Participants

As the profiles presented in Chapter 4 indicate, the two female participants in this study came from unique educational settings. Likewise, they each pursued unique paths to their current positions and were influenced in their positions by different individuals and circumstances. Each of the participants had several years of experience in the educational area. Participant One has spent most of her career as a superintendent, while Participant Two spent the majority of her time in the classroom before pursuing a job in administration. Both of the women in this study worked solely with male principals as assistant principals, prior to assuming their current roles as school leaders.

The Nature of the Experiences of Female Administrators

According to Hackney's research, female administrators lead quite differently from their male counterparts, but in the same manner women do feel the impact of the barriers that may keep them from going into key leadership roles. In order to ensure successful changes in certain areas of education like curriculum and instruction, schools and school districts are now beginning to realize the unique strengths of their women administrators. At this point in time, however, women still do not utilize their talents within their schools and school districts. It also has been shown that women administrators tend to interact more with students and teachers than their male counterparts.

The Societal Constructions

As with any leadership position, successful socialization or culturalization of school-based leaders requires a new type of leadership support in schools. What is also important with school cultures is how female administrators interact within the school culture. In addition, it was

discussed by the participants that communication of beliefs and visions can help the transition from the classroom to administration to run more smoothly. Not only do women have some problems socializing into their new positions, they may also have experience public constraints when transitioning, such as personal and familial constraints. The participant's responses reflect that women have been socialized to resolve conflicts amongst family responsibilities in a supportive capacity; they often find a balance between family and career goals.

Often, though, leadership positions such as educational leadership are still viewed as incompatible with the teacher positions. Both participants, however, felt that their positions did not conflict too much with their personal and family lives. The socialization of a new school administrator should be viewed as an encompassing process by which a female administrator acquires the knowledge, skills and disposition needed to perform effectively in her roles as a school-based leader. According to Shakeshaft, studies show that women who have had several school experiences prior to assuming an administrative role, such as teachers, counselors, assistant principals and other on-the-job leadership training, tend to be more easily socialized into their new roles as school leaders. Studies have also determined that female administrators experience different patterns of socialization and that the district in which they work vastly influences the nature of their experiences. Female administrators have also been influenced by the different stages they have passed through and how they were then supported in the different areas they went through, as well as by the personal and social context they find themselves also in and by their own set of values, beliefs and aspirations.

Administrator Preparation Programs

` Although over half of advanced degrees in educational administration are awarded to females, few preparation programs offer gender and leadership courses, and general leadership

courses at the university level most often incorporate readings that reflect a bias. Both participants shared that they were exposed to literature from privileged points of view during their preparation. Similarly, the supporting literature included in preparation programs should reflect practice and leadership at all levels from varied, female viewpoints: elementary, middle, high school, and superintendency. Special attention should be paid to incorporating literature that includes the standpoints of the underrepresented in the areas where they are most underrepresented.

Likewise, these programs should introduce their students to underrepresented practitioners in the field who can serve as visiting lecturers and can share their viewpoints not only as leaders but as (in this case) female leaders. It may be difficult for women to share openly about the nature of their experiences while still practicing in the field, as silence remains a survival mechanism for them. Nevertheless, new research, like this study, for example, where the voices of female school leaders are heard loud and clear, can be shared with aspiring administrators to expose them to unique and varied leadership experiences, as well as views on leading. The issue is equity for women, not just numeric equity but equity in their inclusion in the discourse surrounding the field and its preparation of current and future leaders. Women beginning preparation programs should be exposed to varied information that addresses their unique positions and prepares them to be (female) leaders at varied levels. Men should likewise be exposed to these varied perspectives as well.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has attempted to serve as a contribution to, rather than a standard for, the literature in the field of educational administration, through providing a forum to an underrepresented group of women serving in a male-dominated profession. It only provides a

glimpse into the nature of the experiences of two female school-based leaders negotiating their

leadership roles in tandem with those roles and constructs socially imposed on them. The study

has initiated a more focused discourse grounded in the language and experiences of women

serving as school-based leaders. More research and investigation into the experiences of women

leaders in school administration or those aspiring to school leadership positions at all levels is

still necessary. To even remotely counter the dominant theories and perspectives with new

perspectives or challenges from female points of view, additional studies are imperative.

<div align="center">Women of Diverse Backgrounds</div>

Both of the women that participated in this study were Anglo. Although it is important to

note that there is no universal experience among Anglo women in the field, it is even more

crucial to recognize that there is no universal experience for all women across racial and ethnic

groups. Hooks (1984), contends that race is more influential on women's experiences than

gender. Studies that capture the language and experiences of women who grapple with both the

intersections of race and gender and their roles as educational leaders could provide rich

perspectives and understandings not possible in more monolithic studies of women still affiliated

with the dominant culture. Banks (1995), Hooks (1990) and others point out that women are not

a numerical minority like people of diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. Their status of minority

stems from their lack of access to power. Anglo women, like women of diverse backgrounds, do

lack economic, social, and political power. However, in contrast to other women, Anglo women

have access to membership in a privileged group and certain powers associated with that status.

The potential for research focused on women of diverse backgrounds leading at the high school

level is great, and this research need not only be conducted by persons of similar diverse

backgrounds, just as women's experience need not only be studied by other women. Women and

persons of varied heritage have long studied traditional leadership theories and literature in the field stemming from a white, male-dominant perspective. It seems befitting that this trend be reversed, not only by other women and those representing diverse groups but also by scholars in the field from all backgrounds and experiences. Inquiry surrounds the manner in which women of diverse backgrounds grapple with the intersection of race and gender in their daily work, their approaches to overcoming dilemmas they face, particular lessons in perseverance that they have learned, ways in which they would like to see themselves reflected in the literature and field, and their general stories about what is needed to be successful as a leader pioneering in the field. Research into this matter could provide rich descriptions and alternative understandings still neglected by the field at this time. Indeed, scholars of all backgrounds could gain valuable insight from investigating the experiences and perspectives of women of diverse backgrounds either practicing in the field of educational administration or aspiring to do so.

Varied District Contexts

Although this study was designed around women serving in two different district settings (small and online districts), their experiences are highly contextual. The findings presented here may resonate with some readers, yet they may not necessarily be transferable to other settings. Additional studies that investigate several women across similar contexts (i.e. a group of women all serving in medium-sized suburban districts) may strengthen similar themes or at least provide insight into the perspectives of women across somewhat more comparable settings. Furthermore, the limited sample of this study requires that more investigation be done on women serving in high school principalships -- period. The varied portraits that participants from varied settings could provide will further contribute to our collective understanding of the worlds of those females underrepresented in the field.

This study analyzes women who are currently practicing in the field – those school-based administrators who currently operate within a system that is still riddled with stereotypes, discrimination and gender stratification. Additional follow-up research on these women a period of time after completion of the study could provide an interesting glimpse of how these participants have been affected by the first round of research and its impact on their later experiences as school-based leaders.

Summary

Based on a study of two female administrators, this chapter presented a summary of the research findings and conclusions, several implications for practice, and recommendations for further research in the field of educational administration. It likewise provided a brief review of the literature, study design and research questions. While acknowledging arguments that the predominant research on female educational leaders strictly focuses on their dilemmas and overlooks their contributions; this study has sought to expand our understandings of the nature of the experiences of female administrators by addressing both areas. The important intersection of gender and the role of the school leaders and the dilemmas that these women face in relation to that intersection are central to the study.

Moreover, the study's emphasis on the participants' perceptions and notions of leadership contribute to new and unconventional perspectives on leadership, as well. It could be argued that the study points to more questions and areas for further investigation than it does answers or conclusions. Although it does shed some initial light on the nature of the leadership experiences of female school administrators, much more study is needed in this area. Nevertheless, by informing educational research with the genuine voices of women serving as school-based leaders, it has attempted to widen the conversation on leadership in the field by including

alternative, differing perspectives often neglected in traditional research that supposes gender

neutrality and/or that analyzes the experiences of high school leaders in general.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are your strongest leadership qualities?

2. What are important qualities for successful women leaders in education?

3. What are the strong personal qualities that you posses which have helped you in your leadership position?

4. Describe the difficulties you have experienced as a female administrator?

5. What are the important life experiences you have had that influenced your choice to become an administrator?

6. Did this district previously employ you? If so, in what position/positions?

7. How did you find out about this job opening?

8. Was the position advertised to the general public within and outside of the district?

9. How are you evaluated?

10. How often are you evaluated?

11. Who evaluates you?

12. What is the race distribution of the students within you district?

13. Are your school board member former educators?

14. How long has each of these members been on the school board?

15. What is the gender and race distribution of your school board members?

16. Are you a native of the community or a surrounding community in which you work? If not where are you from?

17. Did the school board voted unanimously to appoint you as superintendent/principal? If not, how were the votes divided? (Appointed only)

18. Were your opponent's natives of the community in which they were seeking a superintendent/principal position?

19. What is your vision and mission for the district?

20. If you could change three things about the district, what would you change and why? (List and discuss in order of priority)

21. What barriers did you face and have to overcome in order to become superintendent/principal?

22. What are you doing to encourage females to become a district leader (superintendent/principal)?

23. How would you describe your leadership style?

24. What role did mentoring, networking, and role modeling play in your rise to becoming a superintendent/principal?

25. What avenues did you take to become a superintendent/principal?

26. What advice would you give to an aspiring superintendent/principal about gaining access to the superintendency or principalship?

27. What is the single most important factor that you think influenced your being hired as superintendent or principal?

28. Are/were there any personal or internal barriers that you encountered while pursuing or in your position as superintendent or principal? For example, obligations, self-confidence, assertiveness?

29. How do you think the community perceives you as a superintendent or principal?

30. Do you feel that being a female helped or interfered with your pursuit to becoming a superintendent or principal?

31. What is your degree level?

32. What do you see as the major reason or key component for your success or longevity?