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Why Are Women with Leadership Certification Not Pursuing School-Level Leadership Positions

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WHY ARE WOMEN WITH LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION NOT PURSUING

SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

by

DAPHNEY DENISE IVERY

(Under the Direction of Abebayehu Tekleselassie)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to understand why women with leadership certification do not seek formal administrative roles. More specifically, the study examined why women with leadership certification choose to pursue a program in administrative preparation; assessed the reasons certified women educators are not moving into formal administrative roles; and identified conditions and structural support systems that these women need in order to help them transition to formal administrative roles.

In order to answer the study's major questions, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach with thematic analysis as a major strategy. The researcher then conducted an in-depth interview with ten educators who obtained leadership certification but are currently in teaching positions.

The study's findings largely converge with those of other researchers that suggest that the glass ceiling concept regarding female advancement has diminished; however, there are numerous factors which impact women's decisions to pursue or accept formal administrative roles. The women who participated in this study found leadership programs to be doable while working and raising a family because many of the programs were offered at a local or convenient site. Time, family obligations, isolation, stress,

travel, student discipline issues, lack of role models, paperwork, love for teaching, and politics were cited as major reasons why women do not move into administrative positions. The results of this study also indicate that districts often lack formal structures to assist individuals who desire to move into administrative positions.

The study was unique in the sense that women are consistently pursuing leadership certification, but the themes that emerged from the participants' interviews are decisive factors as to whether or not they will enter into a formal administrative role. Not only are the results of this study valuable to women interested in leadership positions, but they are also very beneficial to school districts as they seek to fill administrative vacancies. Based on the data, school districts are presented with ideas of how to possibly restructure leadership positions in order to make them more attractive and doable for those who also desire to preserve their family structure. While providing opportunities for interested personnel to transition from the classroom into leadership positions is important, the establishment of support systems to ensure success for those who have moved into leadership positions is of equal importance. These are key components that are often lacking for aspiring leaders. Due to their convenience, on-line courses and satellite campuses are major attractions for individuals who long to pursue leadership certification. This study provided recommendations for school districts and universities as they seek to promote women's advancement in educational leadership.

INDEX WORDS: Glass ceiling, Leadership certification, Principal, Stereotypes,
                 Women Administrators, and Underrepresentation

WHY ARE WOMEN WITH LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATION NOT PURSUING

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Willie N. and Marion C. Ivery. These two people have always encouraged me to be the best person I could be and emphasized the importance of obtaining an education. They constantly reminded me that an education was the key to unlocking numerous employment opportunities, which would result in a better life-style. I have worked hard to obtain this degree to show my parent that their words did not return void. I dedicate this dissertation to both of them for all they have done to make me a better person.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the formation of the one-room schoolhouse with one teacher and several

students of different ages with various ability levels, there has been evidence of a school

administrator. The school administrator was primarily called a "head teacher" who was

in charge of the school but spent most of his or her time on instructional tasks

(Richardson, Blackbourn, Ruhl-Smith & Haynes, 1997). In an attempt to address the

complexities of urban systems, many districts decided to unite several teachers in the

same building with a single head known as the school principal (Knezevich, 1984).

School or educational administrators who manage elementary, middle, and secondary

schools are referred to as principals (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006-07). According to

Knezevich (1984), the school principal is responsible for controlling and managing

school affairs, which include maintaining the building, supervising instruction,

disciplining students, and procuring resources for the building.   However, according to

Richardson et al., (1997), the first principals spent the majority of their time on the

instructional programs of the school.

   Today most school districts have a superintendent, associate and assistant

superintendents, principals, and assistant principals charged with various tasks to

ensure that all facets of a school district, including each individual school within

the district, are operating at the fullest capacity in order to reach the goals of the

district. A study conducted by the Mid-continent Research for Education and

Learning (McREL) posed the following question: "Does leadership really make a

difference in schools?" The results of the data collected indicate a significant

positive correlation between school leadership and student achievement (Waters,

Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Waters and Grubbs (2004) found that principal

leadership is significantly correlated with student achievement and that leaders

can have a positive, marginal, or negative impact on student achievement.

   As society continues to define the principal's role and the significance of the position,

it is critical to remember that pinpointing the role of a person in this position is not an

easy task. Leaders, managers, facilitators, and instructional leaders are among many

titles principals have been given (Richardson et al., 1997). According to Lashway

(2003), principals must serve as instructional leaders with their focus on student learning.

They must be knowledgeable in content areas and pedagogical techniques in order to help

teachers strengthen their instruction (Lashway, 2003). The Interstate School Leaders

Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) provides guidance for principal preparatory programs

with the overall focus on student achievement (Lashway, 2003, and Waters & Grubbs,

2004). According to Sergiovanni (Portin, 2004), there are seven functions of leadership:

instructional leadership, cultural leadership, managerial leadership, human resource

leadership, strategic leadership, external development, and micropolitical leadership.

School leaders are known as visionary individuals charged with the task of transforming

others to incorporate the vision and carry on once the leadership of an organization

changes (Richardson et al, 1997).

   School leaders perform many different tasks, and they are expected to be well-versed

in all areas of school administration in order to be effective in improving the academic

performance of the students. The role of principals has been outlined, and expectations

have been clearly stated. Principals must understand and execute a plan for making expectations a reality.

Profile of School Leaders

As noted earlier, education administrators have a wide range of duties and responsibilities, which generally require more than one individual to effectively orchestrate. Therefore, many schools, depending on the number of students, have a principal and one or more assistant principals. Historically, women have made up the majority of the teaching workforce; yet, women are still underrepresented in school leadership positions, especially the principalship. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) during 1999-2000, a total of 2,590,000 (75%) teachers were women and 860,000 (25%) were males (2005). Between 1993-1994 and 2003-2004, the percentage of public women principals increased from 41 percent to 56 percent at the elementary level and from 14 percent to 26 percent at the secondary level. During 1993-1994, of a total of 104,600 principals in the United States, 60.9 percent were males and 39.1 percent were women (NCES, 2005). In 1999-2000, of a total of 110,000 principals in the United States, 53.7 percent were males while 46.4 percent were women (NCES, 2007). During 2003-2004, of the 115,000 principals in the United States, 50.3 percent were males and 49.7 percent were women (NCES, 2005). This data indicates a constant increase in women representation in administration at the school-level, but this increase still does not erase the disproportion of female representation in school administration compared to the number of women serving as classroom teachers.

In the fiscal year of 2003, there were a total of 103,350 teachers in the state of Georgia, and 82 percent of these teachers were women (Glynn & Muth, 2004). Yet,

according to a 2003 study comparing Georgia School Principals, the percentage of female

principals hired by the state of Georgia as a whole was only 55.1 percent (Toth, 2003).

Based on the data presented, the disproportion among the number of women serving as

classroom teachers compared to the number of women serving as school administrators is

a notable one. According to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) of Georgia,

there were a total of 2,126 principals in the state during the 2005 fiscal year and 2,146 in

2006. This information showed an increase of twenty principals during this time frame

(PSC 2006). The PSC (2006) revealed that a total of 2,947 assistant principals in 2005

increased to 3,098 in 2006, indicating a difference of 151 in this category. In 2006, there

were a total of 8,398 educators in the administrative group, which includes

superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and program directors. Almost two-thirds

(64%) were women, and over half of the principals and assistant principals were women

(PSC, 2006).

    According to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (2006), a total

of 3, 699 school leadership degrees were awarded between 1997 and 2005. This school

leadership category includes the following areas: Curriculum and Instruction, General

Education Administration and Supervision, Educational Supervision, and Educational

Administration and Supervision. During this time period, 94 degrees were awarded in

the area of Curriculum and Instruction, 3,153 were awarded in General Education

Administration and Supervision, 405 were awarded in Educational Supervision, and 47

were awarded in Education Administration and Supervision (Board of Regents, 2006).

This information was not categorized by gender; therefore, the number of males and

women awarded leadership certification has not been determined.

The statistics presented regarding school leaders provide evidence that women leadership is on the rise. According to the United States Department of Labor (2000), 60 percent of the 108 million women in the United States age sixteen and over are presently employed; however, that number is relatively high in comparison to the number of women holding administrative or managerial positions. The National Association of Women Business Owners reported that females held less than eight percent of America's top managerial positions (Maich, 2005). According to Shakeshaft (Byrd-Blake, 2004), women represent the majority in the teaching profession but still remain absent from the highest administrative positions in public education.

Reasons For Under Representation of Women in Leadership Positions

Males have traditionally held most supervisory positions, but recent statistics indicate that by 2010 nearly 70 percent of individuals entering the workforce will be women (Pearson & Trent, 2004). Even though women are represented well in the workforce, women managers continue to lag behind male counterparts in both advancement and pay (Dingell & Maloney; Albrechtsen, 2004). While women are in the workforce and may hold managerial positions, these women still fail to advance beyond a certain level. Many women have the leadership qualifications for becoming potential administrators but often choose not to pursue leadership positions due to the "glass ceilings" as well as the frustration and demands of the job (Williamson & Hudson, 2003). According to Williamson and Hudson (2003), politics, limited experience as an assistant principal, time constraints of the job, and the relationship between work and family have also caused potential women leaders not to pursue the principalship.

Review of the Literature

According to Hall (2002), the "glass ceiling" concept is often associated with the notion of why women struggle to advance in employment settings. This transparent barrier hinders advancement beyond a certain point and is revealed in various forms of gender bias that often occur in overt and covert ways (Oakley, 2000; Atwater & Van Fleet 1997). The notion of the "glass ceiling" suggests that certain invisible barriers, based solely on gender, are incorporated for the purpose of keeping women out of certain positions of leadership (Sczensy, 2003; Oakley, 2000). Even though women make up approximately 40 percent of the managerial positions in the United States, many organizations are reviewing policies and practices because women hold less than five-tenths percent of the highest paid managerial positions in large corporations.

In response to the barriers to female advancement in the workplace, a Glass Ceiling Commission was established by the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (Dingell & Maloney, 2002). The purpose of the commission was to identify various obstacles to advancement while implementing and expanding policies and practices to ensure more opportunities for women and minorities in the workplace. According to a recent study, many institutions of higher education are biased in regards to hiring practices (Bombardieri, 2005). Universities acknowledge the fact that disparities exist in the number of men and women professors in various departments. Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and other universities are taking a closer look at what can be done to promote women in male-dominated departments such as engineering and chemistry (Bombardieri, 2005). As a result of these findings, many organizations have shifted from male-dominated professions to

professions adamantly seeking to secure women hopes of changing the perception of employees regarding gender-specific jobs (Valentine & Godkin, 2000).

Although organizations are required to practice equal treatment of all employees, regardless of age, gender, race, and religion, gender inequalities do exist in the workplace (Ngo, Foley, Wong & Loi, 2003). Some women revealed that gender has affected careers because their gender has forced them to work harder in order to obtain the same recognition as males in the same positions (Olsson, 2004). Olsson (2004) also revealed that employers often reserve powerful positions for males and view women as less likely to exhibit authority in the workplace. Large employment projections have been encouraging because women are graduating from universities in greater numbers (Albrechtsen, 2004); however, women still have a long way to go to achieve equity and workplace privilege (Thomas & Lauda, 2002). Workplace privilege has afforded females the opportunity to feel connected to the job in terms of information received and to feel valued as an employee regardless of family obligations and gender. Noticeable disparities exist between women employed and women promoted.

Barriers

The number of women in managerial or supervisory positions has increased; yet, the struggle for women to move into upper management positions has not disappeared (Tai & Sims, 2005). While women are being promoted in the workplace, the majority of those promotions are management positions of lower status (Granleese, 2004; Eicher-Catt, 2005). According to Granleese (2004), women typically occupy top management positions in organizations that have a greater number of lower-level management positions. For example, banking is an industry in which women are likely to acquire top

management positions because banking is a field dominated primarily by women; however, the low number of women in managerial positions is still typical of a male-dominant culture (Granleese, 2004).

The myth that women are emotionally and physically weak and therefore incapable of disciplining older students also prevents women from advancing (Growe & Montgomery, 2000). Growe and Montgomery (2000) also indicate that society's attitude hinders women from reaching supervisory positions as women are viewed as being too dependent on feedback and the evaluation of others, lacking independence, receiving little to no encouragement to pursue leadership positions, and not being task orientated enough.

According to Oakley (2000), several other barriers associated with the lack of women advancement include corporate policies and practices, training and career development, promotion policies, and compensation practices. In addition to the aforementioned barriers, Oakley (2000) also cited the following as factors that hinder women from acquiring promotions or top managerial positions: (1) double binding creates a situation where a person cannot win regardless of what is done, (2) gender and communication styles of women are often misinterpreted and devalued by men, (3) gender-based stereotypes, such as a lack of a low-pitched, masculine-sounding voice, a style of dress that accentuates femininity, and physical attractiveness often do not fit the male stereotype of leadership, (4) male cultural stereotypes of leaders presume a widespread difference in the abilities of males and women, (5) women and power create uncomfortable atmospheres that often remind males of the powerlessness felt in the presence of women because of the motherly association, and (6) maintenance of the

status quo which purposely excludes women from the membership and allegiance is tied to the structure within.

One of the major barriers to women advancement in the workplace is that women must look and act like males who are already in power (Wolverton & Macdonald, 2001). According to Atwater and Van Fleet (1997), men prefer to supervise men operating under the same-sex premise. According to Weber, Feldman and Poling (1981), men often used cronyism, which was a buddy system where men often refer male associates to jobs by word of mouth or bulletins. The purpose of this concept was to handicap women by excluding information from them. Most people identify leadership as a male concept, and the term "servant leadership" is a term that is becoming more associated with women because "servant" often means inferior (Eicher-Catt, 2005). However, the Contingency Theory (often referred to as the Leader-Match Theory) suggests that the effectiveness of leaders depends on how well leaders with specific styles of leadership are matched with the correct setting (Northouse, 2004). Leadership positions should be representative of qualifications instead of gender.

While women believe that there are concrete reasons that advancement in the workplace is limited, researchers indicate that many women are not willing to do what is required to obtain supervisory positions. In many instances, too few women qualify for or are interested in managerial positions (Atwater & Van Fleet, 1997). According to Maich (2005), females refuse to disregard everything else in life in order to climb the corporate ladder. Many women are not interested in the long hours and travel associated with top managerial positions. According to Dr. Anne Daly, associate professor of economics at the University of Canberra, the numbers in regards to promotions conceal a great deal of

pertinent information (such as the level of commitment shown in the number of hours worked, the type of work performed, and whether one works in a high-fee grossing area) needed in order to support a gender discrimination claim (Albrechtsen, 2004). Adams and Hambright (2004) reveal that negative and noncompliant teachers and staff members and the time spent attending extracurricular activities are other reasons some women do not seek leadership positions.

Researchers indicate that many women are choosing part-time employment, which limits networking abilities and can make advancement more difficult (Albrechtsen, 2004; Dingell & Maloney, 2002). Women tend to accept work in "dead-end" jobs or jobs in which promotion is less likely (Ngo et al, 2003). According to a study of women superintendents, stress, politics, and media involvement are reasons many women choose not to apply for promotions (Wolverton & Macdonald, 2001). Wolverton & Macdonald (2001) also cited scrutiny of the public and the lack of job security as deterrents causing women not to apply for promotions. Williamson and Hudson (2003) revealed that many administrators have also cited time demands and the interface of work and family as contributing factors that add to the frustration of rethinking a career track in leadership. Physical and psychological demands, increasing expectations and responsibilities, lack of control, and lack of support were all cited as factors that make the principalship undesirable to women (Mulhall, Flowers & Mertens, 2004).

Summary

Education has primarily been a profession dominated by women, and the majority of educators serving as classroom teachers are women. According to statistics, women comprise about 75 percent of the teachers in this profession, but they are still vastly

underrepresented in the area of school leadership as compared to the number of women who occupy teaching positions. In 2003-2004, approximately 50 percent of school leaders were women, and the majority of these served as elementary school principals. Many teachers have the certification to become school leaders, yet they are not serving in such a capacity. Family obligations, lack of interest, lack of motivation and the glass ceiling are factors contributing to women not seeking administrative positions. While numerous organizational and societal barriers to women advancement have been identified, often women who possess the necessary credentials do not pursue leadership positions, and this may be a determining factor related to the under representation of women in school leadership positions.

Statement of the Problem

Women are returning to school, earning degrees, and entering the workforce in record numbers, but in many instances, they continue to be ranked in the minority when compared to their male counterparts in terms of serving as school leaders. Researchers have noted that organizational and personal barriers are often cited as reasons preventing women from obtaining certain leadership positions. In spite of such barriers, some women are pursuing and acquiring leadership positions that were once reserved for males while other women have no interest in advancing to leadership positions.

As the current population of principals grow older and become eligible for retirement in the next three to five years, school districts will be in need of certified individuals to fill these vacancies. School leaders often converse about the potential shortage of administrators that may be forthcoming; however, there is little or no mention of the number of women with leadership certification who could possibly fill projected

administrative vacancies. In terms of women with leadership certification, the researcher does not know the total number of certified potential women administrators in the state, the characteristics common among this group of individuals, or why many of these women are choosing careers outside of leadership. Therefore, the researcher's purpose is to investigate why women with leadership certification are not pursuing school-level leadership positions.

Research Questions

The major question for this study was:

1. What factors negatively impact women's decisions to apply for school- level leadership positions?

The following sub-questions guided this research project:

a. What aspects of the program attracted women to pursue certification in leadership?
b. Why are women with leadership certification not entering school level leadership positions?
c. What structures or supports are available for women transitioning into leadership positions?

Significance of the Problem

Because many school administrators are at retirement age or are approaching retirement age within the next five years, school districts across the state are concerned with their ability to fill these projected vacancies with certified individuals. Researchers constantly allude to a potential shortage of administrators, but the studies conducted have not taken into consideration certified women personnel who could fill these vacancies but for some reasons are choosing not to apply for school-level administration positions.

By conducting this study, the researcher will provide women who currently hold leadership certification a voice for identifying reasons for pursuing the certification but

not the positions. A vast number of women candidates already possess the certification, and other women candidates have begun to seek leadership certification. With the rapid shrinkage of the applicant pool of highly capable and certified applicants, this information would aid districts in determining what aspects of administrative duties and responsibilities may need to be revamped in order to replace current administrators with certified and qualified personnel. Current practice is often to select individuals who profess an interest or know the district's political powers as future administrators. By conducting this study, the researcher will increase the awareness of current hiring practices and examine the potential barriers that prevent many women from applying for leadership positions. The data collected from this study will provide school administrators with more awareness of those factors that make leadership positions less attractive to women personnel and provide these administrators with methods to increase women interest in the positions.

Through this study, the researcher seeks to identify any new barriers women may face while attempting to advance. The literature will include reasons why certified potential women administrators are currently not in leadership positions and determine if these women are applying and not being considered for these positions or if certified women are simply not applying for the positions. School districts will be able to explore the possibility of gender bias in hiring practices and work toward eliminating specific barriers in order to make leadership positions more attractive to females. If these women are not applying for these positions, the researcher will investigate their reasons for not applying. By answering these questions, determination can be made as to whether or not

the "glass ceiling" really exists and, if so, what new barriers have surfaced in the last few years.

Universities constantly offer leadership programs in convenient locations and make the certification degrees very obtainable by requiring only four to six classes for completion if the applicant has a master degree or higher. This study will provide documentation for legislators to examine the pay scale for teachers receiving pay for leadership certification without serving the position in comparison to those actually holding a leadership position.

Procedures

The researcher plans to focus on a select group of individuals who possess leadership certification but are not presently working in leadership positions. The researcher will use a qualitative method that will allow the researcher to interpret information gained from a series of interviews held with select participants. Each participant will be asked a series of questions that will allow the researcher to gain insight as to why these females are presently not in leadership positions. After analyzing the data, the researcher will focus on themes and patterns that were revealed through the interview process.

Research Design

The researcher will use a qualitative research design in order to broaden the researcher's knowledge and understanding to the lingering question of why leadership certified women choose not to pursue leadership positions. Through various interviews, the researcher hopes to identify characteristics common among the women participants and explore their rationale behind acquiring the certification but choosing not to pursue a

school-level leadership position. This type of design is appropriate for this study because it will allow the researcher to shed light on this topic in order to provide answers to the many questions as to why many women choose to stray from a position that once peaked their curiosity. Qualitative research allows the researcher to probe and examine the "whys" and enlighten others of the reasons things are the way they are and why so many women opt to remain in a classroom setting instead of pursuing leadership positions. A narrative inquiry will provide a forum for women to express their concerns and opinions about school-level leadership positions and what caused them to have a change of direction once they had achieved leadership certification. It will also allow the researcher to probe and examine the common attributes that exist among the participants.

Population

The population for this study will consist of approximately ten women, nine in the Coastal Savannah Regional Area and one participant from the north Georgia area, all of whom have acquired leadership certification but are presently not in leadership positions. Because the researcher possesses limited knowledge about these women, the researcher will use a combination of convenient and "snowball" sampling to identify participants for this study. The researcher will request individuals readily available and rely on these participants to further identify other women with the same criteria who are willing to be a part of this study. The researcher has no knowledge of an available pool of women meeting the designated criteria; therefore, in order to identify participants for the study, the "snowball method" will allow the researcher to gain such information from willing participants.

Instrumentation

   After identifying the participants for the study, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews to gather data on why these women educators are not in school-level leadership positions after obtaining the necessary credentials for certification. The researcher will obtain data related to why these educators became interested in educational leadership, as well as the factors that later contributed to these same educators remaining in the classroom setting after preparing for leadership positions.

Data Analysis

   After conducting the interviews and observations of the participants, the researcher will thoroughly analyze the data relative to the overarching research question and other sub questions. This process will help the researcher identify specific themes, patterns, commonalities, and differences among the participants.

Delimitations

   The delimitation of this study is that the participants are confined to five school districts in the state of Georgia, and widespread implications can only be made from the pattern, themes, and views generated by the teachers in this study. The nomination selection of participants may not give you a diverse group. Another limitation is the comparison of men with leadership who did not apply for leadership positions because the difference between the two groups.

Definition of Terms

   Within the scope of this study, the following terms will be used:

   1. Leadership Certification—documentation stating that an individual has
      mastered all the required credentials of a program of study in order to serve as

an administrator in a school system (Georgia Professional Standard

Commission, 2006)

2. Glass Ceiling—a transparent barrier that hinders advancement in the workplace

(Oakley, 2000)

3. School Principal—a school or educational administrator who manages an

elementary, middle, or secondary school (U.S. Department of Labor)

Summary

As educators explore options for replenishing the potential shortage of administrators

in the future, more consideration should be given to women. While many women acquire

leadership certification, many do not pursue leadership positions or may not be

considered for such positions. Exploring the reasons women are not in leadership

positions after toiling to obtain the certification may offer insight to current

superintendents and others mentioned before as to certain aspects of the duties and

responsibilities that may need to be reevaluated and redistributed to encourage more

interest and pursuit of such administrative positions. School districts are in dire need of

individuals with both the certification and the interest in leadership positions. Through

various interviews, the researcher will attempt to provide a better understanding of the

reasons women pursued and obtained leadership certification yet remain in non-

leadership positions.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The results of a 1998 survey administered by the Educational Research Service indicated that many school districts were struggling to staff administrative positions due to promotions, retirements, and resignations (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001; Winter, Rinehart & Munoz, 2001). Information presented at a state legislature conference in 2002 revealed that the number of vacancies in education administration is expected to increase by 10 to 20 percent through the year 2008. Many of the present school administrators are at least 50 years old, and approximately 40 percent of them will be eligible for retirement in the next six years (National Conference of State Legislature, 2002). With the expected increase in the number of vacancies in educational administration positions, a shortage is possible in the near future. Although 47 percent of teachers across the nations have the credentials necessary to become education administrators, they are electing not to apply for such positions at the school-level (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2002). This is particularly true of women in the education field. The review of the literature will examine the barriers that women have encountered to gain entry into the workforce and those obstacles preventing advancement in the workplace. Reasons for not pursuing leadership positions once leadership certification has been acquired will also be discussed.

Historical Background of Women Educators

Society has traditionally viewed women as mothers, secretaries, nurses, and educators or in roles in which they exhibit nurturing attributes to other. In spite of the stereotypes

associated with women, they have come a long way in the workforce (Chaffin, Forbes, Fuqua & Cangemi, 1995; Laff, 2007). According to Mats Alvesson (Abdalkhani, 2004), males hold about 85-90 percent of all executive positions in the workforce, and the number of women in low to mid-level business occupations has increased greatly in recent years. In 2000, more than 60 percent of women managers were working in certain sectors of the medical profession and in education (Wirth, 2004). According to a study conducted by the United States General Accounting Office in 2002, women at that time represented approximately 47 percent of the workforce but held only 12 percent of the managerial positions (Wirth, 2004).

Women are serving as executives in Fortune 500 corporations, politicians in Congress, doctors in major hospitals, and principals or superintendents in school districts throughout the world (Abdalkhani, 2004; Hildenbrand, 2007; Chaffin et al., 1995; Redwood, 1996). The 2005 Catalyst study of Fortune 500 companies indicated that women held 16.4 percent of corporate office positions, which is an increase of seven-tenths percent from 2002. The report also stated that women held 6.4 percent of top income positions, up from one and two-tenths percent in 2002 (Breaking the Glass Ceiling Foundation, 2003-2004; Laff, 2007). Women in the education profession represented 46.4 percent of all school principals in 1999-2000 and 49.7 percent of all principals in 2003-2004 nationally (NCES, 2007).

While women are acquiring school-level administrative positions, the percent of women school-level administrators are just a "scratch of the surface". The NCES reported in 2005 that there were 1,340,000 female teachers compared to 140,000 male teachers at the elementary level. This represents a 91% to 9 % gender difference. At the

middle school-level, there were 660,000 women teachers compared to 250,000 male teachers. This represents a 73% to 27% difference in gender. On the contrary, the gap is much narrower at the high school-level. There were 570,000 women teachers and 470,000 male teachers, thus representing a difference of 55 to 45 percent (NCSE, 2005). The data indicates an overwhelming number of women serving as teachers, but there is a significant gap between females and males serving as school-level administrators. Most public school principals in Georgia are women, which is an indication that the ratio of men to women reversed in 2000 and continued to increase until in 2004 (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2006). According to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC), women hold the majority of principal positions, yet substantial differences are still evident among the three major school-levels. Women hold more than seven of every ten elementary principalships but hold only one in four high school principalships. Middle school principalships have become relatively evenly divided between genders (GPSC, 2006).

While the research indicates that women are entering and remaining in the workforce now more than ever before, the question often pondered is what factors or barriers exist that may create a major disparity between genders in school-level administrative positions. In an attempt to understand this concept and to provide a logical explanation as to why this discrepancy exists, the following topics will be discussed: the glass ceiling, family obligations, the "old boy network", lack of role models, mobility or relocation, and lack of support from other women.

The Glass Ceiling

    In an attempt to understand the significance of the data related to women advancement in the workforce, an examination of how they acquired such positions will be discussed. Though women visibility in the workplace has increased, the path to women advancement in the workplace has not been a smooth journey, but instead one inundated with many challenges women have battled in order to reach leadership positions or obtain promotions in the workplace (Harris, 2006; Paton, 2006). These challenges or barriers women have overcome in order to obtain positions of leadership have come to be known as a "glass ceiling" (Nguyen, 2005; Oakley, 2000). Wall Street Journal reporters began using the "glass-ceiling" phrase in 1986 to describe the artificial barriers women were facing in the workplace as they attempted to advance to higher positions within the organization (Chaffins et al., 1995; Hildebrand, 2007). These barriers often prevented women and minorities from equal access and equal opportunities, denying them the opportunity to advance within their careers (Redwood, 1996; Davidson, 1999). According to Chaffins et al. (1995), this form of discrimination has been described as a strong transparent barrier that hinders women and minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy. Lynn Martin, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, indicated that the scarcity of women and minorities at management levels hinders society as a whole and not just the individual (Klenke, 1996). Martin explained that the glass ceiling deprives our economy of leaders and decreases our pool of potential leaders (Klenke, 1996). This "glass ceiling" goes beyond just position but is also evident regarding pay within organizations (Chaffins, et al., 1995).

The theory that women can only aspire to less than uppermost management positions prior to hitting an invisible ceiling of advancement attracted so much attention that the Glass Ceiling Commission was organized in 1991 (Abdalkhani, 2004; Dingell & Maloney, 2002; Eicher-Catt, 2005; Granlessse, 2004; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). This commission was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to identify barriers that blocked the advancement of women and minorities, to develop solutions to these barriers, and to implement successful practices and policies to increase advancement opportunities of minorities in the workplace (Abdalkhani, 2004; Tia & Sims, 2005; Dingell & Maloney, 2002; U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). In 2003, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission released a report indicating that only 7% to 9 % of the senior managers at Fortune 500 companies are women even though women continue to comprise almost half of the nation's workforce (Velasquez, 2004).

A vast amount of information is available regarding barriers associated with women advancement and how these barriers have impacted society's view of women. The research conducted by the Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) identified three distinct levels of barriers to advancement for women and minorities in corporate America. The levels were categorized as societal barriers, internal structural barriers, and governmental barriers. Societal barriers may be outside the direct control of businesses and relate to educational opportunity and attainment as well as stereotyping, prejudice, and bias in regards to gender, race, and ethnicity (Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). According to the Glass Ceiling Commission (1995), the internal structural barriers within the direct control of businesses deal with the climate of the organization, recruitment practices, and pipeline barriers. Governmental Barriers, as outlined by the Commission (1995), include

failure to consistently monitor and enforce laws, as well as failure to collect and disaggregate employment related data.

Highly educated women, those holding bachelor or post graduate degrees, possess the tools necessary to help crack the glass ceiling, yet they fail in eradicating the challenges that women encounter at upper levels of corporations (Redwood, 1996; Velasquez, 2004). Bell and Nkomo (Davidson, 1999) explained that the white women population felt the glass ceiling was holding them down. In spite of the fact that the "glass" was dangerous and could injure those attempting to break through it, the perception was that this ceiling still could be broken because the glass was clear and allowed those below it to see though it and learn by observation (Davidson, 1999). In addition to being able to see through the "glass" and to identify those above the "glass" the "glass" also provided a means for these women to become visible to the individuals above the glass. This is very critical for anyone attempting to break through the "glass ceiling" (Davidson, 1999). The glass ceiling is primarily defined as a women's issue, the ceiling whether, glass, brick, or concrete, may have a few cracks in it but is far from being shattered (Savage, 2002). In spite of the creation of the Glass Ceiling Commission, the invisible, and sometimes visible barriers continue to restrict passage beyond a certain point.

In 2004, the International Labour Office (ILC) reported that men continued to retain the majority of managerial positions in the workplace (Wirth, 2004). In 2003, Global Employment Trends reported that women continued to have lower labor participation rates, higher unemployment rates, and significant pay differences compared to their male counterparts (Wall, 2000; Wirth, 2004). The report also indicated that women represented over 40 percent of the world's labor force, yet attitudes toward male and women jobs

tend to result in what is referred to as occupational segregation (Wirth, 2004).

Occupational segregation tends to categorize professions as being either a feminine or

masculine profession. This often limits entry into or advancement in certain professions

due to society's perception of a particular career (Wirth 2004; U.S. Glass Ceiling

Commission, 1995). Occupational segregation is a societal barrier, which may be outside

the control of the business (Chaffins et al., 1995; Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995).

Similar barriers were also evident in a report generated by the International Labour

Office (Wirth, 2004). According to a 2003 Catalyst study, corporations had not

implemented policies to promote women to leadership positions since 1996, and the

barriers to women advancement in the corporate world had not changed. Women

participating in the study cited the following as barriers to career development: lack of

career and succession planning, lack of management experience, lack of mentors or role

models, lack of flexibility in work schedules, exclusion from informal networks,

stereotyping and gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and tokenism (Wirth, 2004).

Many women realize that numerous barriers to advancement exist, but they tend to

believe that the barriers that hinder penetration through the ceiling whether it is "glass" or

"concrete," are more societal obstacles rather than individual barriers (Paton, 2006).

These barriers include stereotypes and perceptions that society attributes to women

regarding their ability to function in certain situations or positions (Restine, 1993; Wirth

2004; Women in Set, n.d.). A report prepared for the South Reference Group for Women

(SARG) in reference to the women in science, engineering, and technology confirmed

that societal and parental gender-related assignments or categories significantly impact

the career choices of young women (Women in Set, n.d.**).** The report noted that women

had been discouraged from entering the field of math and science when career options were being explored, and the attitudes of husbands toward traditional gender roles was a strong determinant of career choices for women (Harris, Arnold, Lowery & Crocker, 2002). This report also listed the following challenges that women faced while trying to enter the work force or struggling to advance in the work force: rules are made by men, young men are introduced and socialized to rules and learn strategies regarding the rules, women are isolated and have difficulty understanding the rules, and males do not teach women strategies necessary to succeed (Women in SET, n.d.).

In the female-dominated field of education, the literature is imbedded with barriers blocking passage through the various "ceilings." Women have made great strides in acquiring administrative positions but those positions have often been obtained by overcoming insurmountable obstacles along the way (Polnick, Reed, Funk, & Edmonson, 2004; "Glass Ceiling Still," 2000). Society continues to view women as teachers and men as top administrators who have the responsibility of overseeing the school family ("Glass Ceiling Still," 2000). Barriers to the principalship as well as other administrative positions in the field of education include lack of mobility of family members, lack of professional networks, lack of mentors in the district, lack of recruitment of women due to school board members' perceptions of women as strong managers (Glass, 2000).

A survey administered to principals and prospective principals throughout the state of Illinois revealed the following as top barriers to the principalship: time demands, mental and physical stress, meeting the demands of federal and state mandates, and conflict between family and job responsibilities (Mulhall, Hartley & Camp, 2003; Mulhall, Flowers & Mertens, 2004). Deborah Hildebrand (2007) identified four distinct categories

to women advancement, which include exclusion, commitment, wage gap, and role models. Exclusion deals with the notion of the "old boy's club or network." In many instances, administrative decisions to fill a leadership position with friends or protégés instead of with certified individuals are made on the golf course, a place from which women have traditionally been excluded (Chaffins et al., 1995; Harris et al, 2000). This lack of association with the "powers that be" excludes women from advancement opportunities (Restine, 1993).

The belief that women are meant to teach and men are supposed to manage or lead others is similar to the mentality of "think manager, think male" (Restine, 1993; Davidson, 1999). Glass also states that many women enter administrative positions late in their careers due to family obligations, while men begin their administrative careers in their early thirties. Commitment to the family obligations of caring for children or elderly parents is perceived to cause women to be absent from work more than males (Buell, Schroth & DeFelice, 2002**;** Hildebrand, 2007; Harris et al., 2002; Harris, C. 2006)**.** Women have always been faced with family obligations taking precedence over their careers and have often delayed entry into administration until their children were in high school or had finished high school (Harris, 2004; Harris et al, 2002). According to Keller (Harris et al, 2002), while a degree and experience in educational administration increase a woman's chances of becoming an administrator, having a spouse and a family decreases her chances of becoming a secondary school administrator. According to Watkins, Herrin, & McDonald (1998), mothering was a societal norm that often caused conflict for women who were seeking employment outside the home.

Although barriers to women advancement exist in all professions, Chaung and Lee (Women in Set, n.d.) noted that these barriers may differ depending on factors such as educational attainment and geographical location. In 1983, Ezariti (Harris, 2004) developed the following list of covert reasons women advancement was restricted mainly in the area of higher education: geographic mobility (because it was difficult for women to relocate in order to acquire or maintain a job and relocating was more acceptable if initiated by the husband), limited bargaining power used to negotiate for advanced positions, nepotism policies (because husbands are hired first causing wives to automatically not be considered), part-time employment selected due to family obligations (resulting in females being viewed as less dependable for promotions) (Watkins, et al, 1998).

In addition to family obligations that often prevent women from seeking school-level leadership positions, there is a lack of female role models from which other women can aspire. Hildebrand (2007) uses the role models category to refer to the lack of someone to emulate or call upon because many males do not want a business relationship to be perceived as a romantic affair. Mentors are needed to provide support or a "go to person" when there are concerns about situations that arise on the job (Laff, 2007; Hidlebrand, 2007). Often women were considered to have "token" or "solo" status because they comprised less than 35 percent of a particular gender or ethnicity (Klenke, 1996). The characteristics of women who are considered to be in "token" positions are that they are highly visible, attract attention with anything they do, and represent or symbolize what women stand for or how they behave as leaders (Klenke, 1996). These women must

work twice as hard as their male counterparts, are under more scrutiny, and are expected to agree with the majority.

Another barrier for women aspiring to acquire administrative positions is the lack of support they receive from other women. This non-supportive behavior displayed by other women is commonly referred to as horizontal violence (Funk, 2004; Wells, 2005). This term depicts the harm that some women do to other women in the workplace. This lack of support displayed by women towards other women administrators is displayed from women teachers to women superintendents (Hastie, 2002; Funk, 2004; Wells, 2005). This term was introduced by Paulo Freire who explored the effects of minorities in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Funk, 2004). Freire, used horizontal violence to refer to the curious behavior of members of oppressed groups who lashed out at their peers in response to oppression instead of attacking the oppressor. These individuals take out their anger and violence on other women in order to reduce the pain of feeling powerless and devalued (Hastie, 2000; Funk, 2004). This inter-group conflict is often manifested in overt and covert behaviors and may be conscious or unconscious (Freshwater, 2000; Hastie, 2002).

Dawn Freshwater (2000) examined oppressed group behavior in the nursing profession and noted that horizontal violence is displayed in experiences such as failure to respect privacy or confidentiality, unwillingness to help out, undermining, and lack of support. According to Freshwater (2000) and Hastie (2000), horizontal violence is typically non-physical but may include the following behaviors: gossiping, name-calling, threatening, making belittling gestures, raising eyebrows, making snide remarks, and withholding information. Studies indicate that non-physical acts of aggression displayed

are the hardest to deal with, and Farrell describes this behavior as "professional terrorism" (Freshwater, 2000). The physical aspect of horizontal violence is often revealed in the form of shoving, hitting, or throwing objects and is the way oppressed people release built up tension (Funk, 2004; Hastie, 2002).

A similar concept referred to as the "Queen Bee Syndrome" describes another hurdle that women encounter in leadership positions. According to Benton, a "queen bee" refers to a woman in a position of leadership or power whose objective becomes protecting her "queen bee" status by working to keep other women out of similar positions (Funk, 2004). This phenomenon is based on the premise that once a woman acquires power, there is not enough of this type of status to share with others. Therefore, the sharing of this power with other women would or may threaten her present situation or status (Funk, 2004). This mindset results in some women resenting the entry of other women into leadership or supervisory roles (Coleman, 2003).

In addition to the above-mentioned barriers to women advancement, Cohen (2006) identified images of masculine leadership, absences of a support system, long hours and numerous evening events, and family obligations as factors that also hindered women advancement. Exploration of barriers that are specific to women in corporate America, educational leaders, and other workplaces provides an insight into what these women faced as they attempted to not only enter the workforce but to become leaders in their profession. After theses barriers were identified, key legislation impacted women advancement and made shattering or cracking the glass ceiling possible for women who wanted to be given the same career opportunities in regards to promotions and wages as their male counterparts.

Legislation That Paved the Way for Women Advancement

Historically, women have been considered intellectually inferior to men and regarded as wives and mothers, limiting many of them from aspiring to enter the workplace and assume positions of leadership. In an attempt to explain how many women have permeated the "glass ceiling concept," it is necessary to examine the legislation that significantly paved the way for women to advance beyond the traditional roles of motherhood and wife. Legislation such as the GI Bill, Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII, Title IX, and Affirmation Actions have played major roles in shaping the future of women throughout the country.

The G.I. Bill

Many women entered the teaching profession as a means of financial support because the marital status of women was directly related to their employment opportunities (Shakeshaft, 1989). During World War II, women, single or married, were welcomed into schools and other work environments to fill the vacancies of men left behind. However, at the end of the war, the men returned home and were rewarded with the G.I. Bill (Blair, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1989). The G.I. Bill, officially known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, was created to provide greater opportunities for the veterans of World War II and to reintegrate military personnel into civilian life (Dell'Anno, 2001). President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed this act into law in June of 1944, and under this legislation, veterans were provided tuition, books, supplies, counseling services, and subsistence (Dell'Anno, 2001). The G.I. Bill drastically increased enrollment in institutions of higher education because prior to this law higher education was limited to those who were financially wealthy (Blair, 1999). Many males received training to

become teachers and administrators. This afforded many lower class men the opportunity to join the women who were already in the profession (Shakeshaft, 1989). The G.I. Bill paved the way for many males to achieve the education and training necessary to enter the workforce and compete for jobs. This proved to be a disadvantage for women because the G. I. Bill mostly benefited men (Blair, 1999).

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII and IX

Despite the fact that women were making some headway in entering the workforce and obtaining skills necessary to be considered for promotions, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation in public schools and other public places (Title IX, n.d). The concept behind this act was to help African Americas, but it also included legislation to help women. There were two major pieces of this legislation, Title VII and Title IX, which impacted or changed the perception of women in the work force. According to the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Preston, 2003), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This law forbids racial discrimination, sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, religious discrimination, and national origin discrimination. Employers are prohibited from making decisions on hiring, promotions, or terminations based on any of these factors. For women, this meant that they could not be denied access to a position solely on the premise that they were women. Title VII provided females a pathway towards advancement and afforded them an opportunity to begin chipping the glass ceiling. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited sex discrimination against students and employees of educational institutions receiving federal funds (U. S. Department of Labor, 2007).

In addition to Title VII and Title IX, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was a critical legislative piece that protected men and women who performed basically equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity; Brunner, 2007). Wage discrimination had been a major issue for females for many years, and women have always struggled to receive equal pay for equal services rendered to their employers. During World War II, employers were urged by the National Labor Board to make adjustments in salaries that would equalize wages paid to females with those paid to their male counterparts for the same quality and quantity of work produced (Brunner, 2007). Of course, the employers failed to adhere to the request and proceeded to push women out of their jobs once men returned from the war. After the men returned, women had a different view of themselves and their positions in society. Many had learned how to balance work and family needs and were reluctant to return to their tradition roles. Until the early 1960's, jobs were categorized according to sex, and those not listed separately had distinct pay scales for men and women (Brunner, 2007). The Equal Pay Act helped women become more aware of the discrimination in pay scale, and many began taking advantage of this law.

As a result of the various legislation originated to eliminate or alleviate the "glass ceiling" concept, women are making their mark, yet they often struggle to receive equitable pay once they obtain managerial or administrative status. Wage inequality is constantly being questioned. Even with the Equal Pay Act, women and minorities are paid less than men for the work they do because of their sex or minority status instead of the jobs they perform (Euben, 2001). The research conducted by the International Labour Office (Wirth, 2004) indicated that in 2001 women on the average earned 76 percent of

men's pay. By comparison, the pay gap between male and women managers had narrowed slightly in some employment fields. In 1995, women in management positions in education earned 86 percent of their male counterparts' earnings compared to other occupations percent in other occupations such as hospitals and medical services (Wall, 2001; Hamilton, 2004; Wirth 2004). Some of the reasons cited by the ILO (Wirth, 2004) for this gap are as follows: women tend to choose occupations and industries that provide a balance between work and family, women tend to work in areas where there are fewer career development prospects, and women opt for part time work and positions that require less education and resulting in lower pay. Women also tend to select jobs that require shorter hours, limited travel, and no relocating. This 2004 study also indicated that child bearing and child rearing decrease the earning power of mothers compared to non-mothers, and this also contributes to this wage gap (Lynch, 1996).

Wall (2001) notes that the wage gap is not primarily related to wage discrimination, but to factors such as education, experience, occupation, union status, and the number of hours worked. Women are often devalued, are more likely to be paid less in occupations where more women dominate, and typically have less work experience than men due to family obligations (Lynch 1996; Wall, 2001). According to Lynch (1996) and Wall (2001), when age, educational attainment, and experience in the work force are considered, the pay gap tends to shrink. The General Accounting Office studied the ten industries that employed the most women in the country. Their findings indicate most women earned less than their male counterparts. This study indicated that in the field of education, public administration, and medical services, women did see some financial gains (Women International Network, 2002).

Discrimination continues to appear regardless of the various initiatives developed and implemented to move beyond such behavior. As a result of the failure of previous initiatives, other measures were introduced to curtail the subtle practices of discrimination and inequality that were still being maintained. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy introduced his plan to readdress discrimination that continued despite civil rights laws (Brunner, 2007). He called it affirmative action. This concept's focus was on education and jobs with emphasis on ensuring that blacks and other minorities were being afforded the same opportunities for promotion, salary increases, and school admission that had been reserved exclusively for whites (Brunner, 2007). Today, this controversial idea still remains at the forefront for many, but it is now viewed more as a means of reverse discrimination. This measure was an attempt to expand the doorway for minorities and women to enter the workplace and be considered for promotions and administrative positions but in the end, it created conflict and discriminated against others.

Beyond the Barriers But Still Under Represented

The past struggles associated with women advancement clearly indicate that aspiring women leaders must be certified in order to be considered for administrative positions. This caused many women to return to school to acquire leadership certification. According to a Canadian study (Smith 1991), many women were underrepresented in administration because they were viewed as being incapable, uninterested, and unqualified; therefore, the number of women returning to school to acquire leadership certification has increased drastically. The study also indicated that the criteria for holding a principalship varied depending on the province. Some provinces required

formal credentials such as a Master's degree in Educational Administration while other provinces did not require specialized credentials (Smith, 1991). Women are also underrepresented in leadership positions because the traditional characteristics associated with women and the traditional leadership characteristics are mismatched (Kellerman & Rhode, n.d.). Women are still considered to be passive and cooperative while leadership positions require individuals to be authoritative, ambitious, and decisive. Women who exhibit masculine traits are more apt to emerge as leaders than females who are not risk takers and fail to take leadership challenges (Kellerman & Rhode, n.d.). Once again the "androcentric mentality" still remains evident. The New York research group, Catalyst, conducted a study on gender and workplace issues, and survey results indicated that many women are not in positions of leadership due to their lack of willingness to make the necessary sacrifices to acquire such positions (Kellerman & Rhode, n.d.).

The role of principals has changed drastically, and principals are no longer viewed as traditional managers of schools. Many principals must deal with bus scheduling, bus and school discipline, school security, fundraisers, and politicians (Savoye, 2001). Flockton (2001 p. 20) states:

> Many of today's schools feed, counsel, provide health care for body and mind, and protect students, while they also educate and instruct. The principal is expected to be a legal expert, health and social services coordinator, fundraiser, diplomat, negotiator, adjudicator, public relations consultant, security officer, technological innovator and top notch resource manager, whose most important job is teaching and learning. (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003)

According to Shen, Cooley, and Ruhl-Smith (1999), there is a struggle to recruit and retain administrators because of increased responsibilities without monetary compensation as well as limited job security. A Louisiana study conducted by Jordan in 1994 indicated that teachers with leadership certification did not plan to enter administration due to the demands of the position, extended work days, compensation of job comparable with teachers' salaries, and criticisms from internal and external sources (Shen, Cooley & Ruhl-Smith, 1999). Many teachers with leadership certification seek positions at the Central Office level or administrative work as teacher mentors and curriculum directors because these positions are less demanding and less stressful (Bell, 2001; Kerrin, 2001).

Reasons for Obtaining the Certification

Individuals, males and women, with leadership certification disclosed various reasons for entering school administration including the desire to provide effective leadership, to acquire a higher salary, to contribute to society, to help children, and to work with teachers in school improvement efforts (Shen et al., 1999). A New Jersey study indicated individuals desired to become principals to be instructional leaders in schools, to work with a diverse group of people, and to make decisions that would impact a large group of people (Stein, 2001). A study of school leadership in New York State revealed that many individuals pursued leadership certification to become school leaders to obtain permanent teaching certification, and because other administrators encouraged them because they saw leadership potential in these individuals (Lankford, O'Connell & Wyck, 2003). Along the same lines, the participants of surveys administered to staff members in senior leadership positions in Catholic schools in Australia cited the opportunity to work with

staff members, a chance to contribute to Catholic education as well as the mission of the church, and the opportunity to build a competent and committed leadership team, as reasons for obtaining leadership certification and serving in the capacity of principal (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003). Individuals involved in a Canadian recruitment and selection study disclosed that many educators view administration as the traditional track for career advancement, a way to earn more money, and a means for achieving higher status and earning greater respect from others (Normore, 2004). The principalship presents administrators an opportunity to meet their own higher level needs as they strive to serve others and to positively impact the lives of students and teachers (Bass, 2006). There are motivators for individuals to pursue such positions.

Certified with Second Thoughts

Teachers are returning to school to obtain the certification necessary to become an assistant principal or principal. In many states, there are more individuals currently certified to become school administrators than there are positions available or projective openings (Lankford, O'Connell, & Wyckoff, 2003; Whitaker, 2006). However, once the certification requirements have been obtained and vacancies are announced, many of these individuals choose not to apply for these positions. According to a study conducted by Shen, Cooley and Wegenke (Whitaker, 2006), there are numerous factors that determine whether an individual will or will not apply for a principal's position (Whitaker, 2006). These factors include the following: workload and compensation, how the position will impact the individual and family members, macro-constraints of position, work environment, intrinsic rewards regarding opportunity for advancement and

the individual status in the community, community characteristics, school district characteristics, and health and safety support (Whitaker, 2006).

A study of women principals in Turkey suggested that males are overwhelmingly more likely to become principals than women despite the number of women with leadership certification (Celikten, 2005). As cited in Celikten (2005), the disparity in the number of women principals, in many instances, may be associated with women having limited access to higher education, reluctance to pursue the position, hiring practices that favor males, the pressure of raising children while balancing the demands of being a school leader, lack of mobility, and lack of a professional network and women role models. Celikten (2005) also mentioned that women do not apply because they expect to play secondary roles, lack self-confidence in their qualification and experience, and have negative self-perceptions and low expectations of success. On the contrary, Neidhart and Carlin (2003) stated that the barrier is not lack of self confidence but rather an informed choice as to what women view as important to them personally and the extent to which they can be real.

Disinterested but Satisfied

Although barriers to women advancement exist, it is important to acknowledge the fact that many women are not in administrative or supervisory positions because they simply choose not to pursue that career path (Buell, Schroth & DeFelice, 2002). Studies that explored the reasons why educators choose not to move into administrative positions cited the following factors as having influenced their decisions: long hours, low salaries, inadequate budgets, stress, lack of job security, and lack of job satisfaction (Buell, et al., 2002). In 1977, Krchniak surveyed 242 Illinois women who held administrative

certification but were not in administrative positions. He discovered that 61 percent of the

women were not interested in obtaining an administrative position. Of the ones offered

such a position, 66 percent refused at least one offer and 93 percent of the women refused

offers because they were not willing to relocate (Buell, et al, 2002). A similar study

conducted by Grady in 1992 revealed similar results including like of current position, no

interest in being an administrator, family responsibilities, no vacancies in the area, no

incentives to change positions, and unwillingness to apply for these positions (Buell, et

al., 2002)

Disincentives Regarding the Principalship

The principalship is a very demanding position, and many tasks required make this

position less appealing to individuals with leadership certification. Difficulty satisfying

parents and the community, diversity of students, and a decrease in public confidence

were also cited as factors causing a lack of interest in pursuing leadership positions

(Butler, 2000). To reinforce the above factors, Ferrandino (2000) cited expanding

responsibilities, reduced authority, increased accountability, stress, and insufficient pay

as the top reasons individuals were discouraged from applying for school-level leadership

positions.

Malone, Sharpe, and Thompson (2000) conducted a survey of Indiana principals,

aspiring principals, and superintendents regarding their perceptions of the state of the

principalship. The survey results revealed that many individuals tend to shy away from

leadership positions because of the time requirements, loss of tenure, societal problems,

and the great demands of the job. The number one deterrent for the principal's position as

revealed by survey results was the stress associated with the job. In addition, the results

of a study conducted in California mirrored many others in that pay, stress, societal problems, and time demands are disincentives for the principalship (Teague, 2001). The results of this survey indicated that politics, mobility factors, family concerns, and satisfaction with present job create a lack of interest in a leadership position that often involves a great deal of public scrutiny.

The principalship requires an individual to wear numerous "hats." These "hats" add a tremendous amount of pressure to the principal. Gilman and Lanman-Givens (2001) stated that wearing too many "hats," along with costly and irrelevant requirements, (such as the acquisition of a doctorate degree), increased pressure due to high stakes testing and legislative mandates often lacking sufficient funding, also builds disinterest in leadership positions. Long evenings because of added extracurricular activities, increased paperwork, time away from family, and difficulty getting teachers to change instructional methods provide reasons to substantiate the shrinking applicant pool (Winter, et.al., 2001). Data from a New Jersey study of teachers and supervisors reinforced the fact that the principal's job is too demanding and complex, too stressful, lacks monetary compensation, and adds pressure to administrators and aspiring administrators to obtain a higher degree. However, the results indicate that interference from local boards of education, parental demands, and increased isolations play a major role in changing the mindset of certified staff.

Certified individuals, males and women, opt not to pursue such positions because they lack interest in disciplining students, working with irate parents, and pushing papers which is often accompanied by frustration due to the complexity of the job, and the workload (Normore, 2004). Many of these individuals pursue and acquire leadership

certification but are slow and hesitant to apply for leadership positions. Their reasons include the strain it would place on their family life, the low salary in comparison with the responsibilities associated with the position, and the long hours (Howley, Andrianaivo & Perry, 2005). The lack of job security associated with becoming an administrator, along with the percentage of time they are actually allocated for instructional leadership, were cited by principals in the Netherlands as reasons for disinterest in the principalship (Kruger, Eck, & Vermeulen, 2005). Because these reasons are not indicative to women in particular, additional research is needed to explore and determine what women view as the cause for their lack of pursuing school leadership positions. Are there some common characteristics among the certified leadership women with similar reasons for their choice not to seek such positions?

Summary

Women have made tremendous strides and have overcome serious barriers in order enter the work force and have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. The traditional role of women was being a mother and a wife and taking care of the children and other family members as needed. Women were not encouraged to work outside the home or alter their traditional roles, until war forced women into the work force to fulfill the positions of males that were serving in the war. After the men returned, women had a different view of themselves and their position in society. Many women had learned to balance work and family and were reluctant to return to their traditional roles. As time progressed, women aspired to work outside the home and to acquire positions of leadership within the organization where they worked. However, the traditional mindset that women are suppose to be at home and men are supposed to work and supervise

others created barriers for women seeking to earn a living or to contribute the family household. Barriers such as "the old boy network" and family commitments, created a "glass ceiling" that needed to be shattered or destroyed in order for women to enter the workforce and advance up the career ladder (Pounders & Merril, 2001)

Transitioning from being a stay-at-home mother to becoming a teacher was, for the most part, acceptable because teaching was seen as an extension of motherhood. This allowed women to become more knowledgeable and to explore their interest in leadership positions within the workplace. Women had acquired the knowledge and experience necessary to move into supervisory positions, but since the acquisition of leadership credentials, many women are somewhat reluctant to apply for such position and express very little to no interest in leadership positions. As school districts face potential shortages because of retirement or individuals choosing a less stressful career path, it is imperative to understand why certified women are opting not to applying for school-level leadership positions.

As school districts seek to combat the potential shortages associated with the principalship, districts must acknowledge that the lack of certified individuals is not the real reason for the dwindling applicant pool. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Kersten & Kersten, 2006), an expected spike in administrative retirement will contribute to positive employment opportunities for individuals seeking school administrative positions. Marks (2007) echoes other studies regarding the principal shortage and concluded that insufficient pay, heighten demands, high turnover rate, and costly and cumbersome application prerequisites greatly impact the shrinking applicant pool of potential and interested individuals.

Based on the review of the literature, stress, lack of job security, and increase demands are causing certified women, as well as males, to shy away from assuming leadership roles. While women continue to struggle and make their mark in the world, it is imperative that researchers search to uncover the reasons why many once determined potential certified women suddenly choose not to enter into a career that they once had aspirations for acquiring. Many of the reasons previously cited are not gender specific but may play a key role in determining why women have second thoughts of becoming building level administrators. Women have other obligations outside their careers that often demand an enormous amount of time and dedication. This may also factor into the decision making process of whether or not to pursue such a high maintenance position like the principalship. Chapter 3 will outline the research design and procedures that will be implemented to determine if there are similarities among leadership certified women and what reasons these individuals have for not pursuing or accepting school-level administrative positions. Based on the data collected, the researcher will attempt to determine if the reasons provided by the participants of this study parallel with those disclosed in the review of the literature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to describe the methods and procedures that were used to determine and understand why women with leadership certification were not presently serving in school-level leadership positions.

Design of the study

Research is a means of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information in an attempt to acquire additional knowledge about a particular topic or question in order to gain a better understanding of the subject (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The researcher must be able to articulate clear and specific goals. In an attempt to understand why so many women acquire leadership certification but do not pursue leadership positions, a qualitative research design was used to guide this study. This topic had not been researched from the perspective of women who had acquired leadership certification but were not pursuing leadership positions; therefore, a qualitative study enabled the researcher to clarify and enlighten others not only about the factors that attracted these women toward a career in leadership but also the factors that may have influenced them to avoid the leadership arena.

According to Strauss and Corbin, qualitative research is any research that produces findings not created or determined by the use of statistical methods (Hoepfl, 1997). Qualitative research allows the researcher to obtain a better understanding of a particular phenomenon, to gain a new perspective on factors that are already known, and to gain additional information that may be difficult to explain quantitatively (Hoepfl, 1997).

McCracken (1988) emphasizes that the goal of qualitative research is to isolate and define categories during the process of research.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of materials and a situated activity located in the world of the observer. The underlying purpose of this method is to obtain a better understanding of the subject being studied. Glense and Peshkin (1992) noted that qualitative researchers seek ways to make sense of personal stories and to describe how the stories intersect. Shank (2006) compared qualitative research to a mirror, window, and lantern. The mirror allows the researcher to become more reflective about the topic and subjects being studied. The window concept provides the researcher the opportunity to have a clear and untainted view of the topic. The lantern provides light for the researcher to see and travel in undisclosed territory so that new knowledge and a deeper understanding of the topic can be discovered (Shank, 2006).

The researcher chose to observe, ask questions, or interact with the participants in order to understand and interpret the participants' worlds as they pertain to the research question (Glense & Peshkin, 1992). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), qualitative research takes place in a natural setting, uses multiple interactive and humanistic methods, and is emergent and interpretive. Qualitative researchers take a holistic view of the social phenomenon, constantly reflect on who is in the inquiry, are sensitive to the individual's personal biography and how it may shape the study, and use complex reasoning that is iterative (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). For this study, the use of qualitative research served as a lantern that allowed the researcher to travel in unfamiliar territory to illuminate the topic of why many women acquired leadership

certification and decided not to pursue leadership positions. The knowledge and insight

gained from this study will be beneficial to other women who may be considering

seeking administrative positions. This study will provide them with additional

information to help guide them in the decision-making process.

Research Questions

The literature indicated that a shortage of principals may be a future problem due to a

lack of potential applicants. In an attempt to acquire a better understanding of this

predicted shortage and to increase knowledge on the topic, the researcher explored the

question: Why women with leadership certification are choosing not to apply for school-

level leadership positions? The following research questions were used to solicit the

answer to the above question:

1. What factors negatively impact women's decisions to apply for school-level
   leadership positions?

   a. What aspects of the program attracted women to pursue certification in
      leadership?
   b. Why are females with leadership certification not entering school-level
      leadership positions?
   c. What structures or supports are available for women transitioning into
      leadership positions?

A qualitative research approach and a thematic analysis strategy were used to guide this

study. The researcher began this project with certain assumptions about the topic. The

inquirer or researcher of a qualitative research study makes knowledge claims from either

a constructivist perspective or an advocacy/participatory perspective (Creswell, 2003).

While the constructivist perspective tends to examine multiple meanings of individual

experiences in order to develop a theory or pattern among the shared experiences, the

advocacy/participatory perspective tends to address political or change-oriented issues

(Creswell, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the advocacy/participatory claim seemed to best align with the research question being posed.

According to the research, the advocacy/participatory knowledge claim surfaced during the 1980s and 1990s by individuals who believed that the constructivists view did not go far enough in advocating for action agendas to help marginalized individuals and did not adequately address social justice issues such as empowerment inequality, oppression and alienation (Creswell, 2003). Through this claim, the researcher provided a voice for participants, raised their level of consciousness or may have advocated an agenda for change in hopes of improving the lives of the participants (Creswell, 2003). According to Luke (1994), giving this concept of voice would mean empowering women. Having a "voice" has often been equated with asserting one's position on an issue, exposing one's one in regards to a certain issue or belief (Luke, 1994).

The key features of the advocacy/participatory claim is that the focus is on bringing about a change in traditional practices. It is designed to help individuals free themselves for constraints found in the media, language, work procedures and relationships of power in educational settings. The researcher often engages participants as active collaborators. It helps to create a debate so change will emerge (Creswell, 2003). According to Shank (2006), participatory action research should go beyond living something. Mindsets need to be changed and awareness of issues needs to be raised. The goal of this concept is to not just make changes in a sub-culture but to turn around the culture as a whole (Shank, 2006). This takes on the ideas of Paublo Freire, who is considered to be the architect of action research.

Data Collection

   Once the participants of the study were identified, the researcher made initial contact to acquire each participant's permission to be interviewed and audiotaped. The location and dates of the interviews were established as well as a rapport with each participant. The researcher used in-depth, face-to-face interviews to collect the needed data. While an audio taping device was utilized to record the interviews, the researcher also made written notes. The interviews, which lasted approximately an hour and a half each, were conducted at the school in which the individual works or in a conference room at the public library. It was very important that the location provided a comfortable environment free of distractions. Follow-up interviews with the participants were not necessary to clarify or expound upon thoughts and ideas revealed during the initial interviews.

   According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), in-depth interviewing, with the purpose of getting participants to freely express their thoughts about a particular subject, is one of the best known representatives of qualitative research. The use of in-depth interviews allows the researcher to understand the experiences of other people and the meanings they make of those experiences (Seidman, 1991). The interviews provide not only access to the context of people's behavior but also a way for the researcher to understand the meaning of the behavior. Siedman (1991) states that the key component to interviewing is listening and those interviewers must incorporate this valuable technique though it is difficult for many. Interviewers listen in order to gain insight into the minds of the participants and interpret the inner voices that are beyond the responses one would expect from a public or outer voice.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) note that in-depth interviews are basically informal conversations that allow the researcher to explore topics that uncover the participant's views and provide the means of collecting a large amount of data quickly. These usually unstructured interviews involve the use of a few open-ended questions designed to elicit the views and opinions of the participants (Creswell, 2003; Leedy & Ormond, 2005). According to Leedy and Ormond (2005), the researcher must maintain a rapport with the participants because the objective is to gain information from the interview through the development of a trusting relationship. In order to capture everything said, it is essential to record the participants' responses verbatim through the use of handwritten notes, shorthand, tape recorders, or a computer.

Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985) outlined following advantages to using interviews as a means of collecting data. Face-to-face interviews provide the interviewer an opportunity to explain the purpose of the study, discuss the process, and respond to any questions the participants may have. Through the use of interviews, the response or cooperation rate increases. Many individuals prefer the interaction of talking over reading questions and writing responses. Interviews provide quality data for the researcher because the interviewer can read or access the mood of the participants and clarify or seek additional information if necessary. Facial expressions and body language may also help the researcher better understand the totality of the interview. Establishing a warm and friendly rapport with the participants can often lead to more sincere responses (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1985).

Marshall and Ross (1999), on the other hand, revealed some weaknesses associated with the interviewing techniques. The interviewer may not be trained to ask questions

that evoke long narratives and may also lack experience in properly comprehending responses or various elements of the conversation. Furthermore, the interviewee may not provide truthful responses and the mere presence of the interviewer may influence the responses, as the participants may feel uncomfortable sharing information and offering honest answers.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once the interviews had been conducted, the collected data was organized, categorized, and analyzed so that the researcher could digest it and attempt to make sense out of the wealth of information. Creswell (2003; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) identifies several steps involved in the data analysis process. First, the researcher must have the audiotapes transcribed verbatim and collect all handwritten notes taken of nonverbal cues and verbal inflections that occurred during the interviews. Once the information has been collected and transcribed and the researcher has read all the information and obtained a general sense of its meaning, the researcher will begin the process of coding, which involves organizing chunks of information into groups or categories based on similarities. Shank (2006) described this process as making notes of things that need to be revisited and reconsidered from a particular perspective. Once the codes have been determined, the researcher will study the data to determine what the data reveals on a larger scale. The researcher will then identify common themes that should reveal multiple perspectives supported by quotes in the transcriptions and narratives. The findings of the data will be described in narrative form, and the researcher will interpret the data to present the lessons learned.

Participants of the study

The participants in the study included ten females with leadership certification who were not pursuing a school-level position. Seven of these individuals were teachers and two of them were directors (non-leadership positions) in the Coastal Savannah Regional Area of Georgia. One other teacher is from north Georgia. They were identified using the snowball sampling method. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), the sample size is generally small when using this method of sampling. In order to select participants for the study, the researcher contacted a female in the county who has leadership certification but no desire to pursue a leadership position. The researcher relied on this individual to recommend other participants for the study (Glesne &Peshkin, 1992). In snowball sampling, identified subjects lead the researcher to other potential subjects with similar characteristics (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1986; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Shank, 2006). Snowball sampling is commonly used to sample to the point of saturation. As cited in Crabtree and Miller (1999 p. 41),

> In this form of sampling one identifies, in whatever way one can, a few members of the phenomenal group one wishes to study. These members are used to identify others, and they in turn others. Unless the group is very large, one soon comes to a point at which efforts to net additional members cannot be justified in terms of the additional outlay of energy and resources; this point may be thought of as redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 233).

Crabtree and Miller (1999) also noted that no rule limits the sample size when using the "snowball method" and that the number of participants generated will usually suffice.

Summary

In an attempt to capture the views of females who have leadership certification but are not pursuing leadership positions, the researcher utilized a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to gather responses to unanswered questions by observing, questioning, and interpreting information derived directly from the subjects. In-depth interviewing was employed in hopes of identifying specific themes and patterns among the participants. Once the data had been collected from the interviews, the researcher analyzed the data by determining what information was and was not relevant to the study. The information was organized into categories, and detail descriptions of the researcher's findings were revealed in the "results "section of this report.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter offers the purpose of the study as well as a brief introduction of the study

and a summary of the research methodology. Also, included in this chapter are the

research questions to be answered, factual interview responses from the data gathered,

and an interpretation of this data.

Introduction

While the majority of teachers are women, women still remain underrepresented in

school-level leadership positions. Though the research data indicates an increase in the

number of women in overall administration, the number of women administrators at the

school-level is still disproportionate to the number of women teachers. The purpose of

this study was to explore the reasons women with leadership certification are not

pursuing school-level-leadership positions. As current school administrators approach

retirement age, school districts are concerned about a potential shortage of certified

individuals who can replace those retiring, resigning, or being promoted. Many of the

studies conducted have not taken into consideration the certified women who could fill

these vacancies but are, for various reasons, choosing not to apply for the school-level

administrative positions. The research questions to be answered through this study are as

follows:

1. What factors negatively impact women's decisions to apply for school-level
   leadership positions?

   a. What aspects of the program attracted women to pursue leadership
      certification?
   b. Why are women with leadership certification not entering school-level
      leadership positions?

c. What structures or supports are available for women transitioning into leadership positions?

This study provided women who have leadership certification a voice for identifying reasons for pursuing the certification but not the position. With the rapid shrinkage of the applicant pool of highly capable and certified applicants, the information obtained from this study will assist school districts in determining what aspects of administrative duties and responsibilities may need to be revamped in order to replace current administrators with certified and qualified personnel. The information will also provide school district administrators more awareness of those factors that make leadership positions less attractive to women and provide suggestions for increasing women's interest in the school-level positions.

The research design was qualitative in nature. The researcher interviewed those who participated in the study by using face-to-face structured interviews. The group consisted of ten women, nine in the Coastal Savannah Regional Area and one participant from the north Georgia area, all of whom have leadership certification but are currently in teaching positions or other non-leadership positions. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect her identity and to maintain anonymity. (Table 1 in the appendix shows the interview schedule.)

In order to accommodate the schedules of the participants, the interviews were scheduled over a three-week period. As the interviews, approximately an hour and a half in length progressed, the participants became more comfortable, and the interviews turned into more of a conversation. A tape recorder was used to record the interviews, which were then were transcribed by the researcher within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. The actual written notes that were taken during the interviews were then used to

check the transcriptions for accuracy. The researcher reviewed and read the responses numerous times to identify major themes or patterns among the participants. The transcribed data was also analyzed by use of HyperResearch software, a program designed to assist the researcher in establishing codes and eliminating bias. The program was also used to organize the data in a professional format, making the data analysis process more effective in answering the research questions. After compiling and disaggregating the data into categories, the researcher had the participants review the interpretations that were written to ensure that the information presented was valid and reflected the comments and thoughts that the interviewees wanted to convey about this topic.

Findings

The results of this study were used to answer each of the research questions. This section, organized through the use of research questions, first provides demographic information about each participant involved in the study. Next, the researcher provided the first research question, the findings, and a discussion of the findings. The same process was utilized for each sub question. The major research question was then discussed and included in the summary at the end of this chapter.

This section begins with the demographic data listed below followed by the research questions. Responses to the interview questions were used to answer the research questions and various quotes from the participants are included in the responses. For the purpose of reporting results, each participant was identified by a pseudonym name.

Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant One---**Abby**, in the 31-40-age range, is White, divorced and has three children between the ages of 5 and 10. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education from Georgia Southern College and a Masters of Education in Special Education from Cambridge University. She received her Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from NOVA University and is presently pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. At one point, she served as Department Chair of Special Education in a Hall County school, and she is currently a Special Education teacher in the Atlanta area. Abby has between 10-20 years of teaching experience.

Participant II---**Betsy,** in the age range of 51-60 years old, is African-America, divorced and has one child in the age range of 17-21. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Studies and a Masters in Integrated Studies. After working as a social worker for numerous years, she enrolled in the Fast Track program at a local college and pursued certification in education. After acquiring a position as a middle school teacher in the area of language arts and social studies, she returned to Cambridge University and received a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership. She is presently teaching in a rural middle school with a little over ten years of experience in education.

Participant III---**C**andi, in the age range of 51-60 years old, is African-American, divorced and has one adult child who no longer lives at home. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in English Education 6-12 and Masters and Specialists degrees in Educational Leadership. She served as a long-term substitute teacher in a rural county prior to entering the teaching profession as an English teacher in DeKalb and Effingham

counties. She later worked as a teacher at Savannah River Challenge and even became an assistant principal at the same facility. She is presently a language arts teacher at a rural middle school with 10-20 years experience in education.

Participant IV---**Doris,** in the age range of 31- 40 years old, is White, divorced and has two children in the 5-10 year age range and one in the 11-16 range. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education from Georgia Southern College and later returned to school to add on Interrelated Studies. She has a Masters in General Education from Cambridge University and a Specialist Degree in Organizational and Instructional Curriculum from NOVA University. She is presently pursuing a doctorate degree from NOVA University in Educational Leadership. She has been teaching for thirteen years in the area of special education, primarily at the middle school-level though she has also taught at an elementary school.

Participant V---**Eva,** in the 41-50 age range, is an African-American, divorced single parent of one child in the 11-16 age range. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from South Carolina State University, a Masters in Health Service Administration from Central Michigan University, and a Specialist in Educational Administration from Cambridge University. In her current position of six years, she develops and implements programs that promote safe environments free of drugs and violence for students in grades K-12 for a local school district.

Participant VI---**Faye**, in the 41-50 years age range, is White, married and has two teenage children ages 15 and 18. She has a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Masters in Educational Leadership. She has worked as an elementary teacher, an elementary assistant principal, a central office administrator, a food service director, a

curriculum director, and a special education director. With 20-30 years of experience in education, she presently is teaching at an elementary school in the rural county in which she was born, raised, and educated, the only county in which she has worked.

Participant VII---**Gina,** in the 31-40 age range, is African-American, married, has three children who range in age from 3-12 and is expecting a fourth baby in August. She has a Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades Education with an emphasis in mathematics and a Masters and Specialists in Educational Leadership, and she is also gifted certified. She has 10-20 years of teaching experience, and she is presently teaching gifted math in the middle school at which she has spent her entire teaching career thus far.

Participant VIII---**Holly,** in the 31-40 age range, is White, married and has two children in the 5-16 age range. She has a Bachelor of Science in mathematics Education from the University of Georgia and a Masters in reading and language arts from Augusta State University. She began her teaching career as a high school math teacher, but later left the teaching field after having children. She has returned to education as a math coordinator in her school district; however, her position is not considered a leadership position. With 10-20 years of experience in education, she is presently pursing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with aspirations of becoming a mathematics professor at the college level.

Participant IX---**India,** in the 41-50 age range, is African-American, married and has two children, ages 10 and 16. She holds a Bachelor of Science, a Masters in Business Education, and a Specialist Degree in Educational Administration. Her years of experience fall in the 10-20 year range, and she presently teaches business education classes at a high school in an urban area.

Participant X---**Jan,** in the 51-60 age range, is White, married and has two adult children who no longer live at home. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in General Education from Lutheran Teachers College, and two Masters degrees, from the University of Florida, one in Secondary Education and one in Letters and Dramatic Theory. She also has a Specialist Degree from the University of Tennessee. She has taught language arts in a traditional high school as well as at an Institution for Female Criminals, a Juvenile Justice facility. With more than twenty years of experience in education, Jan presently teaches four gifted Advanced Placement Language classes at a rural high school.

The demographic data reveals that five of the female participants are white and five are black. Five of the ten are divorced while five are still married. They vary in age from 31-60. Of the ten participants, three of them have one child, five of them have two children, and two of them have three children. Of the nineteen children, one child falls in the 0-4 age range, seven of them in the 5-10 range, six in the 11-16 range, two in the 17-21 range, and three of them are adults. One of the participants has ten or less years of experience, seven have 11-20 years of experience, and two of them have 21-30 years of experience. In terms of educational levels, all these women have at least a Masters Degree, nine of them have Specialist Degrees, and three of them are presently pursuing doctoral degrees.

Research Questions Analysis

Each participant was asked numerous questions to solicit responses to the research questions this study was designed to answer.

There are numerous factors that have caused women to think twice about embarking on a school-level leadership position. Many of these factors coincide with the reasons why so many women are not entering school-level leadership positions, which may or may not be seen as negative reasons for not applying. The answer to the over-arching question below is revealed through the participant's responses to sub-questions A-C. Research Questions:

What factors negatively impact women's decisions to apply for school- leadership positions? The participants indicated that women are choosing to remain in the classroom setting due to family obligations, time issues, paper work, feelings of isolation, student discipline, politics, location of positions, lack of support, lack of teaching experience, stress, and no interest in dealing with adults. The researcher expounded on each of these factors while addressing sub-question B.

Sub-Question A: What aspects of the program attracted women to pursue leadership certification?

The responses to this question were solicited during the first few interview questions requiring the participants to discuss their degrees, educational careers, and positions held. The questions resulted in casual conversations regarding the institutions they had attended for their post-graduate work. Three of the participants attended colleges or universities that were in close proximity to their homes while the others acquired most of their post-graduate degrees from universities or college with strong online components. If the institution for higher education was within twenty or thirty miles from their homes, the participants were able to attend these programs without excessive travel. Several of the participants were involved in a combination of a traditional post-graduate program

and an online program depending on the degree they were pursuing and what was transpiring in their personal lives at the time.

Convenience of Satellite Campuses/Online Aspect

Abby discussed the convenience of local campuses that required less travel. "I had very small children at the time. Once I relocated to the Atlanta area, I was no longer near family members who could baby-sit my children while I attended class thirty or forty miles away after work. Being a divorcee means you don't have a spouse to help share the load of child care. So I had to search for programs that worked with my situation at the time. I explored all options, and found that colleges and universities with local course offerings through a satellite campus were very appealing to me. There was no way I could go to school and leave my small children for hours after having been at work all day. I wanted to go back to school, but my kids still needed a mother to be at home with them at night, so I enrolled in an online program of study. This way I could pursue my degree and not neglect my kids. I could drive a few blocks or less than twenty miles to campus. That was great. After discovering the satellite campuses and the online programs, I became optimistic that I could juggle school, work, and family" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Doris also discussed the convenience of satellite campuses from the perspective of a divorcee. "You know in a situation such as mine, a single parent, you must think about what is best for your children, even if it means postponing a personal goal or finding an alternate route to acquiring it. Attending classes on the weekend once a month was a sacrifice, but it was one I could live with. I was still able to work, maintain my motherly duties, and obtain another degree all at the same time without being labeled as one of

those parents who is so goal-oriented that they never have time for their children"

(Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Holly's thoughts on the convenience of local campuses were, "I live in a town where a college is located and that was great for me. I was only a few minutes from the college so I had the perfect opportunity to improve my job skills and add on another certification. It was the most logical thing to do, so I took advantage of having a college in my home town" (Participant VIII, April 4, 2008).

Gina stated, "It's far easier to travel to class on the weekends or to not have to travel at all and just work at your own pace while still being able to spend quality time with family. The college set up was, and still is, ideal for mothers or should I say anyone wanting to attend classes but just don't have the time to travel" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008).

Professional growth or a desire for leadership position in the future

Some of the participants were interested in pursuing a leadership degree or adding on the certification for professional growth because they desired, at one time, and still desire a leadership position in the future. Abby thoughts about professional growth and the desire for leadership positions were, "When I was appointed as head of the Special Education Department, I had to do paperwork, schedule meetings with parents, and take on some of the administrative responsibilities such as actually being the disciplinarian for many of these students. Because I was doing it all and enjoying it, I thought this was something I wanted to pursue. You know ah after having a taste of something that peaks your curiosity, you want to know more about it. At the time, I felt I was the special education administrator for the school, and if I were going to perform administrative

tasks, I might as well make it worth my time. So I searched until I found a program which met my needs as a teacher and hopefully as an administrator" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Betsy's reasons for pursuing leadership certification were primarily for professional growth. She said, "With seventeen years of experience in a completely different field, working with Department of Family and Children Services, I had to master this teaching thing. After about six years in the classroom, I was at the point of being comfortable with what I was doing. I started thinking about what I wanted to do after retiring from the classroom. Most people have to work after retirement, so it was a matter of preparing for my future. I thought about doing something in admissions or the area of financial aid on the college level. I'm really interested in this and leadership certification would hopefully open a few doors for me beyond middle and secondary education. Uh, well, I guess I would say I pursued the certification so that I could have a few more employment options after I reach retirement requirements for teachers " (Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Candi's views about professional growth or the desire for an administrative position are also noted. She stated, "At the time I was appointed to an assistant principal's position in the Juvenile Justice facility where I was working as a classroom teacher, I was pursuing a degree in English, and the rules changed regarding individuals who were in leadership positions. So I was required to seek the certification if I wanted to keep my job. Now you see, the desire to be fully certified and competent in the position in which I was working prompted me to pursue this certification. Plus, you know I needed to keep my job so you do what needs to be done. I also wanted to be able to answer questions about policies and laws pertaining to my administrative position, and therefore, I realized

it was in my best interest to increase my knowledge in this area if I were going to be effective and keep my job" (Participant III, March 31, 2008).

Doris' views about her attraction to leadership certification revealed, "One day I would like to be a Special Education Director. That's what I really want to do, and I know I would need to have the leadership skills and training necessary to acquire such a position. I also would like to become an adjunct professor in the evenings. With this leadership piece, I can grow professionally and broaden my options. The attraction for me was career advancement and what this degree or certification could do for me professionally." I would like to explore other options while remaining as a classroom teacher, and having the appropriate leadership certification would provide me with more options while still working as a full time teacher "(Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

In terms of professional growth and the desire for a leadership position, Eva stated, "I have been given the run around several times. I am responsible for a lot of programs, individuals, and administrative tasks. In order for me to go anywhere in my career, I needed this certification. Several aspects of my position are similar to that of an administrator anyway. I make my own schedule. No one really looks over my shoulders or micromanages every thing that I do. I do what I am supposed to do, and I am where my schedule says I'm supposed to be. The frustrating part is that in many ways I am treated as an administrator. I just don't have the title or the pay for doing many things that most administrators do. I have several degrees, but I was told if I wanted to be considered for an administrative position and wanted to advance, I needed to get the leadership certification. It's kind of ironic because now that I have the certification, nothing has changed career wise except the reasons I'm given as I continue to struggle to acquire a

leadership position. I keep being told that I can't advance to the administrative level because I lack the required three years of classroom experience even though I teach several evening classes. I pursued this degree to be an administrator and I bring a lot of experience to the table. I really think I should be recognized for my experience" (Participant V, April 2, 2008).

Faye discussed her interest in becoming a school leader as a reason for pursuing the degree. "I always had a desire to become an assistant principal. When I learned that my assistant principal was leaving, I immediately knew that this was something I wanted to do. I kept my eye on that position because I wanted to become his replacement and I did. I was always interested in pursuing this degree" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

India stated, "I want to become an administrator. I want to be a Career Technical Agriculture Education (CTAE) director. I want to assist students with career choices and to make sure they are aware of all the career choices available to them. I like working with students who are involved in the various clubs such a Future Farmers of America (FFA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), etc. This is what I enjoy and what I want to spend my time doing" (Participant IX, April 17, 2008).

Ease of adding on leadership certification

Holly mentioned the advantage and ease of being able to add on leadership certification to her Masters degree. "Even though I was serving as math coordinator and had duties and responsibilities that required leadership skills, I was told my position was not a leadership position. I saw this as an opportunity for professional growth, so I could be more effective at my job. At the time it was only a part-time position but one that I

dearly loved. I was only a few minutes from the college, and these courses provided me the perfect opportunity to improve my job-specific skills while adding on the certification that I would need if I ever decided to become an administrator" (Participant VIII, April 4, 2008).

Pay Increase

Four of the participants mentioned their attraction to the leadership program was the increase in pay they would receive upon obtaining the leadership certification even though they are not currently working in a leadership position.

Betsy mentioned pay as a reason for pursuing the certification. She states, "In addition to professional growth, I must admit that finances always come up and why not. I'm not rich. It would be ridiculous to have the degrees and not get paid for them" (Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Doris stated, "Yes, money is important and even though my desire is to obtain a leadership position so that I can make a difference, I would also look for a pay raise" (Participant IV, March 31, 2008).

Gina thoughts regarding pay increase are, "With three kids, I have to do what works for me. Yes, I'm married, but it takes all we have to raise a family, especially if one child has significant financial and medical needs. In my household, money became a necessity, and I was divorced (now remarried) at the time I was pursuing my Masters in leadership. For me, this was a way to prepare for the future but also to satisfy an immediate need. The extra money in my paycheck each month really helped out" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008).

In regards to a pay increase, Jan stated, "Of course I added on the certification for the pay increase that I would get upon completing my degree. It's not all about the money. I also love teaching and learning, but the money is important" (Participant X, April 22, 2008).

Becoming a change agent

A few of the participants pursued the degree because of their desire to become a change agent. Doris stated, " I would love to be in an administrative position. These are unique positions, and they put you in position to help and to make a difference by changing things for the betterment of all" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Eva said, "I want to create a position, something new with buy-in from everyone, that is something that has not yet been created. My diverse background would allow me to do something different because I bring lots experience or pieces that people outside the school system may not have. I want to service schools in general. I have experience in guidance and testing and working with graduation coaches and teachers among other things. I am called on constantly to develop plans and provide resources. I want to bring the school and community together so I can make a difference. With my experience, I have a lot to offer, and I wanted to put all I know into creating this awesome environment for school districts" (Participant V, April 2, 2008).

Gina's desire to become a change agent stemmed from her desire to make a difference in the low performing schools. "I work with those high performing students, but I would like the challenge of working as an assistant principal in a low socio-economic school in order to bring those students up to where they need to be. I have something to offer them.

Working with teachers who are not necessarily the strongest but who are in need of new methods and ideas is something I really want to do" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008).

In addition to the individuals quoted above, the consensus of many of the participants was that leadership certification was easy to acquire or add on to a previous degree, and a pay raise would be immediate once leadership certification was obtained. Various programs offered options regarding flexibility for attending classes. Though many of the traditional programs still require you to attend classes weekly, the online programs provide the option of attending classes monthly, during the summers only, or not at all in some instances. Program expectations were doable and admission requirements are not too stringent. All of these components made acceptance and enrollment into leadership programs very appealing to many of the participants.

Sub-Question B: Why are women with leadership certification not entering school- level leadership positions?

The responses to this research question were revealed through numerous questions asked during the interview sessions. The majority of the participants, if not all of them expressed several of the same responses. The most common ones are mentioned below along with significant quotes from some of the participants.

Isolation

In order to address this question, during the interview, the participants discussed things that would prevent them from moving into administrative positions and things they would miss or lose upon accepting leadership positions. They also discussed the benefits of simply taking their leadership classes even if they never accepted a leadership position.

Many of the respondents stated that they would miss the camaraderie of their peers

because becoming an administrator can lead to a very lonely life.

In reference to their being isolated, Abby remembers, "Working with a principal who

was the only female principal in the district created many challenges for her. She has no

one she could relate to and of course she was not on the same level as her teachers.

Everyone could sense that she was not in with the other male administrators, and so she

'stuck out like a sore thumb'. She was lonely, frustrated, and had no support, not even

from the Central Office. How isolated can you get?" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Doris said, "You have no one to share things with or do things with unless it's family

members. There is a great deal of confidentiality that comes with being an administrator.

Administrators cannot talk about many aspects of their jobs to their friends or even

family members without breaching confidentiality" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Family Obligations

 Several of the participants named their family obligations as the main reason for not

undertaking a school leadership position.

For Abby, family obligations were a major reason she was not presently in a

leadership position. According to Abby, "I'm a single parent with small children. Right

now they really need me. It would be extremely difficult to accept a leadership position.

My children are adjusting to the divorce and need stability right now. I know I would not

be able to give them a great deal of stability if I were in a leadership position. I would

have to change a lot of things in their world, and I'm just not ready to do that. Perhaps in

few years when they are more prepared to adjust to change, I will accept a leadership

position. Right now we are still having adjustment issues surrounding the divorce. My children come first, bottom line" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Doris also mentioned family obligations as a reason for not presently pursuing a school-level position. She said, "It's different when you are divorced and for the most part, you are the only one they have. Yes, my parents help me with them, but I need to be there to get them to baseball practice and watch them play in the game. Many times, it's a constant run. You can only do so much, but their interest should not take a back seat to my career goals. I am interested in becoming an administrator. In the next five years, when my children are older or grown, it will be my time to do what I would like to do, but for now, it's….well it's just isn't my time to be an administrator" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Gina stated, "I don't think I would have time to do everything that is required for such a position because my family requires a lot. My husband, aging parents, and my children keep me on the go, and that's about all I can handle at the moment. I think anything else at this point would send my stress level skyrocketing" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008).

India indicated, "I would not accept a school-level leadership position if it would interfere in the life that my children would want to lead, such as being able to participate in extracurricular activities or even other things outside of the school setting. Their interest are important, and I want to support them and be there to see them perform" (Participant IX, April 17, 2008).

Faye reiterated the same by saying, "I enjoy being with my family, and that's more important than work. I want to attend my children's activities without having to ask someone to cover my duties and responsibilities at work, such as supervising an

extracurricular activity because it's my day to cover this event. It's very difficult to be some place when your heart is somewhere else. I was often supervising children at school while missing the activities that my own children were involved in. This broke my heart" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

Time Issues

Four of the women mentioned the issue of time as a concern. They expressed their concerns about the number of work hours spent keeping up with paperwork, dealing with parents, attending special programs, traveling to conferences, and attending all those extracurricular activities.

Abby said, "While serving as head of the Special Education Department at one of the schools where I worked, I was faced with the lack of time to get everything done. Being able to multi-task didn't mean it all got done. For me the department head is an example of a small-scale administrative position with many responsibilities. Being a building-level administrator involves so much more, and where does one find the time to get it all done? It's just not enough hours in the day" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Faye, who was once in an administrative position, said, "If it had not been for the support of my husband, parents, and in-laws helping with my children, I could not possibly have gotten my work done. My job consumed so much of my time. It became worse after I moved to the Central Office….work, work, work. After sitting down with my husband and looking at the hours I was working and the money that I was making, I realized that it wasn't worth it…too time consuming" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

Holly agreed, "The work hours or schedule for an administrator is not 'parent-friendly.' Parents in leadership positions have a very difficult time managing work and

home. Work is far busier than it has ever been. They keep piling more duties and
responsibilities on your plate and nothing comes off, so the length of time spent at work
increases with those tasks" (Participant VIII, April 14, 2008).

Jan says, "I think they must be on call all the time, and of course their summers are
much shorter, if they even get one. You know they (administrators) do have an extended
contract and that means work, work, work…perhaps too much work for me. One of my
school administrators was promoted from the classroom to an assistant principal's
position. She is very good at it…organized and efficient, but she has become so rigid to
the point that her job consumes her life because that's all she has time for" (Participant X,
April 22, 2008).

Discipline

For many of the participants, discipline was a major deterrent for not entering school-
level leadership positions. Most of the participants have aspirations to become directors
or assistant principals of Curriculum and Instruction. If the position was not at the Central
Office level, the number one position would involve working with Curriculum and
Instruction, becoming a Literacy Coach, Lead Teacher, or Instructional Coordinator.

Betsy alluded to the discipline aspect of administration, "Being an assistant principal
and having to deal with student discipline issues is not what I want to do. I have no
interest in disciplining students beyond the classroom setting. Please let someone else do
that" (Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Doris mentioned the discipline aspect in this regard, "I would consider accepting a
school-level position dealing with discipline only if I were allowed to develop my own
ideas about discipline...perhaps create a Code of Conduct that would allow assistant

principals to develop a relationship with students instead of just being an enforcer of the rules. Many times assistant principals who handle discipline are often criticized by teachers for trying to keep students in school for minor discipline infractions. They should be allowed to develop relationships with the students and try whatever they can to help keep the children in school. I don't understand why teachers want to get rid of their students for petty thing" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Love for teaching and the students

The majority of the participants seem to have a genuine love for what they do and for the students they teach. Their passion for teaching and children radiated throughout each interview I conducted. There is an enormous sense of loyalty to teaching and to the children, and all of the participants felt that if they became administrators, they would lose the connection or rapport that classroom teachers have with students.

Candi stated, "The only reason I would leave the classroom would be if I became too old to run behind the students, or I got to a point where I really didn't enjoy the students anymore because I want to enjoy what I do, and I thoroughly enjoy teaching and being with the students" (Participant III, March 31, 2008).

Doris echoed, "I remain in the classroom because I love the challenge of working with students, and I love the hands-on interactions that I can create among the students" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Holly reiterated, "I love teaching! Most of my time in this coordinator's position is teaching adults new strategies and techniques related to math, but teaching is my first love. I still teach students, but the students that I teach are adults instead of children" (Participant VIII, April 14, 2008).

 Gina went on to say, "I really enjoy my job, and I just love my kids. I think if I got a leadership position, I would miss teaching the children so much that I would have to go into the classroom and teach the students twice a month so I could satisfy that void" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008).

Jan summed it up by saying, "I really enjoy teaching Advanced Placement students and teaching in general. By becoming an administrator, I would miss opportunities to be silly with the kids and to allow them to see me in a different light. I would also miss seeing the students change from month to month or year to year; both good and bad changes occur" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008).

Another of the participants disagrees. Betsy believes, "You shouldn't lose any relationships with the students because you will still have opportunities to interact with them. As an administrator, you will be able to interact with more students as opposed to just the ones in your classroom. You now can build relationships with as many as you desire" Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Prefer to deal with children instead of adults

Based on the responses of the participants, many of them enjoy the interaction with and supervision of the students more so than they would enjoy interactions with and supervision of adults. As an administrator, one is required to communicate and interact with numerous adults ranging from parents, teachers, support personnel, Central Office personnel, board members, and community leaders, and in many instances, these interactions are not positive. Several of the participants stated that they would prefer to work with students instead of adults.

Abby said, "Administrators should not have to change who they are to be effective. In dealing with adults or people in general, I must be able to sleep at night, and I have to be sure that my conscious is clear. Some times it's just easier to deal with the children. When you deal with children, you are more likely to avoid the other issues that come with dealing with adults" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Candi stated, "Honestly, I'm not good at soothing upset parents because I am very blunt. I would rather spend my time dealing with students than parents or community leaders. I know that my weakness is being able to deal with parents, especially when they defend their children when they are wrong. You know I have a real problem with that." (Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Doris stated, "Having to deal with a lot of parents would be a challenge for me. I need more classroom experience to become a better communicator with adults. I think administrators should be able to "bail the cat," which means be able to provide constructive criticism on an individual basis instead of making general statements to an entire group when everyone knows who is guilty of non-compliance. At this point, I am not sure I can "bail the cat" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008).

Faye said, "I worry too much about whether adults are happy. I don't like to dictate or mandate to my peers or other adults. That adds more stress especially when you have to deal with friends and people you grew up with" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

Lack of support for females

Two of the participants said they would not apply for an administrative position because their principal or superintendent favors men over women in leadership positions. With frustration echoing in her voice, Abby said, "I had a female principal whom the

superintendent did not like because he wanted a male to have the job. I watched how she was treated and received very little to no support from the superintendent and Central Office personnel. It was horrible, and no one should be treated that way whether they are a woman or a man" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

According to Jan, "My superintendent is pro-athletic, especially football. He makes decisions on a love-hate basis. If he likes you, that's great; if he doesn't, you are pretty much doomed. He never advertises positions, and he believes administration is a field for males only" (Participant X, April 22, 2008).

Politics

One of the participants indicated that politics is a reason for not entering school-level leadership positions. India stated, "When applying for these positions, you have to realize that politics control a lot. Sometimes decisions are made for political reason. Individuals are selected on the basis of politics. They know instead of well….let me see how I want to say this, 'that a person may be related to someone on the board or a family member is best friends with the superintendent so they get the job whether they deserve it or not.' It's not right and it's frustrating, but that's life" (Participant IX, April 17, 2008).

Lack of teaching experience

Most administrators are required to have at least three years of teaching experience in order to be considered for a leadership position. Eva disagrees with this concept by commenting, "I came into leadership in a non-traditional way. I have not always worked in education, but the experience I have I feel has prepared me for a leadership position. I am constantly being told that I needed to add on the leadership certification and that I need three years of teaching in a classroom setting in order to move up to the

administrative level. I teach classes now, not all day, but usually two or three evenings each week. If I am required to go into a classroom and teach for three years just to get an administrative position, I guess I will seriously explore my options in another profession" (Participant V, April 2, 2008).

Not Being Offered a Position

There was one participant who had applied for several administrative positions within her district, but she had not been offered a position. India stated, "I have applied for quite a few leadership positions, but someone else always ended up with the job. No real feedback was given as to why I did not get any of the positions. If I had to guess, I would say too many applicants for the position or politics played a major role in determining who actually was hired for the job" (Participant IX, April 17, 2008).

Greater Impact in the Classroom

One of the participants indicated that she would have a greater impact as a classroom teacher. Candi stated, "I believe that I have a greater impact in the classroom setting than I ever would have as an administrator. I make a real difference in the lives of the children that I interact with each day, and this is where I believe I am meant to be" (Participant III, March 31, 2008).

Relocating for a Position

Relocating to another area was cited by one participant as a reason she did not apply for a school-level leadership position. According to Betsy, "There are limited opportunities for leadership positions here, but I know that there are a lot of positions out there. We have had so many young people to move to another district and move up the

ranks at a very fast pace, but I'm just not willing to pick up and move in order to get a leadership position" (Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Stress

Three of the participants mentioned that they would not want to deal with the stress that comes with being an administrator. Abby said, "I know that holding an administrative position would be very stressful. Trying to please people, making sure the rules are enforced, and ensuring that quality instruction is being delivered are all things that must be addressed constantly. Upset parents can create lots of stress for administrators, and I know that I would want to do the right thing in every situation so that my conscience is clear and I can sleep at night. Administration is too stressful, especially at the school-level" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Betsy mentioned, "Sometimes you have to do things that you don't like to do or things that hurt others and bring on a lot of stress. Many times it can't be helped, but it is stressful to try to justify to parents, teachers, and board members why a certain decision was made" (Participant III, March 31, 2008).

Faye stated, "This is my hometown, and most of the teachers in this system are from here. They are my friends, or I know their family. Having to reprimand them or tell them what to do can cause conflict. Stress levels rise, and I just hated it. I was always concerned about how my friends would accept criticism and how to separate friendship from work. Now if that's not stress, what else is it? I had to get out of administration because it wasn't working for me, and I would stress over the smallest things" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

As noted by the responses provided by the participants, some of the reasons why leadership certified women are not pursuing school-level leadership positions include obligations to family members as well as time. Family obligations make it difficult to complete the time consuming tasks that come with being a school-level administrator. The time involved in this position makes it difficult to balance home and work. Many women love interacting with others, and leadership positions often force them to interact with them in a different manner than what they are accustomed. They often feel they don't have the support needed to be successful because they are still viewed as being inferior to males in the administrative arena.

Sub-Question C: What structures or supports are available for women transitioning into leadership positions?

The participants did not mention many structures or supports available for women transitioning into leadership positions. Two participants mentioned the importance of mentoring along with their cohort experience during graduate school as support structures. A few of them mentioned that having a practicum component embedded in their leadership program that allowed or required them to shadow a principal offered them a glimpse of what it would be like to hold such a position. The cohort aspect of graduate classes was also mentioned as a structure that often created an interactive atmosphere for getting to know others and establishing a network system for potential administrators.

Mentoring

Abby viewed mentoring as something very necessary for the survival of anyone in a leadership position. Abby proclaimed, "I worked under a principal who was not

supported, and she was miserable. I feel that everyone needs someone they can look up to for advice or just someone to go to when you are about to explode and need to vent. Mentoring is key. I know that my principal's experience would have been much more positive if she had the support of a mentor. I could see her isolation, frustration, and sometimes hopelessness. Everyone needs support, and mentors do a good job of providing support. Teachers have mentors and why not administrators" (Participants I, March 29, 2008).

Betsy alluded to support structures by stating, "Administrators need a 'go to person' when they have a question or concern. Well, sometimes, you need someone who can tell you just how it is in plain language and get you back on track. Just like school districts assigned mentors to new teachers, administrators who are new should also be assigned a mentor within the district" (Participant III, March 31, 2008).

In regards to transitioning into a leadership position, Eva stated, "I would more than gladly accept a leadership position as long as there is a smooth transition into administration. I would need to feel supported and know that I have someone there to assist me, support me, and encourage me. My supervisor is a mentor, and her advice is valuable. She often makes me see a different perspective, and she has taught me a lot. She would be great at helping me or anyone else settle into a new leadership position. The advice and expertise provided by this individual or anyone else would be more helpful for a new administrator" (Participant V, April 2, 2008).

Faye regarded the mentoring aspect as a positive experience for support as she moved into administration. She remembered, "During my graduate courses, I was able to develop friendships and make contacts. I even found a mentor in graduate school. This

person had the experience and the 'know how' and I know I wouldn't have a problem calling on this person or even a few more, if I ever needed advice as an administrator" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

Holly said, "Having someone to call on when you are not sure about what you have done or something you are about to do is invaluable. There are some things I know and understand, but for other things, I would have to call on a colleague or mentor" (Participant VIII, April 14, 2008).

According to Abby, she remains in the classroom setting because the male mentality still exists, and she will not accept a position on the premise of just having someone to fill a position. She stated, "There are not many female role models who are in administration in my school district, and I don't want to accept a position because someone (just anyone) is needed to fill the vacancy. I want to accept the position because I am the best candidate for the job, and I would have the support of those above me who selected me for that particular position. Just because we are in a crunch, let's pick someone is not the solution. I worked for a woman principal whom the superintendent did not support simply because the superintendent believed that administrators should be males. Whom could she turn to during this frustrating time in her life? No one in the district! She was the only female in our district who was serving in this capacity" (Participant I, March 29, 2008).

Supportive Board of Education Members

Doris believed that board support is necessary for an administrator to be successful. "I would need a supportive board that would back me or support me. There is nothing more frustrating than being out on that limb all by yourself. If they approve you for a position, they should support you and have confidence in your ability to do the job

and make the right decisions while you are in that position" (Participant IV, April 1,

2008).

Professional Development Opportunities

A few of the participants discussed the importance of professional development

opportunities as a means of obtaining on the job training opportunities. This helps

develop a team approach to administrative leadership.

Betsy mentioned, "There are limited opportunities for many aspiring administrators

unless they know someone who has clout. I've heard about a couple of leadership

programs within my school district for those interested in becoming leaders, which I

think are great, but they are only offered to a select group of individuals. These are

probably very important professional development pieces; however, these programs or

classes are not advertised across the board so I am not sure what they include, but at least

it's something whatever that may be. In my graduate program, we had to complete many

hours to provide those of us in the program opportunities to serve or assist in leadership

roles such as chairing the Southern Accreditation of College and Schools (SACS), being

a mentor, working with the curriculum, developing a discipline plan, and many other

things. This gives individuals desiring to become administrators an opportunity to semi-

live the life of an administrator without actually holding the position" (Participant II,

March 31, 2008).

Regarding professional development, Candi responded, "I'm really not sure of

anything in place for those aspiring to be leaders at the school-level. I've worked in

several different counties, and I'm not sure of specific professional development geared

just for administrators. You know as you move among people you do hear things. For

instance, I think this county has a couple of things in place for administrators, but I'm just not aware of the specific names of the programs or how often they meet, but I'm almost positive there are classes for new administrators and different classes for teachers who are wanting to move into a leadership position" (Participant IV, March 31, 2008).

Cohort experience

Faye remembered, "During my graduate courses I was able to develop friendships and make contacts. I even found a mentor in graduate school. This person had the experience and the 'know how 'and I know I wouldn't have a problem calling on this person or even a few more, if I ever need advice as an administrator" (Participant VI, April 3, 2008).

Jan stated, "I enjoy learning, but beyond that I have a great time. In graduate courses, there is a lot of camaraderie. We all get to know each other and form a bond. We have fun, and I look forward to going to class to fellowship so to speak" (Participant X, April 22, 2008).

Practicum Experience

One of the participants mentioned being required to shadow a school administrator as part of their leadership program. Betsy said," In my graduate program, we were required to complete so many hours of a practicum. That meant we had to shadow an administrator and serve in as many leadership roles as we could. We were encouraged to see what it's really like by assuming some of the duties and responsibilities such as serving on the School Leadership Team and School Council, facilitating content meetings, serving as a mentor for new teachers, and working with the curriculum. This allows those of us in the leadership program desiring to become administrators an

opportunity to semi-live the life of an administrator without actually holding the position"

(Participant II, March 31, 2008).

Jan also said, "Being required to interview and shadow a representative from each

entity of the school (teacher, lunchroom worker, custodian, bus driver, assistant principal,

and principal) was one of the greatest as well as most beneficial aspects of my leadership

program. I even had to drive a school bus, but what an experience. I feel I was prepared.

At least, I knew about some of the things that administrators must deal with" (Participant

X, April 22, 2008).

Family Support

As one transitions from one career or position to another, the individual needs support

inside as well as beyond the school-level. According to Gina, "Family support is critical.

Women need a support system at home. Spousal support will make or break a woman's

career. If your husband and children don't fully understand or support what you do, this

leads to aggravation and often times disputes. Parental support is great because many

times a spouse or in-laws have to fill the void when the administrator is attending a

conference or is dealing with a last minute crisis that developed at school" (Participant

VII, April 4, 2008).

India concurred with Gina's thoughts by adding, "I have a supportive husband and

that support must be there if I ever obtain a leadership position. Without support from

your spouse and other family members, you cannot be successful. In order to maintain a

balance between work and home, one needs support, flexibility, and communication.

These are very important concepts to keep in mind" (Participant IX, April 17, 2008).

In summary, most of the women feel that they did not have a support system for transitioning into a leadership position or they were not aware or very limited in their knowledge of any school or district level support systems that may have been in place. Any leadership skills they have acquired to help them become effective school leaders were obtained through their graduate programs. The participants feel the cohort component of their graduate programs provided opportunities for them to get to know others administrators as well as aspiring administrators whom they came to view as mentors. Professional development opportunities existed for certain people but not for everyone who was interested in becoming an administrator. Even though their knowledge regarding support structures seemed limited for many of them, they all indicated the need for such structures to assist newly appointed administrators transitioning and becoming successful administrators.

Summary

From the participants and the data collected, two of the interviewees have a background in Special Education, and another one would like to pursue Special Education certification. Three of the ten women have certification and work experience in the area of Social Services, and three others have work experience in a juvenile or correctional facility. Because they all have a love for teaching and children, eight of the ten participants said they are satisfied with their present job while one is not and another is undecided. Five of the interviewees are presently serving as middle school teachers, two are high school teachers, and two work at the Central Office level in non leadership positions. Only one of the participants is actively pursuing an administrative position.

The attractions of the leadership program for the women included having the flexibility to attend class weekly, monthly, or not at all depending on whether a traditional graduate program or an online program was selected. The location of these classes was also a determining factor because the majority of the participants have children and lengthy travel and late nights were not feasible for many of them. Completion of a leadership program resulted in an administrative pay raise even though a leadership position was not taken. This increased pay was a definite attraction for some of the participants. The convenience of being able to complete the assignments and still have time to spend with family members was also a big attraction. These programs were seen to be very doable.

The participants cited numerous reasons for not entering school-level positions. The time constraints of a school-level administrator would infringe on their time with family members. Family obligations such as raising children and taking care of elderly or ill parents are a top priority as opposed to becoming an administrator. Many of the participants have a specific school-level administrative job in mind, and if it is not primarily in the area of Curriculum and Instruction, they are not interested. Having the task of disciplining children outside of the classroom is not something they aspire to do. Some of them do not want to be in a position that requires them to supervise adults or interact with irate parents. A few of them feel that women are often not viewed as leaders because of the male mentality that still surfaces and causes women to believe that they would not be supported in an administrative position in the same manner as a man would. However, their love for teaching and the children are the main reasons most of them do

not want school-level leadership positions. They enjoy what they do and feel that they have a greater impact on others as a classroom teacher opposed to as an administrator.

Lastly, many of the participants were not able to identify support or structures that are available to provide a smooth transition into a leadership position. In many instances, if such structures or other support mechanisms were in place, only a select few were asked to participate; therefore, professional growth opportunities were not available for all who desired them. For the most part, the participants believed that their graduate programs were more in line with providing them opportunities to explore certain aspects of administration by shadowing a principal. This allowed them to role-play what administrators experience from a hands-on perspective. The cohort experience afforded them opportunities to establish networking systems and to identify potential mentors for future references.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a brief summary of the study on why women with leadership certification are choosing not to apply for school-level leadership positions. It presents a brief synopsis of the findings and conclusions of the study, the implications of future studies relating to this topic, and recommendations from the researcher.

Summary

There seems to be a genuine concern about a potential shortage of school administrators within the next few years due to the number of administrators who will be eligible for retirement. While school districts nationwide are concerned about how to combat this potential problem, there is very little if any discussion of the number of women teachers who presently have the credentials to fill these vacancies but are for some reasons choosing not to apply for school-level leadership positions. The purpose of this study was to explore what attracted or caused these women to pursue certification in school leadership and then suddenly decide they were no longer interested in acquiring a position that was perhaps very intriguing to them at one time. Women represent the majority of those employed in the education profession, and the pool from which potential leaders are drawn from is not far from the doors of the classrooms. This study was designed to explore the reasons many women choose to obtain leadership certification but then seem disinterested in pursuing a career as a school-level administrator.

The major question for this study was: What factors negatively impact women's decisions to apply for school-level leadership positions?

The following sub-questions guided this research:

1. What aspects of the program attracted women to pursue certification in leadership?
2. Why are women with leadership certification not entering school-level leadership positions?
3. What structures or supports are available for women transitioning into leadership positions?

In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative design was implemented. A snowball sampling technique was used to acquire women participants who had leadership certification but were not pursuing leadership positions at the school-level. Data for the study was collected through the use of face-to-face interviews.

Analysis of Research Findings

The demographic data and responses to the interview questions indicated clear similarities and differences among the participants regarding the various research questions this study was designed to investigate. Several of the participants stated that they entered leadership programs because of the flexibility of taking classes in close proximity of their homes or being able to take classes while in the convenience of their own homes. Several of the participants stated that they pursued the certification because family members and friends thought they could be good administrators. The majority of the participants stated that another administrator had encouraged them to return to school to obtain leadership certification because they were viewed as individuals who have what it takes to become a school leader. Abby stated, "My principal thought I had what it takes to be a leader; therefore, she encouraged me to pursue leadership certification. She knew I have aspirations of becoming a Special Education Director one day" (Participant I, March 29, 2008). Candi said, "My principal appointed me to a leadership position as an assistant principal because he saw something in me, something that I did not see in

myself, that caused him to believe that I was up for the challenge of administration. He was very clear about wanting me to be the assistant principal of the juvenile justice facility where we both worked. I was told that I could make an impact on the institution" (Participant III, March 31, 2008). Gina stated that her former and current principal, as well as her colleagues, were the ones who prompted her to return to school to acquire leadership certification. "They tell me to apply for positions, and I have been told numerous times that if I would just apply for a leadership position in my school district, I would get a position" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008). Jan stated, "My present administrator is always telling me to apply for positions he hears about" (Participant X, April 22, 2008). A review of literature revealed that many individuals pursue leadership certification because they are seen as individuals who could make decisions that would impact a larger group of people (Stein, 2001) and because other administrators see leadership potential in them (Lankford, et al., 2003).

Several of the participants would like to have a position as an instructional leader in their schools or school districts. They seek positions as instructional administrators in order to positively impact the delivery of teacher instruction in order to be change agents in their school or district. Abby said, "I'm very observant, and I can help others as an administrator. I can be objective and provide the necessary feedback to improve achievement" (Participant I, March 29, 2008). Betsy said, "I think I have what it takes to be an effective literacy coach or lead teacher. At this point, I believe the duties and responsibilities of an Instructional Coordinator are too much for one person to do." (Participant II, March 31, 2008). Candi would love to align the curriculum for a juvenile justice system with that of public school. "I think there is a big disconnect between the

two institutions, and something needs to be done so we can close the gap and concentrate on school improvement" (Participant III, March 31, 2008). The literature reviewed in this study also mentioned that many individuals enter school administration programs with a desire to work with teachers in school improvement efforts (Shen, et al, 1999).

Other than being encouraged to enter school administration, the participants for the most part did not feel that they had a structure or support system designed to assist them prior to and upon acquiring a leadership position. A few of them mentioned the fact that they had heard about professional development opportunities for aspiring leaders in their district, but these opportunities were only open to a select group of individuals. Betsy remembered that a few of her colleagues participated in a program sponsored by her local board, but it was not advertised. She commented, "I don't know how they were selected. I just knew someone who was in it, whatever it was called, but it was kind of 'hush hush' and never advertised! They were just put into this class or program. I guess it goes back to who you know" (Participant, II, March 31, 2008). India said, "There is a lack of support structures, and there is so much politics involved; politics often get in the way of selecting the right person for the job" (Participant IX, April 17, 2008). The review of the literature confirmed the participants' statements and is aligned with the current practice of those who profess an interest or know the district's political powers are likely to become future administrators. The research indicates that administrative vacancies are often filled with friends or protégés instead of with certified individuals (Chaffins et al., 1995; Harris et al., 2000).

Several reasons for not applying for school-level leadership positions were more common among the participants than other reasons that were more specific to one or a

couple of the women. Obligations to family members were at the top of the list. The

majority of the participants still have school-age children who need them, and in order to

be available for family members, many of the participants had to realistically say, "Being

a school administrator is something I want to do, but for now I must put it on hold"

(Participant IV, April 1, 2008). According to Watkins, Herrin & McDonald (1998),

mothering was a societal norm that conflicted with women who wanted to seek

employment outside of the home. This mentality still exists and women realize that

family comes first. Even though these participants work, they understand the importance

of family and do not want to do anything that will create additional stress for family

members. Abby said, "I will take a leadership position in the next five years because my

children will be older, and they won't need me as much as they do now" (Participant I,

March 29, 2008). Doris echoed similar comments: "I need to get at least twenty years of

classroom experience, and when my children are grown, I look forward to the

possibilities" (Participant VI, March 1, 2008). Faye is the only participant who has been a

school-level and Central Office administrator. During this time, she really missed not

being able to spend time with her family or attend her children's activities. A review of

the literature indicates that women often delay their entry into administration until their

children are high school or have entered college (Harris, 2004). Gina also declared, "I

would not be able to take an administrative position at this time due to family obligations

and my responsibilities as a wife and mother" (Participant VII, April 4, 2008). Holly left

teaching after the birth of her first child and only returned in a part-time capacity;

however, the position eventually became a full time position. In an Illinois survey,

conflict between family and job responsibilities was listed as one of the top barriers to the

principalship (Mulhall, Hartley & Camp; 2003). Glass (2000) confirmed that women often enter administrative positions late in their careers due to family obligations. Harris et al. (2002) noted that having the degrees and experience in school administration increases a woman's chances of becoming an administrator, but her chances decrease significantly if she has a spouse and a family.

While family obligations were among the top reasons for women not entering into school-level administrative positions, the time issue is just as significant for turning potential women away from those high-profile positions such as the principalship. A few of the participants feel that the role of an administrator is too time-consuming. Even after a full and busy day on the job, administrators are still required to attend after-school events such as ballgames, board meetings, parent meetings and anything else that may come their way. Jan alluded to the fact that administrators are "on call" at all times (Participant X, April 22, 2008). "When one of my co-workers became an assistant principal, she was always working and her job became her life "(Participant X, April 22, 2008). Holly said, "I always work until around 6:30, if not later, most evenings trying to get things done once everyone goes home" (Participant VIII, April 14, 2008). The review of the literature indicates that the time demands of the job are of great significance to women rethinking a career track in administration (Williamson & Hudson, 2003). Cohen (2006) also mentioned that the long hours and numerous evening events often deter women from advancing to a leadership position. Time issues, job responsibilities and family obligations emerged as themes from the study and correlated with the review of the literature.

Several of the participants mentioned that having to deal with adults was a disadvantage to accepting an administrative position. Faye indicated that she constantly worried when everyone was not happy and felt she needed to be the peacemaker (Participant VI, April 3, 2008). Doris described the downside of acquiring a position as Assistant Principal of Instruction as, "I would have to work with adults. The majority of my work would be centered on interacting and communicating with adults" (Participant IV, April 1, 2008). The interviews revealed that even though a few of the participants do not like dealing with adults, many of them wanted to work in the area of Curriculum and Instruction which would require them to supervise and interact with adults daily. The literature review also noted that teachers with leadership certification usually seek positions beyond the school-level, mainly at the Central office as curriculum directors, because these positions are less demanding and less stressful (Bell; 2001; Kerrin 2001). Butler (2000) noted that it's extremely difficult to satisfy parents and community, and this causes women to lose interest in school-level administrative positions.

Another issue of concern for the participants was a lack of support for women administrators. Three of the participants mentioned that in many instances women are not supported because the perception of male leaders is still embedded in the minds of others. Abby stated that she would need the support of Central Office personnel if she acquired a position. She discussed the stress and frustration that her principal endured primarily because she was a woman and was not the superintendent's choice (Participant I, March 29, 2008). Gina mentioned, "Women may not be applying for leadership positions because they have been conditioned over the years to believe that a man should lead, and this is often a school-wide mentality. Even many women also believe this. She stated,

"It's sad that we have been conditioned to believe that women teach and men lead"
(Participant VII, April 4, 2008). Jan declared, "It's hard for women to be accepted in a
leadership role because society, in general, still believes that women should not be heard
and they don't tell men what to do" (Participant X, April 22, 2008). The review of the
literature validates their concern about a lack of support for female administrators.
Negative and noncompliant teachers and staff members deter women from entering
administration. The Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) cited that society still views
women as teachers and men as top administrators who are responsible for supervising the
school family. The mentality of "think manager, think male" is based on the premise that
women are meant to teach and men are meant to manage or lead others (Restine, 1993;
Davidson, 1999). Mulhall, Flowers, and Mertens (2004) named lack of support as a factor
that makes the principalship undesirable. Women continue to combat the inferiority
concept that many members of society practice while making decisions about school
leaders.

The issue of pay was mentioned by some of the participants as a reason for acquiring
the leadership certification, but only one participant proceeded to compare the pay
increase to the increase in hours she would have to work due to additional paperwork and
after-school events (Participant VI, April 3, 2008). Because only two of the participants
have ever held a leadership position to know what it really entails, the other participants
could not truly compare the pay increase to the number of hours worked and the demands
of the job. The literature, however, constantly makes reference to administrators not
being compensated for duties performed beyond the regular school day (Shen, Cooley &
Ruhl-Smith, 1999).

Relocating, traveling, politics, stress, and paperwork were also noted among other factors as reasons certified women are not entering school-level leadership positions. The research indicates that many women are not interested in the travel associated with top managerial positions (Maich, 2005). Wolverton and Macdonald (2001) cited that stress and politics impede women's desire to apply for promotions. The responses elicited from the participants were aligned with the information retrieved through an extensive review of the literature.

Conclusion

An analysis of the findings indicated that most of the participants in this study were attracted to the flexibility of leadership certification programs. Though they mentioned the desire to receive a pay raise after completing the program, they did not harp on the money issue. They were, however, excited about not having to be in a leadership role in order to receive a pay raise. They had a desire to grow professionally and to hopefully obtain a promotion in years to come so they can put into practice all the things they learned in their leadership classes. Some of the women had always been intrigued about becoming a school leader, so their own personal goals and drive attracted them to the program. The convenience of being able to work while completing the course work and internship was also cited as an advantage. One of the participants had to obtain the certification because her job required her to have leadership certification.

The interviews also revealed that many of the participants were unaware of structures or supports available to assist women in transitioning into leadership positions. A couple of them were aware that their district had a few things in place for aspiring administrators, but they felt left in the dark because everyone was not privy to this

information. All professional growth opportunities should be advertised to everyone

aspiring to become a leader so that the district can determine those who have leadership

potential based on the performance demonstrated during the duration of the class or

internship. Many of the participants mentioned that a lack of women role models in

school-level leadership positions meant they would have no one they could emulate or

with whom they could identify. They feel that everyone needs a mentor or a "go to

person" with whom they can discuss concerns relevant to their positions. New teachers

are generally assigned mentors, and the participants believe that new administrators

would benefit from the same type of support structure. A couple of the participants

mentioned the need for an open forum or round-table discussion in which newly

appointed women leaders can discuss concerns and acquire feedback on their current

performance. One participant commented, "So often individuals are approved for

positions and then they are left to sink or swim on their own" (Participant II, March 31,

2008). If afforded the opportunity to receive constant feedback or constructive criticism,

the newly appointed administrators could make adjustments and communicate with other

administrators in similar positions. As a result of such a dialogue, the women would

develop more confidence in knowing that others in similar positions may be experiencing

the same problems or concerns. Such discussions on a monthly or bi-monthly basis

would possibly prevent the new administrators from becoming frustrated and feeling

isolated. The need to join professional organizations to make contacts and network with

others was mentioned as well as the need to attend conferences to obtain ideas to become

a more effective leader.

It is evident that all of the participants in this study, with the exception of one, desire to become administrators, and a few would like positions beyond the school-level. They all seem aware of the factors which cause women not to apply for these positions or to delay their interests in seeking such positions. Some of the factors and/or beliefs noted are deeply embedded in society. While progress has been made in regards to attitudes about women administrators, changing society's views of women is still something women combat on a regular basis. One of the participants, Candi commented, "I would encourage other women to pursue leadership certification and apply for positions. I think it's a great field for women but not for me. It gives women the opportunity to be in charge, to be versatile, and to display all of their talents and skills. Women are good at running things, and they should run things. I'm also good at running things; however, my weakness is dealing with parents" (Participant III, March 31, 2008). Family obligations, time issues, lack of support, stress, paperwork, relocation, travel, adult issues, parents, politics were all mentioned as concerns that influence women not to enter school-level leadership positions.

While women are constantly puncturing the "glass ceiling" in an attempt to shatter it, there are still barriers that impede women from advancing in the workplace. The women in this study are realistic and very aware of those things that may require them to delay their pursuit of such positions until they are able to give it their best. The researcher, as a practicing woman school-level administrator, understands some of the struggles these participants have identified as reasons for not pursuing school-level leadership positions. These factors are very real, and so is the stress they cause. To be an effective leader, one must be ready for the task. There is no doubt that women can be great leaders, but women

also need to be cognizant of when the time is right for them to step into a leadership role. Women must be prepared and able to identify and create their own support structures in order to survive the things they will encounter in a leadership positions. Knowing the challenges of the position is the first step, but being able to combat the challenges is equally as important.

Uniqueness of Study

This study is very unique to women in the sense that it not only provided a voice for women who desire to become administrators, but it also echoed the concerns and issues that often prevent them from becoming school-level administrators. Women have truly advanced in the work place but with the advancement came daily struggles inside the workplace as well as outside the work environment. Society has always viewed men as strong and aggressive individuals capable of leading and guiding others. On the other hand, women, in many instances, continue to be viewed as homemakers and nurturers whose primary role is to take care of home and family. Yes, women have shattered the glass ceiling and made some significant gains in all aspects of the world. Women are well-renown doctors, politicians, entrepreneurs, and CEOs, but they still cast doubt in the minds of many board members as to whether they can function successfully in both worlds, work and home, simultaneously.

Many of the responses echoed throughout this study vividly unveiled the picture that the more things change the more they remain the same. Even though women have overcome many obstacles and jumped through countless hoops, they are still considered to be inferior to men. Family obligations forces women to take a backseat to career opportunities because they must attend to children, spouses, aging parents and in-laws,

and in many instances, aging siblings. A school-level administrator's job is never-ending and is very time consuming. For women, there never seems to be enough hours in a day to get it all done. From a male's perspective, at the end of the workday, his daily tasks have come to an end. However, women must continue working hours beyond the typical close of a workday because once their job responsibilities end their family obligations begin. Children must be fed or nursed, dinner must be prepared, clothes must be washed, assistance with homework must be provided and preparations must be made for the next day. These activities could last until ll:00 or 12:00 at night.

Let's not forget the attitudes that men have in regards to women leaders. Men have always viewed males to be effective leaders. Today, many male superintendents and board members may not openly verbalize these feelings, but they make it abundantly clear through their mannerism and decisions that men continue to be viewed as their preferred choice of leaders. Coaching positions are often stepping stones for leadership positions and as one participant stated, "He never advertises positions, and he believes that administration is a field for males" (Participant X, April 22, 2008). When a superintendent is pro-athletic, as this participant indicated, and believes that administrative positions are for males only, another piece of the glass ceiling remains in tack and the struggle for women continues.

This study also demonstrated that all the themes and patterns that emerged from this study are forces that impact women's decisions about school leadership positions, and they are interwoven. In dissecting the responses of the participants, the following themes and categories emerged: time, job responsibility, emotions, lack of preparation, and the male commander. In regards to the issue of time, there was the concern of being

bombarded with so many tasks that made it difficult to get everything done. Family

obligations were considered to also be time consuming and often caused or prevented one

from completing certain tasks at work. The job responsibilities of an administrator

involve a never-ending trail of paperwork, meetings, student discipline, parental issues,

and politics while still trying to keep abreast of the latest research-based initiatives to

improve student achievement.

In addition to the responsibilities of the job, women also have an emotional aspect that

came into play. The stress of the job and family, isolation from role models or a support

system due to the position held and perhaps the location where the position is held pulls

an enormous amount of energy from women. Love for teaching is involved because of

the passion felt for the children along with the notion that every decision made will have

a tremendous impact in the classroom and the children. Often times women have not

received the proper preparation for the job so once they are in such a position they would

be overwhelmed. Once the course work has been completed, no one provided them

opportunities to experience some of the administrative tasks they would be faced with

upon receiving a school-level administrative position. The final theme "male

commander" is an attitude that often drowns women with lack of support. The male

mentality stifled growth in many women as they attempted to move into administrative

positions. Unless they are able to relocate, it becomes impossible for them to rise to a

leadership position. Note that one theme impact all other themes. Lack of time can cause

stress and may impact one's ability to be prepared for specific aspects of the job while

responsibilities continue to mount, but no more time is allotted to complete the tasks.

Figure I (figures section) depicts how one theme impacts or overlaps with all the ones

that emerged from this study. Each circle figure denotes a separate theme but one that

intermingles with the other surrounding themes. The impact is obvious and plays a major

role in causing women to shy away for the so-called "ills of an administrator's life."

This study provided a voice for women, but most importantly, it allows others to

understand and hopefully grasp the concept that school-level leadership positions are

viewed differently from a male and female perspective. The struggle is very different for

a woman who has aspirations of becoming a principal than that of a man. Women may be

more qualified and more effective than many certified men, but the road to the

principalship is curvier with twice as many detours for women than men. The wealth of

knowledge and insight provided by the participants in this study truly added to the

knowledge of literature available on this topic while bringing to the forefront the gender

specific struggles that still exist today in the twenty-first century.

Implications

This study has implications for women who are interested in possibly pursuing

leadership certification with aspirations of becoming school-level administrators. It not

only provides valuable insight for women as they inquire about obtaining the certification

required to become an administrator, but it also discusses the challenges, both personal

and professional, that may surface while pursuing leadership certification or a leadership

position. It also offers a realistic perspective of how desires and personal goals may have

to take a back seat to family obligations and how support structures are a necessity for

anyone who embarks on such a career track. It brings to the forefront that even in the

twenty-first century women who forge ahead and obtain leadership positions still have

not escaped the age-old mentality that there are certain occupations such as being leaders

that society still views specifically for men, and other occupations, such as nursing or teaching, that are viewed to be more suited for women so that they can continue their nurturing and supportive roles. This study also indicates that many women are stepping out and attempting to make their own marks, but the journey is not free of scrapes and bruises. It reminds women that stereotypes and obstacles may still exist and that they must be resourceful enough to take alternate routes or small steps toward achieving their goals.

This study is also important to colleges and universities offering leadership certification programs. The participants mentioned the availability of class scheduling as an advantage for women to further their education while continuing to fulfill other obligations at the same time. As certification requirements regarding school leadership change, institutions of higher education will need to realign their programs to make sure key components are addressed. While the online aspect of leadership programs is most appealing, the practical component is the most significant. Interacting with colleagues is essential because school administrators are constantly required to interact and communicate with individuals from all walks of life. Due to the fact that teachers will not be allowed to enroll in these programs without being recommended as potential candidates for a leadership position, colleges and universities must consistently collaborate with school districts to ensure that participants exit their respective programs well-prepared to deal with other adults (parents, faculty and staff members, and community leaders), adapt to change, make hard-core decisions, display a professional demeanor at all times, and be resourceful as to knowing where to go for answers that are not found in a text book. With the collaboration of both school districts and institutions of

higher education, every student who leaves a leadership certification program should have a smooth transition into a leadership position.

For school districts, this study provides feedback about what may need to be done to revamp current school-level leadership duties and responsibilities to make them more equitable, realistic and doable. Revamping administrative duties and responsibilities may be the key to attracting as well as maintaining good leaders. School districts should ensure that information about classes or programs pertaining to aspiring leaders be disseminated across the board instead of to a select few. The results of this study may also increase awareness of current hiring practices that may often communicate that only a certain gender or group is being considered for administrative positions. Hopefully, this study will encourage school districts to investigate the number of females in their district who have already obtained the certification and examine why these individuals are not applying for leadership vacancies within the district. Based on the data presented, school districts may need to develop strategies for women (married, single, divorced, and with or without children) to be able to effectively adhere to the duties and responsibilities of their job while also being able to meet their obligations to family. The information could also be used by school districts to develop support system for newly appointed administrators so that they will not feel overwhelmed and frustrated to the point of wanting to return to the classroom.

Recommendations

It is recommended that women who are considering going into school-level administration utilize the information contained in this study to gain a better understanding of the responsibilities of a school leader. School districts may need to

explore the possibility of job sharing in which tasks are divided between two leaders who possess specific skills in different areas. Quality professional development through which leaders learn specific job skills and feedback is provided to determine their effectiveness should also be offered. School districts and institutions of higher education should develop a collaborative partnership to ensure that the program of study designed for certifying potential school administrators provides the quality instruction and application skills required to become effective leaders. School districts should also share organizational affiliations on the administrative level so that relationship building can begin and a system of networking can be developed. School districts may also use this information to develop ways to create a family-friendly work environment to accommodate employees with small children.

Recommendations for further research include comparing the reasons women with leadership certification who are not entering school-level leadership positions with the reasons women who accepted school-level leadership positions are returning or have returned to the classroom. It would also be interesting to investigate how many men also have leadership certification but are not pursuing leadership positions. Further research may include exploring how women in leadership positions are succeeding in a school leadership position while maintaining a balanced life outside the workplace, how they are nurturing their marriage, raising children, caring for elderly parents, all while fulfilling duties as an administrator. It would be interesting to study how the principalship could be made more appealing not only to attract women candidates but also to retain them once in the positions. The literature contained information on masculine and feminine leadership styles. A study investigating leadership styles and which style of leadership is most

preferred by faculty members would also be intriguing. Lastly, mentors for females were mentioned several times and are obviously needed. A study conducted to determine the impact of male and female mentors on the success of newly appointed female school-level administrators may also provide some valuable insight for those in the education profession.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University	
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs	
Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-681-0843	Veazey Hall 2021
	P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Daphney D. Ivery
        P.O. Box 526
        Waynesboro, GA 30830

        Abebayehu Tekleselassie
        P.O. Box 8131

CC: Charles E. Patterson
        Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
        Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
        (IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: March 25, 2008

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: H08175 and titled "Why Are Women with Leadership Certification not Pursuing School Level Leadership Positions", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your career in education including your degrees, positions, and the schools in which you have worked.

2. What was your background prior to your career in education?

3. Describe the school district where you are currently employed particularly the number of schools, the tenure of the superintendent, and who makes decisions about school leaders.

4. When did you decide to pursue certification in Educational Leadership? What other certification do you hold?

5. Why did you decide to pursue certification in Educational Leadership?

6. Why do you remain in the classroom rather than work in an administrative position?

7. Are you satisfied in your current position?

8. What do you believe you would miss or lose if you were to move into a leadership position?

9. What conditions make it likely that you would move into an administrative position? What conditions prevent you from moving into an administrative position?

10. What characteristics do you think are necessary to be an effective principal or assistant principal?

11. How do you assess yourself in terms of your ability to do the job of a principal or assistant principal?

12. Has anyone ever encouraged you to move into administration?

13. Have you ever interviewed for an administrative position? If so, describe the position for which you interviewed? What do you think prevented you from getting the position for which you applied?

14. What type of administrative position would you be most likely to pursue? Are you more open to an administrative position at any grade level or at a certain grade level such as elementary, middle school, or high school?

15. Describe the school at which you might be likely to apply for an administrative position.

16. What type of administrator position is most appealing to you and might cause you to consider accepting an administrative position if offered?

17. How have the leadership classes you have taken benefited you even though you are not currently in an administrative position?

18. If an opportunity for you to become a principal or an assistant principal presented itself, would you take it?

19. What are your future plans regarding your career? Do you plan to seek a position in which you can use your leadership certification?

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Information For Participants in Dissertation Study

Participant Number _____

Race: Please circle one of the following:

 White   African American   Hispanic Asian   Chinese

Age: Please circle one of the following:

20-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61 and over

Martial Status:

Single   Married   Divorced

Number of children and age range of children:

_____ Children

0-4   5-10   11-16   17-21   adult children/no longer living at home

Years of Experience:

1-5   5-10   10-20   20-30

Table 1—Interview Schedule of Participants

Participant Number	Pseudonym	Date	Total Interview Time
Participant I	Abby	March 29, 2008	1:15
Participant II	Betsy	March 31, 2008	1:45
Participant III	Candi	March 31, 2008	1:25
Participant IV	Doris	April 1, 2008	2:00
Participant V	Eva	April 2, 2008	2:00
Participant VI	Faye	April 3, 2008	1:30
Participant VII	Gina	April 4, 2008	2:00
Participant VIII	Holly	April 14, 2008	1:45
Participant IX	India	April 17, 2008	1:10
Participant X	Jan	April 22, 2008	2:30

Table 2—Level of Education

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Educational Levels (n=10)

Degree	Highest Level of Education	Frequency
Masters		1
Specialists		9
Doctorate		0*

*Three of the participants are currently enrolled in a doctoral program

Table 3--Race

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Race (n=10)

Race	Frequency
White	5
African American	5
Hispanic	0
Asian	0
Chinese	0
Lebanese	0

Table 4—Ages of Participants

Frequency Distribution of Participant by Age (n=10)

Age	Frequency
20-30	0
31-40	4
41-50	4
51-60	3
61 and over	0

Table 5--Martial Status

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Martial Status (n=10)

Martial Status	Frequency
Single	0
Married	5
Divorced	5

Table 6—Number of Children

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Number of Chidren (n=10)

Number of Children	Frequency
0	0
1	3
2	5
3	2
4	0
Five or more	0

Table 7—Age Range of Children

Frequency Distribution of Age Range of Children (n=10)

Age Range	Frequency
0-4	1
5-10	7
11-16	6
17-21	2
Adult children/not living at home	3

Table 8—Years of Experience

Frequency Distribution of Years of Experience (n=10)

Range of Years	Frequency
1-5	0
6-10	1
11-20	7
21-30	2

Table 9—School-levels of Participants

Frequency Distribution of School-levels of Participants (n=10)

School-levels	Frequency
Elementary	1
Middle	5
High School	2
Central Office	2

Figure I - FORCES THAT IMPACT THE DECISION TOWARD SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP

Themes and Categories