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Women and Educational Leadership: Exploring the Experiences of Current and Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

Kimberly Crosby-Hillier
University of Windsor

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Kimberly Crosby-Hillier

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by

Kimberly Crosby-Hillier

APPROVED BY:

Dr. P. Milne

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr. B. Egbo

Faculty of Education

Dr. C. Greig, Advisor

Faculty of Education

Dr. D. Stanley, Chair of Defence

Faculty of Education

(June 12, 2012)

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of women participating in the paid workforce has been one of the dominant social trends in Canada over the last half century. While women have made tremendous strides in labour participation, the proportion of women in top-tier educational leadership positions remains a concern. The purpose of this mixed-methods research study is to explore the experiences of current and aspiring female educational administrators, utilizing a feminist theoretical perspective. This study explores the experiences of ten female educators: six aspiring female educational administrators and four current educational administrators, drawn from a local school board in Southwestern Ontario. Results of the semi-structured interviews and supplemental Likert-scale survey indicate four key themes influenced by gender relations, in the participants' experiences: (1) Intersection of Work and Family; (2) Mentoring Opportunities and Access to Resources; (3) Women's Work Relationships; and (4) Gender Politics. By drawing attention to the gendered experiences women encounter while pursuing and maintaining educational leadership positions, this study helps pave the way forward for teachers, administrators, policy makers and others interested in bringing about the aims of gender justice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Study

This thesis explores the experiences of current and aspiring female educational administrators within the Ontario context, and argues that gender plays a complex role in shaping the relationship between women and leadership. While recognizing that we have, over the past two decades witnessed a rise in numbers of female educational administrators, this thesis highlights how women are far from barrier-free in securing a leadership role; relations of power between genders and within a gender circulate in ways that create both old and new barriers for women who aspire or occupy leadership positions. While facing well-established and well-known gender barriers such as the "double day," some female administrators spoke about being undermined or sabotaged by other women in their pursuit of leadership, something they did not expect.

Employing a feminist perspective, which views gender as a social, cultural, and historical construct (Blackmore, 2006; Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995) and situated in relations of power, this study explores the lived experiences of 10 women: six aspiring female educators and four current educational administrators. Through semi-structured interviews and administering a Likert-scale survey, their experiences are explored, examined, and compared in order to shed light on gender and gender relations. Results of this study demonstrate that gender is a key factor that influences the experiences women encounter when pursuing, or occupying an educational leadership position. The influence of gender and gender relations was most evident

during discussions of work and family, mentoring and networking, women's work

relationships, and broader issues surrounding gender politics.

Background and Context: Educational Leadership Trends

As an educator interested in addressing issues of equity, I find the current

statistics and literature on women and educational leadership encouraging, yet

disheartening. Encouraging in that recent trends show an increase in the proportion of

females in various educational leadership positions; disheartening as there are

differences across areas of formal leadership (i.e., school board director, elementary

versus secondary school leadership positions). It is acknowledged that the numbers

have indeed increased for women's representation in educational leadership. For

example, in 1998, a mere 28% of secondary school principals were women, which

increased to 48.3% in 2008-2009, yet this increase has not been reflected in the

highest positions of educational leadership, such as superintendent or Director of

Education levels in Ontario school boards (Ontario College of Teachers, 2010). The

lower numbers of females in top-tier school board leadership positions presents a

problem, as representations of system leadership are indicative of the state of

educational administration (Blackmore, 2006).

Female Representation: Elementary Versus Secondary School Leadership and

Representation

Elementary School Leadership Representation. Recent trends on women

and elementary educational leadership in Ontario, demonstrate a change over time in

women's representation in formal leadership positions. Reflecting broader trends, in

1940, for example, within the Toronto Board of Education, just over 4% (four out of

88) elementary school principals were women. By 1980 little had changed when it came to the gender composition of elementary school leadership with only 14% (15 of 105 elementary principals) of positions occupied by a female (Reynolds, 1995). Today, however, women represent 64.6% elementary school principals and vice-principals, while men make up only 35.4%. The largest difference can be seen in Roman Catholic School Boards in Ontario, where in 2009-2010, women comprised 19,964 of teaching and administrative positions, in comparison to 4,526 men (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Why then, if so many women are qualified to assume higher leadership positions, are these numbers not reflected or consistent with top-tier school board leadership positions?

Secondary School Leadership Representation. Although the increased number of female leaders at the elementary school level can be viewed as a move toward more equitable school board practices, the picture at secondary school level looks very different. For example, in Ontario, during the 2009-2010 school year, the total number of female secondary school teachers and educational administrators for both public and Roman Catholic schools was 25,120. During the same year, their male counterparts represented a total of 20,907 teachers and educational administrators. When incorporating the number of department heads and classroom teachers in secondary schools (i.e., both public and Roman Catholic school boards), females continued to surpass men representing 54.9%, of the total population (45.1% for males) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Where the main difference lies when comparing the level of secondary school leadership representation by gender are principal and vice-principal level. During the 2009-2010 school year, females

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represented 48.6% of all secondary school principals and vice-principals in Ontario.

During the same year, males represented 51.4% secondary school principal and vice-principals in Ontario, despite the larger proportion of female secondary school teachers. In fact, males have been outnumbering women in secondary school principal and vice principal positions for well over a century (Gelman, 1991). In fact, Gelman (1991), when writing about the Toronto context, points out that it was not until 1930, when gender segregated auxiliary schools, devised by a woman, provided the first two secondary school principalships for women (Gelman, 1991, p. 97). Tables 1 and 2 outline the number of secondary school positions held by females from 1994-2000. Table 1 includes the positions held up to 2000 only, as this data is not strictly comparable to years prior to 2000, due to a change in data collection methods in 2006.

Table 1.

Percentage of Secondary School Positions Held by Females in Ontario from 1994-2000 (Ontario Ministry of Education Quick Facts, 1994-2000)

Year	Classroom Teachers	Department Heads	Principal and Vice-Principals
1994-95	46.6%	36.5%	27.6%
1995-96	47.3%	39.2%	31.2%
1996-97	60.9%	39.5%	33.6%
1997-98	48.7%	41.0%	35.0%
1998-99	51.4%	43.4%	39.7%
1999-00	51.7%	44.8%	40.6%

Table 2.

Percentage of Secondary School Positions Held by Females in Ontario from 2000-

2010 (Ontario Ministry of Education Quick Facts, 2000-2010)

Year	Classroom Teachers	Department Heads	Principal and Vice-Principals
2000-01*	52.7%	45.5%	42.7%
2001-02	53.0%	46.4%	43.1%
2002-03	53.3%	47.8%	44.4%
2003-04	53.8%	47.0%	44.2%
2004-05	54.3%	47.6%	44.7%
2005-06	55.1%	47.9%	46.1%
2006-07**	-	54.1%	46.5%
2007-08	-	54.3%	47.0%
2008-09	-	54.6%	48.3%
2009-10	-	54.9%	48.6%

Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the complexities of women and educational leadership.

While these tables indeed show an increase in the proportion of women in principal

and vice-principal positions from 1994-2010, they also demonstrate that although

women comprise over half of the representation of teachers and department heads in

most cases, they represent less than half of the representation of vice-principals and

principals, demonstrating that there remains a 'quiet' or hidden preference for male

principals.

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*Data are not strictly comparable with those published in Quick Facts prior to 2000–
01 owing to a change in methodology: data now represent the computed FTE of
active full- and part-time teachers and administrators excluding those on leave, rather
than headcounts of only full-time staff including those on leave. Data are also not
strictly comparable with those for 2005–06 and earlier owing to a change in collection
methods, as stated previously. Data exclude teachers and administrators in hospital
programs, Provincial Schools, and care, treatment, and correctional facilities.
** Classroom teacher and department head positions began being combined in 2006.
Data in table represents the combined total of both of these positions.

This was the case for every year from 1994-2010, and has been the case traditionally for nearly a century (Reynolds et al., 2008).

Principal Qualifications. According to the Ontario College of Teachers' annual reports on the total number of members with their principal qualifications, females have been recently surpassing males. Table 3 outlines the numbers of members with principal qualifications, by gender from 1998-2008.

Table 3.

Members with Principal Qualifications (by Gender) from 1998-2008 (Ontario College of Teachers, 2008)

Year	Males	Females
1998	8,413	7,700
1999	7,832	7,685
2000	7,750	7,978
2001	7,744	8,290
2002	7,646	8,585
2003	7,554	8,842
2004	7,518	9,189
2005	7,563	9,513
2006	7,554	9,698
2007	7,420	9,939
2008	7,355	10,132

In 2001, 8,209 females and 7,744 males obtained their principal qualifications. In 2002, 8,585 women in comparison to 7,646 men obtained their principal's qualification. This trend continues up to and including the year 2008, when 10,132 women and only 7,355 men obtained their principal's qualifications. In fact, the proportion of males with principal's qualifications actually decreased from 8,413 in

1998 to 7,355, a decrease of approximately 106 men/year. The representation between men and women widened over the eight-year period, with females far exceeding males by 2009. Table 3 demonstrates that although more women have their Principal Qualifications, the numbers of principals are more or less equal (see Table 3, 4). This further supports the argument that although more women have entered into educational leadership, there still seems to remain a quiet or hidden preference for male principals.

Supervisory Officer Qualifications. In Ontario, Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) members who have a minimum of five years of teaching experience and have a master's degree are able to register for the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program. The Supervisory Officer's Qualification enables members to be responsible for positions such as superintendent, assistant superintendents and director (OCT, 2008). The data for members with this qualification also depict an increase in the number of females obtaining these qualifications, yet the utilization of this qualification differs. For example, from 1998-2001, males had a higher rate of Supervisory Officer's Qualification's than females. From 2002-2003, the number of males and females with the qualification became similar. Commencing in 2004, females obtained more supervisory officer's qualifications than males. This trend remained consistent into 2008 with 961 females obtaining the qualification in comparison to 830 males (OCT, 2008). Table 4 outlines the numbers of members with supervisory officer qualifications, by gender, from 1998-2008.

Table 4.

Members with Supervisory Officer Qualifications (by Gender) from 1998-2008

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2008)

Year	Males	Females
1998	1,210	925
1999	1,037	881
2000	1,002	879
2001	968	896
2002	938	927
2003	908	903
2004	881	919
2005	872	933
2006	856	931
2007	833	943
2008	830	961

In addition to the gendered differences between those qualified for an educational leadership position and those that are active in that position, differences are also evident in national statistics indicating the level of educational leadership positions (i.e., elementary and secondary school leadership). According to a 2004-2005 Statistics Canada profile of elementary and secondary school principals in Canada, gender differences were found between the number of principalships held, as well as the school level in which these principalships were employed. During the 2004-2005 school year approximately 8,000 men and 7,000 women were principals at elementary and secondary school in Canada. At the elementary school level, female principals accounted for 53% of principals while men accounted for 68% of secondary school principal positions. Additionally, although women hold

approximately three in four teaching positions in Canada, only one in five women are superintendents (Statistics Canada, 2008). Statistical data also indicate that despite women's increase in post-secondary education, their earnings, occupational category and intensity of participation continue to vary from men's.

As women continue to increase their investment in post-secondary education (Statistics Canada, 2011), one would assume that their ascension to senior leadership positions and relative earnings would reflect their preparation. In 2010, more women (71.4%) than men (64.5%) aged 25 to 44 years of age had completed post-secondary education. In fact, women comprise the majority of undergraduate enrollments and graduates in industrialized countries and are catching up in developing countries (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). However, despite high levels of academic preparedness, women are still more likely than men to work part time and earn less (Statistics Canada, 2001; Brodie & Bakker, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2006). Also worth noting is the fact that although women comprise the majority of post-secondary students and academic institution employees, top executive administrators are predominantly male (Eddy & Cox, 2008). There are also more women than men in mid-level management positions in organizations, which have created an overflow of managers ready for advancement to elite positions (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). This overflow and stalled progression of qualified women into top-tier leadership positions, has been referred to as the "pipeline" (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). Even when controlling for various factors that have been attributed to women's lower earnings, women are still at a disadvantage, as demonstrated by Drolet (2003).

In 1998, the female to male Canadian earnings ratio was 0.63. Women's shorter work histories, job responsibilities, education, and major field of study were contributing factors in this wage gap (Drolet, 2003). However, after controlling for these factors, the ratio adjusted slightly to 0.85, leaving a large proportion of the wage gap left unaccounted for (Drolet, 2003). A decade later in 2008, women still had lower average annual earnings from paid work than men. This figure is considerably lower for single parent families headed by females (Statistics Canada, 2008).

In 2008, women earned approximately 65 % of what men earned (Statistics Canada, 2008). A continuing explanation for this gap is that women are less likely than their male counterparts to work full-time. However, also in 2008, women in full-time, full-year basis employment earned about 71 cents for each dollar earned by men (Lu & Morissette, 2010). Further, although the earnings gender gap slightly decreases for women as their educational level increases, women working full time with a university degree earned about 30% less than men with a university degree (Lu & Morissette, 2010). In addition to the gender gap in earnings and employment status, the literature also demonstrates a gap in promotions to top-tier leadership positions between females and males (Chenier & Wohlbold, 2011; Timberlake, 2005; Strohs, 2008).

This research aims to investigate the experiences of current and aspiring female educational administrators in a Southwestern Ontario school board. Female elementary and secondary school administrators will have the opportunity to discuss their experiences as educators and their quest to become an educational administrator. Situated within the context of this particular Southwestern Ontario school board, the

experiences of the female participants will be discussed and analyzed in an attempt to understand the status of women and educational leadership.

Key Terms

Before continuing, the key terms will be defined to help facilitate an understanding of what this study means when referring to the following terms: *female educational administrator, leadership, experienced, phenomenology, and barriers and/or challenges.* This research will refer to *female educational administrators* as vice principals, principals, and superintendents currently employed with their respective school board and active in their current position. It is assumed that in accordance with the Ontario College of Teachers' additional qualification requirements, vice principals have completed part one of the Principal's Qualifications ourse. Principals are expected to have completed both part one and part two of the Principal's Qualification course. Superintendents must have completed their supervisory officer's qualification certification and the required years of experience (Ontario College of Teachers, 2011). For purposes of this study, *leadership* can be defined as the educational purpose of guiding and directing teaching and learning to improve "educational outcomes" for all students by those who have obtained the mandatory qualifications to do so (see educational administrator definition) (Bush, 2003; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). It is recognized that the term "*leadership*" like social justice, is a conceptual category that emerges out of contestation over meaning, which is part of a web that is interconnected to social power (Blackmore, 2006). Leadership, therefore, needs to be understood as a gendered concept, which "has been produced discursively out of, and

in turn represents, a particular set of economic, political and social relations, and therefore marked by temporal discursive shifts" (Blackmore, 2006, p.185). The term *leadership* in this study also encompasses gendered power relations that impact the aims and goals of those interested in addressing issues of social justice (Blackmore, 2006). *Phenomenology* refers to a research tradition or strategy that focuses on the lived experiences of human experience (Van Manen, 2007). It involves thoughtful reflection on that experience and the meaning individuals attach to that given experience (Van Manen, 2007). The term *experienced* in this study will refer to the completion of five years of teaching and a minimum of one full year in their leadership position. Five years has been chosen as the cut off for teacher experience due to the Ontario College of Teachers' minimum years of teaching requirement to apply for admission to the principal's qualification course. Lastly, the terms *barriers or challenges* will refer to the obstacles that may prevent female educational administrators from entering into upper levels of leadership and management (Strohs, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and examine the experiences of two groups of women educators: current educational administrators and aspiring educational administrators. Women who are active in their educational leadership positions have been successful in their attempts and have overcome any preliminary challenges that they may have encountered while applying for the position. By including those who are not currently active in the study, but who are seeking a formal educational leadership position, allows the reader to understand the

experiences women encounter even before they are active educational administrators (e.g., mentoring, applying for the position, preparation opportunities). Failing to include women who have not yet obtained an educational leadership position, but have demonstrated a desire to do so, jeopardizes a complete understanding of gender relations for aspiring educational administrators. Also, women who were part of the aspiring educational administrator participant group were currently active in their respective school board's mentorship program, which added current insight about the mentoring opportunities and level of preparation given.

In order to explore the relationship between gender and leadership, 10 participants from a local Southwestern Ontario school board were selected and interviewed. Participants were asked to comment on their experiences pertaining to work and family, mentoring and networking, gender equity, gender stereotyping, and the progression of their teaching/educational leadership career. Lastly, seeking to understand women's experiences as gendered subjects, this study will also challenge patriarchal relations of power, while also serving as an outlet of expression for women in educational leadership.

Research Questions

The central question that will be addressed in this study is as follows: How does gender influences the experiences of female current and aspiring female educational administrators? The guiding questions shaping the study were:

a) How does gender shape, if at all, the experiences of women who have successfully gone through the process of securing an educational leadership position?

b) How has gender influenced, and continue to influence, the experiences of female educational administrators?

c) What role does gender have, if any, in shaping female educator's decisions to pursue an educational leadership position?

d) How do the experiences of prospective and current educational administrators compare with the existing literature on women and leadership?

Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt a theoretical lens informed by feminist theory (see, for example, Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995; 2000; Harding, 1991, 2004; Smith, 1987, 1990, 2005; Young, 1990), which views gender as a social, historical, and cultural construct (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995). In other words, femininities, like masculinities, are not a product of biology or some manifestation of 'inner essence'; rather they are socially constructed "configurations of gender practice" (Connell, 1995) created through historical and social processes, situated in patriarchal relations of power, and interact with other social justice factors such as race, social class, bodily ability, and sexuality.

Gender is also performative. Feminist theorists such as Judith Butler (1990) have demonstrated that gender is performative, in that being male or female is not "self-evident", or, "natural". Rather, one's gendered identity only appears "natural" through repeated, ongoing performances. For Butler, the performative dimension of gender reproduces and helps create the illusion of an essential gender identity. Moreover, a feminist theory of gender is also interested in and examines the intersectionality of social class, race, sexuality, ableism and other social justice

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factors which help complexify and smash the boundaries of what Martino (2008) calls "essentialist mindsets" (Martino, 2008). These essentialist mindsets reduce gender down to an outcome of biology, thereby reproducing patriarchal relations of power.

Moreover, seeking to address structural inequalities (Young, 2011) that produce and reproduce everyday inequities (Smith, 1987), feminist theory supports the premise that women, particularly racialized and minority women are situated within the gender order (Connell, 1995) in ways that exclude them from the ruling apparatus of society (Connell, 2010). That is, a society that is constructed, maintained, regulated and policed by those in dominant patriarchal positions-positions of ruling (Smith, 1990; 2005). All of which work to ensure that women play a secondary role. For example, despite the fact that more women have entered fields formerly dominated by men, sexist patterns of hiring and promotion remain (Abraham, 2010; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). In an attempt to understand this persisting phenomenon, feminists have developed the theory of "gendered job queues." Gendered job queue theory argues that the most valued jobs are reserved for the men of the dominant racial ethnic group. Once these positions are no longer valued or begin to provide decreased wages, dominant men exit from the position creating opportunities for women or men of disadvantaged racial ethnic groups (Reskin, 2002).

Feminist histories, as feminist theories and politics, focus on domination, marginalization, appropriation, and the 'othering' of any social group (Blackmore, 2006). In so doing, feminism imparts numerous deconstructive possibilities of dominant storylines by challenging dominant categories and unpacking concepts

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(e.g., leadership). Additionally, research drawing upon feminist theory can also be reconstructive, as it provides space for voices of the less advantaged and offers alternative representations of leadership through the narratives of marginalized leaders. This study employs feminist theory in a broad way, although always keeping in clear focus patriarchal relations of power and how they are exercised in a way that undermines the lives of women (Connell, 2010).

Feminist theory also aims to give voice to women. Garder et al. (2000) define feminist theory as follows:

> …feminist theory validates multiple and diverse perspectives, in particular the values of examining these perspectives to clarify one's own beliefs and values, and for the pedagogical opportunities to help one to consider viewpoints of other individuals. Women learn from other women's voices and experiences (p.29).

By providing an opportunity for female participants to share their experiences, this research supports the fundamental purpose of feminist theory (United Nations, 2011).

Further, feminist theory is also "connected in principle to feminist struggle" (Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993, p. 266). By documenting the lived experiences of female participants in feminist research, the basic structures and ideologies that oppress women are revealed. By creating a safe place where female participants can express their personal experiences with hegemonic masculine power, a sense of understanding and trust can be formed in order to challenge and counter its hegemony. By documenting their lived experiences, this research will further challenge the basic administrative structures and ideologies that oppress women.

According to Hesse-Biber (2007), to engage in research that is grounded in feminist theory, one must challenge knowledge that excludes oppressed groups. Feminist theory asks new questions that place women's lives at the centre of social inquiry, while disrupting traditional ways of knowing to create new meanings. By focusing on the lives and experiences of women, a feminist perspective will serve to illuminate and bring attention to the ways in which women in educational leadership have been discriminated. This may also challenge conventional assumptions that influence social policy. Feminist theory also aims to uncover the politics of gendered and sexualized representation including the historical, social, and political context in which they were produced (Harding, 2004; Hesse-Biber, 2007). By employing a gendered lens in this study, this research will be able to uncover new knowledge and build theory from the participants' lived experiences.

Lastly, feminist theory is committed to challenging patriarchal, racist power and oppression and producing results that are useful and applicable to social justice. A feminist perspective provides space for the exploration of broader questions of social justice, while simultaneously addressing multiple forms of structural inequality (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality). Research informed by feminist theory fosters empowerment, liberation, and emancipation for women and other marginalized groups, and is consistent with the broader aims of gender justice (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). Feminist theory offers insights into the social construction of gender, in particular the relationship between gender and leadership. Broadly understood, feminist theory focuses on the advancement of women as a

group, interrogating sources of gender inequality in order to bring about the aims and goals of gender justice.

Importance of the Study

Although there have been numerous studies on the topic of women and leadership, most studies undertaken have focused on higher education (i.e., university and college) or businesses. For example, many of the Catalyst studies focus on Fortune 500 companies while overlooking other institutions, such as elementary and secondary schools. Although the work of Jill Blackmore and few others stand out as the exceptions, most studies that focus on educational institutions tend to do so at higher academic levels, such as universities and colleges. By focusing primarily on elementary and secondary school female educational administrators' experiences, this study will shed light on the myriad of challenges, possibilities and constraints, faced by female educators in educational leadership today.

This study will also allow other female administrators to express their experiences, which is critical to the goals of feminist theory and research. By including the voices of women from neglected areas of research, this study will accomplish one of the primary objectives of feminist research, which is to "ask new questions that place women's lives at the center of social inquiry" (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p.3). This study will serve to benefit not only females, but also all members of society. By engaging in interactive dialogue with female educational administrators, this research will assist in developing a greater understanding about the social structures that oppress some members of society, while advantaging others. This

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study may, in turn, contribute to the social change that is necessary to facilitate

change in societal oppression.

Additionally, school board administrators and policy developers will also

benefit from the information and dialogue contained in this study. By detailing the

experiences of female administrators, their work environments, and perspectives,

gender initiatives could be formulated to ensure their needs are being met (e.g., access

to resources, mentors, etc.). The information gathered from this research could also

serve as a guide to develop strategies that promote the entry of more women into

educational leadership positions.

Scope/Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of this study was sample size. Due to limited resources

and limited amount of time, current and aspiring female administrators from only one

school board, located in one Ontario city, took part in the study. Because the study

was conducted with a small sample size ($n=10$) the results of this study cannot be

generalized to the entire female administrator population or other females who aspire

to leadership. The small number of participants will not allow the researcher to make

broad generalizations.

Another significant limitation of the study was the demographic composition

of the participants. All of the women in this study were white, able-bodied women.

This glaring absence of diversity within educational leadership highlights the

complex intersectionality between social justice factors such as race, class, gender

and their relationship to leadership. To put another way, although the women were

facing structural and institutional challenges based on gender, they also benefited

from a privilege system based on race, class and ableism. The absence of diversity was an unexpected finding that speaks volumes to the quiet or hidden preference for the traditional male model of leadership (i.e., white, able-bodied men). These demographics further limit the ability to generalize the experiences encountered by the women in this study and therefore, give this study limited external validity.

Finally, the study is limited in that I was not able to enroll senior administrators, female superintendents or school board directors. Enrolling these types of high level decision makers would have added another layer of complexity to the study and most likely would have yielded interesting insights into how gender is worked out in senior levels of administration.

Holistic Reflexivity

Consistent with the feminist theoretical perspective employed throughout this study, this section will explore my own personal reflections relating to this study. A reflexive methodology provides the researcher an opportunity to raise new questions, engage in new kinds of dialogue, and organize different kinds of social relations (Collins, 1998, 2000; Harding, 1991,1993; Smith, 1987). This process of recognizing, examining, and understanding how one's social background, location, and assumptions influence their research is referred to as reflexivity (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Reflexivity also includes the ways in which the researcher's agenda affects the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Locating myself within this research study and topic has been a tremendous opportunity for me to examine and explore various questions and concerns I began asking myself years ago.

As a white, middle-class, able-bodied woman, I acknowledge my position in the area of women and educational leadership. As a novice educator and graduate student, I have been surrounded by literature and experiences that have shaped my perceptions and attitudes concerning the topic of gender and leadership. During my second year as a graduate student at the University of Windsor, I was presented with a reading that discussed the state of women in educational leadership positions. This reading also discussed women's disparity in these roles and explanations as to why women's representation is considerably lower than men's. Although I began to question the representation of women in educational leadership far before reading literature on the subject, it was at this point that I knew this was a topic that I wanted to pursue.

During my elementary school years, I never had a female educational administrator. This remained throughout my high school career as well, until I had a female vice-principal in 1999. Since then, I have noticed a shift in the representation of women in educational leadership positions and have noticed that there are more female principals and vice-principals (mainly at the elementary level). However, there is one area that I still find myself questioning women's representation. This area includes the top-tier positions, mainly board-level leadership, including superintendent and director of education.

During my graduate school career, I began to educate myself further on the topic of gender and educational leadership. I explored these topics separately and then together to be able to understand their dynamic relationship. My passion for this topic has grown over the years and I have emerged myself in the theory, literature, and

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statistics. I began developing this study as a means to bring attention to the experiences women had while attempting to secure an educational leadership position and their experiences while active in a current leadership position. I chose to focus on the experiences women encounter in these situations as a means to question why there is a lack of representation in top-tier educational leadership positions. I believe that giving voice to women's experiences will help pave the way to more opportunities for women and society in general and allow the topic to be explored and questioned critically. My thoughts and questions that arose as early as my elementary school years, concerning the lack of women in educational leadership positions, have resonated within me and have become the driving force for my thesis. The women's voices that are included in this study not only provide a closer look into the experiences of current and aspiring female educational administrators, but also provide society with a critical lens to look through, while asking the very same questions I began to ask myself many years ago.

While engaging in the research process, I was cautious about the dangers of self-identifying as an insider or outsider prior to entering the research setting. Feminists argue that researchers can come to understand themselves as subject/object, insider/outsider, by reflexively examining the shifting nature of one's role in the field. As an educator myself, I was always aware of my positionality and maintained a steady balance between the knower and the known (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007).

While examining the transcripts, field notes, and journal entries that were made after each individual interview, I found that the process of this study was similar to the way I felt about the literature of women and leadership- encouraging;

yet disheartened at times. I felt encouraged by the passion each of the participants expressed for their careers, the level of commitment shown to their roles, and the strength behind each of their stories. Also, by providing women with an opportunity to express their experiences, I often felt that I was "doing justice" to the field of women and educational leadership. However, I also felt at times, that some women expressed views that often perpetuate the stereotyping of women in educational leadership and the resultant limited access to educational leadership positions.

At times, I felt that it was difficult to listen to these thoughts being expressed, as many were inhibiting to women. However, through reflexive listening and approaching interviews as "contextualized conversations" I was better able to understand the experiences of the participants (Stage & Mattson, 2003). I was also disheartened by the experiences women expressed, mainly the sabotaging behaviours that some of the women experienced and their experiences with gender stereotypes. However, when asking myself "how has this study influenced my views of women and educational leadership?" I feel a greater drive to continue to explore the topic as the results have indicated that there is still much to be explored and uncovered. While some studies have indicated that there has been an exhaustive amount of research on the topic of women and leadership, this process has shown that there are experiences that contribute to the literature that, left unexplored, would continue to go unnoticed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature related to women and leadership. Current literature on women principals reveals that while many school boards, including those in Ontario, are showing increasing numbers of women in educational leadership positions, in particular the elementary panel, barriers remain that prevent full equality across formal leadership positions. This chapter highlights key barriers and constraints faced by female educators. These include: *The Glass Ceiling; Work and Family Conflict; Access to Resources & Mentoring Opportunities; Male Power Structure; Gender Stereotypes; Perceptions of Female Leadership Effectiveness; Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Women and Leadership;* and *Race and Leadership.* An overview of these key barriers aims to facilitate an understanding of the complexities involved in gender and leadership, as well as information that clarifies the differences of levels of participation in leadership between males and females.

Drawing upon a variety of contexts (i.e., higher academia, business, educational leadership, management), this chapter will provide a broad overview of the experiences women encounter on their journey to the higher echelons of leadership. Although this thesis focuses specifically on educational leadership, an understanding of the traditional challenges women in leadership positions face is imperative and contextualizes the common hurdles women have experienced and continue to experience. The key barriers outlined in this chapter are comparable and similar to those in educational leadership and draw attention to the complex

relationship and 'messiness' (Shakeshaft, 1989; Blackmore, 2006; Wallace, 2005) of a feminist analysis of gender and leadership.

Key Barriers

The Glass Ceiling. The glass ceiling metaphor has been used explain gender inequities faced by women in institutional contexts. Since the term "glass ceiling" was first coined in 1984, women have made great progress in terms of leadership equality with men in the workplace (da Costa Barreto, Barreto, Ryan, & Schmidt, 2009). However, women are still underrepresented in the upper echelons of these same organizations. The glass ceiling metaphor emphasizes the notion that invisible and unseen structural patterns of gender discrimination prevent women from ascending into the most prestigious, well-paying senior leadership positions (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). Data demonstrating women's slower ascension into top-tier leadership positions, lower earnings, fewer academically based awards, and lesser representation in top-tier leadership positions are all examples of how the glass ceiling functions and limits women's potential (Valian, 2005). Glass ceilings and walls are systematically constructed as a consequence of cultural beliefs, behaviours, and practices (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). For this study, the lower numbers of women in senior leadership positions within school boards can be understood as an outcome of the 'glass ceiling.' Or, to take another example, although women comprise more than half of all management and professional positions, a mere 3.8% of women hold senior positions in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2010). The amount is even lower for non-white women.

An array of literature (da Costa et al., 2009; Eagly, 2007; Hoyt, 2005; Pichler,

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Simpson & Stroh, 2008; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007) continues to demonstrate that the advancement of women into senior leadership positions is much slower than it is for men, that women earn substantially lower salaries, and that fewer academically based awards are given to women (Eagly, 2007). It can also be viewed as a metaphor for the levels of leadership to which women have not been permitted (Eagly, 2007). Additionally, Meyerson (2004) views the glass ceiling as a small portion of the barriers faced by women as she states, "It's not just the glass ceiling that's holding women back; it's the whole structure of the organizations in which we work: the foundation, the beams, the walls, the very air" (p. 8; as cited in Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). The glass ceiling reminds individuals that while society has undergone significant changes when it comes to gender equality, there remain barriers and constraints for the advancement of women into educational leadership positions, as well as other fields.

Other researchers have found that women may also experience what is referred to as a "psychological glass ceiling" (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). Shaped by gender-based socialization, the term psychological glass ceiling refers to the way in which women themselves have internalized a patriarchal gender ideology which, when acted out, undermines their own chances at securing leadership positions. Unlike their male counter parts, women appear less willing to engage in self-promoting or assertive behaviours, or seem less willing to take risks that will propel their leadership roles, and have a greater fear of failure. For example, while self-promotion can convey status and competence, it is not at all communal. So while men can use bluster to get noticed, modesty is expected even of highly accomplished

women (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Further, because women are perceived to be less competent, ambitious, and competitive (i.e., less agentic) than men, they may be overlooked for leadership positions unless they successfully present themselves as atypical women. However, engaging in such behaviour defies the prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes, which can result in negative reactions to female agency and authority (i.e., backlash) (Rudman & Phelan, 2008).

Work and Family Conflict. A common explanation for women's underrepresentation in leadership positions centres on work and family conflict. A version of this explanation made an early appearance in Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique,* which focused on the ways in which work and home cultures failed to provide women with a choice for balancing these two obligations. The choice was clear for women: it was one or the other. In response to Friedan's attention to work and home cultures as contributing factors to women's underrepresentation, other researchers have pointed out how some women are simply rejecting leadership roles for a greater focus on family, a decision that inherently affects their long-term career paths (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). For example, the timing of a woman's choice to have children can often delay the completion of their undergraduate or graduate education, which ultimately leads to higher career advancement. This choice subsequently prevents women from ascending into higher-level positions that require a higher level of education (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). The common conflicts and implications of family life, primarily on women's careers, include: time-based conflict (the time required to manage both roles), strain-based conflict (the spillover

of the two roles), and behaviour-based conflict (incompatibility of the two roles) (Galinsky and Swanberg, 2000).

Research by Mason and Goulden (2002) also examined family formation and its effects on the careers of both women and men. Results of this study revealed a consistent gap between women and men who have children and the effects on tenure track positions in education. More specifically, a 24% gap was found between men and women's rates of having achieved tenure 12 to 14 years after receiving a PhD. Also worth noting, is the finding that men across all fields of education that had babies achieve tenure at a slightly higher rate than men and women who do not have children. Lastly, when comparing women with children and women without children, those without children demonstrated a higher rate of promotion. Rather than focusing on the two polar ends of the spectrum when referring to women that opt-out and those that opt-in, Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2011) include the perspectives of women who opt in between.

Research by Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2011) reveals that the decision to opt in or out of the workforce was not clear-cut. Women in this study made shifts in their careers becoming part-time employees, entrepreneurs, or changed organizations that offered a more flexible work schedule. The women that decided to remain employed on a full time basis all had flexible work schedules, were entrepreneurs, or worked from home. Participants in this study also adapted their careers at various points in time. For example, the decision to either remain full time, begin part time, work from home, or change their career path occurred while in the process of still receiving their education, before having a family, or after having their first child. Although the

women in this study placed a high value on their careers, results indicate that they also placed a high value on family and children (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2011). This particular study also reveals highly useful strategies that these professional women have adopted in order to maintain a successful work and family balance while opting in between.

Strategies utilized by women in this study in order to make their professional lives work include: finding the right organizational fit (i.e., organizations that offer formal and informal policies intended to help manage work and family); "getting over" the guilt of not spending enough time with their children and family; shifting one's paradigm by acknowledging the enrichment that various roles can provide; establishing professional contacts; seeking personal support; finding satisfactory child care (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2011). Results of this study conclude that organizations would greatly benefit by offering guidelines, assistance, and providing mentoring opportunities to their employees, who have families, to connect them with the appropriate resources required to achieve balance in their work and family roles (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2011). While this study focuses the strategies used to maintain balance between work and family roles for women who opt in between, Statistics Canada's (2006) report, *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report* reflects the difficulties and struggles many women in Canada face while simultaneously attempting to maintain their careers and family.

Findings from this report indicated that compared to their male counterparts, women were far more likely to lose time at work because of personal or family responsibilities, work part time, and earn less (Statistics Canada, 2006). Moreover,

38% of families headed by lone-parent mothers lived below the poverty line, compared to 13% of male lone-parent families, and 7% of two-parent families (Statistics Canada, 2006). These findings demonstrate the double standard women in leadership roles face as well as the double standard women face in society in regard to children and family. This double standard is also reflected in the treatment of women with children by superiors, as well as their access to resources and mentoring by superiors once in leadership positions. This next barrier (i.e., access to resources) focuses on the treatment of women who have attained such leadership positions, but do not receive the same type of informal instruction as men, which ultimately affects their success as leaders.

Access to Resources. Women's access to resources, or lack thereof in some cases, focuses primarily on the deficiency of career advice, resources, mentoring, and socialization of women in academic leadership positions (Paludi, 2008). Access to these resources available within the workplace is also characteristic of one's social capital. An individual's social capital (Coleman, 1988) refers to one's level of networking connections within a community and the set of collective expectations within a community, that influences the goal seeking behavior of its members (Davies, 2004). A review of the literature commonly cites that the formation, utilization, and access to these stores of social capital differ among minority groups, namely women (Brown, 2005; Timberlake, 2005; Pichler et al., 2008; Searby & Tripses; Hoyt, 2005). Further, much of the literature suggests that women are excluded from social networks, which is one of the most significant aspects of organizational power (Timberlake, 2005). Women's lack of access to workplace

social capital, as well as its associated benefits, can have detrimental effects on career advancement, such as: a lack of knowledge sharing, higher turnover rates, fewer resources, fewer contacts that lead to power and advancement, and lower levels of trust and cooperative spirit amongst coworkers (Timberlake, 2005). The importance of access to resources has also been supported by other researchers (Brown, 2005; Searby & Tripses, 2006).

Supporting the notion that mentorship is an invaluable resource for the recruitment and preparation of women, Brown (2005) examined mentoring relationships among female college presidents. Samples of 91 female presidents at selected independent colleges were surveyed about mentor and protégé relationships. Findings from this study revealed that a majority of college presidents did in fact receive mentoring. This finding suggests that mentorship plays a significant role in the advancement of female college presidents. Further, approximately 72% of presidents were involved in a mentoring program. This finding proposes that aspiring female college presidents appreciate the value of mentorship in administrative advancement (Brown, 2005). Both of these findings indicate that mentorship is a crucial element in the advancement of females into top tier positions.

The disadvantage faced by women as a result of not being part of the "old boys' club" has also been cited by Searby and Tripses (2006). Based on the assumption that women and minorities experience a disadvantage in their workplace social capital, their study sought to understand how women develop the capacity and confidence to enter into mentoring relationships. More specifically, this study investigated how women engage in mentoring relationships, what barriers they might

perceive, and differences between their stated intentions. Results of this study revealed an array of thoughts concerning the entry of a mentoring relationship (Searby & Tripses, 2006).

According to Searby and Tripses (2006), the main themes present in the responses included a general resistance to the mentoring process due to its formal structure. However, many of the respondents acknowledged the potential for mentoring to gratify their personal and professional needs. An analysis of the participants' journal entries on the topic of mentorship demonstrated a yearning for a mentoring relationship as well as the need for support and encouragement from a mentor. On a personal level, participants expressed the desire to receive job-related advice from a mentor as well as a reduction of professional isolation. These findings highlight the fact that women in leadership benefit from support and nurturance of their careers. While the careers of most educational administrators are lonely, female administrators experience loneliness on a higher level, as they are required to work in a typically androcentric culture (Searby & Tripses, 2006). As demonstrated by the multitude of findings on the topic of mentoring and female leadership, access to a mentor can be a catalyst for promotion of more females in higher-level positions and may lead to greater success when in these positions. However, in order for women to benefit entirely from their access to mentoring, other barriers such as gender stereotypes, must also be confronted and challenged.

More recently, an article in the *Toronto Star* discusses a claim made by a female vice-principal of systemic discrimination and a lack of sufficient mentoring. Ranjit Khatkur claims that after serving as a vice-principal for ten years, subjective

promotional policies and lack of mentoring prevented her from becoming a principal. Perhaps demonstrating how race intersects with gender in a way that disadvantages non-white, racialized women, Khatkur stated that numerous principals and superintendents refused to provide her with the required mentoring necessary for promotion. From a social justice perspective, it is also rather disappointing that the school board's lawyer dismissed Khatkur's claims by stating they are "subjective views". Though the article does not specify whether male colleagues made the refusals, this scenario is shockingly similar to the testimonials made by female administrators in the preceding literature (see, for example, Grewal, 2011). It is important to note however, that although this section focuses primarily on the comparison of mentoring experiences of women and men, the struggle to reach parity amongst and between women has also been cited as a contributing struggle for current and aspiring female leaders (Jones & Palmer, 2011).

The relationship dynamics between women in the workplace has been portrayed as having both positive elements and negative impacts by media reports (e.g., Meece, 2009; Tahmincioglu, 2010) and research findings. According to Litwin (2006), the first portrayal of women's work relationships is grounded in oppressive systems, focuses on the positive contributions that women provide the workplace and the encouragement women provide to one another. In the same vein, women's work relationships have been cited as an additional barrier placed on their gender by plaguing the workplace with bouts of relational aggression, competition and sabotaging behaviours between women. The clash between women in the workplace, especially when competing for a limited position (e.g., superintendent or director of a

school board), has been attributed to the powerlessness and self-hatred that people in subordinated groups can experience when they internalize the negative stereotypes of the dominant culture (Kanter, 1977; as cited in Litwin, 2006).

This phenomenon is also highlighted in Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, where he utilizes the term 'horizontal violence' to describe the lashing out at one's own oppressed group member(s). Freire (2000) describes the term 'horizontal violence' as a way of acting out the internalization of negative stereotypes placed upon the oppressed individual by the dominant societal group, in an attempt to regain a sense of power. Horizontal violence can occur as indirect aggression or as intentional and harmful behaviour. For example, female participants in a study conducted by Jones and Palmer (2011) reference this horizontal violence as they discuss their experiences with the follow behaviours: competition between female co-workers, an inability of to view one another as team members, suspicions as to how fellow female colleagues earned positions of power (insinuating inappropriate relationships with supervisors), reluctance to speak out about discriminatory practices, and generational conflicts with younger female leaders (Jones & Palmer, 2011).

Litwin (2006) also cites other negative patterns of female behaviour in her study, which include: unclear and unspoken friendship expectations between women, taboos against discussing the boundary confusion of women's friendship in the workplace, the double bind when utilizing both feminine and masculine work styles in the gendered workplace and the labels that occur as a result of implementing a masculine style, and the illusion of powerlessness women experience as a result of

internalizing negative gender stereotypes (Litwin, 2006). Findings from Litwin's (2006) study indicate that women often experience a clash between friendship expectations that are carried into the workplace, and the masculine norms that dominate the workplace. These expectations (often unspoken and unconscious) serve as a filter for interpreting the behaviours of other women in the workplace. This is often manifested in the different expectations women have regarding the behaviour of their male and female bosses. The expectation for positive relationships and friendship occurs more between female bosses and co-workers than it does for male bosses and female co-workers. The impact of these expectations is increased for female leaders that do not adopt a 'feminine' leadership style and are then seen as "bitches" or "difficult to work with" (Litman, 2006, p. 3). Litwin (2006) also discusses the double bind her participants experienced when utilizing a masculine leadership style. Within this discussion, women explained that they were discouraged from supporting other women because they were competing for a limited position. Becoming friends with a fellow female co-worker was seen as something that may interfere with obtaining a top-tier leadership position.

Perhaps the most detrimental and compelling finding from Litwin's (2006) study is the fact that women may internalize negative gender stereotypes, which become manifested in their own beliefs and behaviours towards their gender and fellow group members. Illusions of powerlessness become evident when women justify the negative behaviours that occur between females in the workplace as, "it's just the way things are"; "it's just the way women are-catty"; "we can't talk about it [friendship expectations]" (Litwin, 2006, p.7). These statements hold other women

responsible for the negative patterns of behaviour and reflect an acceptance of them. Women in this study (i.e., Litwin, 2006) are described as being unaware of the stereotypes and demonstrate a generalization of behaviours that are attributed to "all" women (Litwin, 2006, p.7). Gender stereotypes are perhaps one of the most difficult challenges women can experience in the workplace, due to their persistence in society and their resistance to change.

  Male Dominated Power Structure. Another way feminist research (Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, 2006; Shakeshaft, 1989) has helped explain the under-representation of women in senior leadership positions is through an analysis of the male dominated power structure. For example, Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, (2006) highlight how male dominated key leadership positions will likely recruit new principals "who resemble their sponsors in philosophy, deeds, appearances, and hobbies" (p. 19). In other words, men in senior positions will hire those candidates who most resemble themselves, thereby reproducing male dominance within educational administration (Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, 2006, p. 19). Writing in the American context, Shakeshaft (1989), for example, has documented the ways in which male superintendents did not want to work with females as they saw them as a threat (see, Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, 2006). Additionally, when power structures are dominated by white heterosexual men, women, in particular non-heterosexual, non-white women, may be less well connected to systems that lead to career advancement and promotion.

  Gender Stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are persistent cognitive structures that influence the way individuals process information regarding men and women.

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For example, although attitudes toward women's rights and professional ambitions have undergone a revolution since the 1960s, gender stereotypes attributed to men and women remain and are consistent across may cultures (Rudman & Phelan, 2010). The impact of gender stereotypes becomes highly increased when they become internalized by the oppressed group and facilitate or perpetuate horizontal violence (Freire, 2000). These cognitive structures are highly resistant to change and contain both prescriptive and descriptive elements about how men and women should behave (Hoyt, 2005). Gender stereotypes are present in many of the aforementioned barriers and demand a great amount of focus in the discussion of women and leadership.

Gender stereotypes can be very powerful obstructions to female leaders as well as their organizations. Awareness and activation of gender stereotypes begins as early as childhood and are well developed for most children by the first grade (Paludi, 2008). Stereotypes learned early in life form the basis for implicit gender stereotypes (Rudman & Phelan, 2010). Implicit gender stereotypes automatically associate men and women with various traits (e.g., men as agentic and women as nurturing) and can become internalized by the individual leading to implicit self-concepts (Rudman & Phelan, 2010). Implicit self-concepts become exacerbated when women are exposed to stereotypic ads and ideologies. This effect was demonstrated by Davies, Spencer, and Steele (2005), after priming women with stereotypic television ads focusing on female stereotypes (e.g., irrational, emotional, weak, indecisive). Priming women with these stereotypes caused a decreased desire to pursue a leadership role and influenced their ability to imagine themselves as successful in traditional male roles (Davies et al., 2005; Rudman & Phelan, 2010). Similar effects of implicit gender

stereotypes and the influence of priming gender stereotypes have also influenced

children's career aspirations and beliefs (Burger, Abbott, Tobias, Koch, Vogt & Sosa,

2007).

Children's activation of their gender stereotypes are commonly manifested in

the types of occupations they consider for themselves. Girls typically tend to choose

occupations such as nurse, teacher, or flight attendant. In contrast, boys tend to

consider occupations such as police officer, truck driver, architect, or pilot. A

restriction of occupational aspirations is also evident in girls, specifically in the

domains of math and science (Burger et al., 2007). Ilene Lang, president of Catalyst,

also addressed the dangers of gender stereotypes in organizations as she states:

When companies fail to acknowledge and address the impact of

gender stereotypic bias, they lose out on top female

talent...Ultimately, it's not women's leadership styles that need to

change. Only when organizations take action to address the impact

of gender stereotyping will they be able to capitalize on the "full

deck" of talent (Catalyst, 2007, p. 24).

The effects of gender stereotyping also manifests itself in the perceptions individuals

maintain regarding female leadership effectiveness.

Perceptions of Female Leadership Effectiveness. The effect of gender

stereotyping on women's leadership effectiveness is often cited in the literature as the

"double bind" dilemma and as the "think-leader-think-male" stereotype activation

(Hoyt, 2005). The "double bind dilemma" represents the idea that women are doomed

if they are able to advance into senior leadership positions, yet are also doomed if

they do not, when they are confronted with gender stereotypes. The think-male-think-leader stereotype activation is the notion that qualities that are commonly associated with successful leaders are often described as male attributes (i.e., taking charge, confident, assertive) (Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, 2006; Sczesny, 2003; Hoyt, 2005). If men are the "natural" leader, then women become by default "unnatural." To put differently, when women leaders act in ways that are not consistent with the feminine stereotype, they are perceived as too aggressive, rigid, uncaring, and self-promoting – decidedly "unfeminine." This ultimately leads to the perception that women leaders will always be seen as less effective than men as leaders.

The "masculine nature" of educational leadership puts women who aspire to leadership at a disadvantage. Women's "tendency to caring, subjective relational values could be perceived as at odds with the 'masculine values' such as 'rationality' and 'objectivity' of senior leadership" (Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, 2006, p. 20). Underlying this perception is the assumption that, when it comes to leadership style, men's behaviours are seen as essential to effective leadership (Shakeshaft, 1989; Oplatka & Hertz-Lararowitz, 2006). When an "environment assumes men's values and practices as the norm for leadership," it is hardly surprising that many women are excluded from senior leadership positions in schools.

Other areas of research outside of education have also demonstrated the way in which leadership is gendered 'masculine.' In the 2005 Catalyst report entitled, "*Women 'Take Care', Men 'Take Charge"* researchers investigated whether opinions about leaders arise from gender stereotypes. Catalyst surveyed top corporate leaders to judge how effective both male and female leaders performed behaviours commonly

associated to effective leadership (i.e., supporting, rewarding, mentoring, networking, consulting, team-building, inspiring, problem-solving, influencing upward, and delegating). The respondents' perceptions were then matched with gender stereotypes. Results of this survey indicate that male respondents considered male leaders to be more effective than women on all of the masculine leader behaviours (i.e., delegating, problem-solving, and influencing upward). Female respondents had similar results, with the exception of problem solving. Surprisingly, female respondents believed that males had greater competency at networking- a stereotypic female behaviour. With the exception of networking and inspiring behaviours, this study demonstrates that both male and female managers judged male leaders as more competent and superior than female leaders on masculine behaviours (Catalyst, 2005). Results of this study are also similar to those of the 2006 Catalyst report titled, "*Different Cultures, Similar Perceptions: Stereotyping of Western European Business Leaders*" (Catalyst, 2006).

      Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Women and Leadership. In their 2006 report, Catalyst investigates the presence of gender stereotypes and perceptions of leadership in the top 50 public companies across Europe. Additionally, this study identifies similarities and differences in the ways women and men leaders are perceived across European cultures and questions whether the consequences of stereotyping vary for women leaders in different European cultures. Given that women lead only 3% of these top 50 companies in Europe, results of this report were not unforeseen. When asked to identify the barriers that keep them out of the top-tier

positions, female leaders across Europe frequently cited gender stereotypes (Catalyst, 2006).

Participants in this study (both male and female) were asked to estimate from their experiences the percentage of female leaders who were effective at various leader behaviours (i.e., supporting, rewarding, mentoring, networking, consulting, team-building, inspiring, problem-solving, influencing upward, delegating, role modeling, and monitoring). The same question was asked concerning male leaders. A comparison of the estimates for male and female leadership effectiveness was made to determine if there were any statistically meaningful differences in their perceptions. Results of this comparison revealed that individuals from every cultural group perceived differences between male and female leaders. There was also a high level of agreement among participants in every cultural group regarding the specific differences between male and female leaders. For example, in almost every cultural cluster, male respondents perceived that male leaders' higher effectiveness at "problem solving" was their greatest performance advantage over female leaders. Similarly, men perceived that "supporting" is the behaviour that female leaders most commonly outperformed men (Catalyst, 2006).

Results of this study also revealed that male respondents believed that male leaders performed better than female leaders in a larger number of behaviours. The largest degree of similarity in judgments made regarding male and female leadership was among the Nordic and Germanic cultures. Interestingly, Anglo and Latin males selected only two leader behaviours they believed male leaders outperformed women on (i.e., inspiring and role modeling). Further research concludes that in comparison

to other European countries, women in Nordic cultures have more economic and political power and have similar status to males in the workplace (Catalyst, 2005). In addition to the research citing differences in attitudes regarding female leaders, Cheung & Halpern (2010) explored the difference between women's progression to top-tier leadership positions in Western cultures in comparison to Asian countries.

On an international level, countries that are closest to the equality mark of 50% for global board seats held by women include: Norway (40.1%), Sweden (27.3%), Finland (24.5%), United States (16.1%), and South Africa (15.8). A fair distance below these countries, Canada comprises (10.3%) of the global board seats held by women, and is surpassed by countries including: Turkey (10.8%), Poland (10.8%), Germany (11.2%), United Kingdom (12.5%), France (12.7%), Denmark (13.9%), Netherlands (14.0%), and Israel (15.0%). The bottom three countries on this list include: United Arab Emirates (0.8%), Qatar (0.3%), and Saudi Arabia (0.1%) (Catalyst, 2011, 2012). These statistics demonstrate that, a half century later, there is still a global struggle for women to ascend to highly regarded elite leadership positions.

Race and Leadership. When addressing the experiences of women in educational leadership, it is important to include a discussion of the experiences non-white, minority women encounter. Failing to include a discussion of race is also a failure to recognize that 'whiteness' is a privileging construct (MacIntosh, 1989; 2006) that perpetuates power and authority, thereby preventing access and opportunity for non-white women (MacIntosh, 1989; 1992; Fitzgerald, 2006). Further, narratives that fail to discuss issues of race risk producing research that

suggests women leaders share a monolithic collective identity based on their gender, which is predicated on western traditions of leadership, power and privilege (Fitzgerald, 2006). Until recently, efforts to engage with issues of race within the broader context of gender equity remained limited. For example, research studies and even provincial federation reports (i.e., Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010; Ontario College of Teachers, 2008; Adams & Hambright, 2004; Lu & Morissette, 2010) that addressed the unique needs of females in leadership and the labour market, failed to include the experiences of visible minorities.

This limited discussion of female visible minorities in discussions of educational leadership of was noted by Mogadime (2008) as she critiques the absence of a discussion about race in the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario's report, *Go For It! Barriers to Women's Promotion in Education* (1991) report. Although this text advocates for the implementation of affirmative action, nowhere does it state or acknowledge the issue of race, as it advocates the rights for all women in society. Further, provisions in the *Education Act* did not include racial minorities until 1992, even though the Ontario Ministry of Education program on employment equity began in the mid 1970s (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1993; Mogadime, 2008). Yet, minority women's struggles can hardly be contained to these time frames, as they are historically situated within systems of racism and sexism that began during colonial periods (Mogadime, 2008). Further, while accumulating information on the experiences of minority women, it was difficult to obtain data on their representation in educational leadership positions (i.e., within a national or provincial context) as the numbers are categorized by gender and not race. What can

be stated is that minority women face experiences that are compounded by additional systems of oppression. In addition to race and gender, Fitzgerald (2006) contributes to the existing literature by adding a third component of oppression.

Fitzgerald (2006) addresses the 'triple bind' Indigenous women face due to exigencies of race, gender, and their identity as Indigenous women. Results of this study indicate that Indigenous women 'walk' and work 'within two systems' (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and are 'judged as a woman' in a 'white man's world' (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 207). This finding indicates a triple bind that places Indigenous women in a poorer position than women of colour. First, they are Indigenous women in a predominantly white world. Second, they are women in systems that value patriarchal leadership. Third, Indigenous women must also overcome judgment of 'others'; all males, white males, and women (Fitzgerald, 2006, p.207). Further complicating this triple bind are the barriers and the Indigenous women face in their leadership positions. These barriers include: the predominantly white organizational structure of the school, placing these women on the margins of organization; community expectations; and responsibilities and accountability placing considerable demands on them. Community expectations were seen as barrier, since none of the women in the study felt as though they could 'leave being Aboriginal' (Fitzgerald, 2006, p.209). Each of the women in this study expressed feeling as though their work belonged to more people than themselves, since they all represented a specific community that required a high degree of reciprocity. Thus, both gender and culture can affect a leader's style, behaviour, emergence, and effectiveness in many multifaceted.

One of the methods cited to cope with the challenges faced by 'walking between two worlds' involved interpreting the 'games' that operated in a 'white man's world' and 'very white organizations' in order to fulfill their duties as Indigenous educational leaders (Fitzgerald, 2006, p.210). For each of the barriers cited below, it is imperative to remember the double and triple-bind racial and ethnic minority women face. While white women indeed face systems of oppression in leadership positions, including educational leadership, these systems of oppression become much stronger for minority women.

Conclusion

Despite women's increased representation of those who hold principal's qualification and supervisory officer's qualifications, women are still underrepresented in top-tier educational leadership roles, such as superintendents and directors. According to the Ontario College of Teachers 2008 Annual Report, women have been surpassing men in principal qualifications since 2001 and also in supervisory officer certifications since 2004 (OCT, 2008). Knowing this trend, one would assume that the number of females employed in an educational leadership position would be reflective of the number of women qualified. However according to the Survey of Principals (SOP) approximately 8,000 men and 7,000 women were principals at elementary and secondary schools during 2004-2005 (Statistics Canada, 2008).

A review of the literature indicates many factors that contribute to this unbalanced representation. The contributing factors cited within this thesis include: the glass ceiling, work and family conflict, limited access to resources and mentoring,

male-dominated power structures, gender stereotyping, and perceptions of female leadership effectiveness. Utilizing a mixed methods approach, with a concentration on phenomenological tradition, this study furthers explores these experiences. By administering a descriptive survey and performing semi-structured interviews with current and aspiring female educational leaders, women's voices are illuminated and heard to provide a deeper understanding of this disparity in leadership representation.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Description of the Study

This study utilized a mixed methods approach, while maintaining its qualitative paradigm and focus. This study may be classified as mixed methods research due to the use of a supplemental descriptive and Likert-scale survey in addition to semi-structured interviews. The primary focus of this study's methodology however, remains within a qualitative paradigm.

Mixed-Methods Research

According to Spratt, Walker and Robinson (2004), mixed-methods research attempts to bring together methods from different perspectives (i.e., qualitative and quantitative methods). Mixed-methods studies provide a basis for triangulation, attempt to view the research questions from different points of view, and facilitate deeper exploration on the research topic (Spratt et al., 2004). This research study combines the use of a descriptive and Likert-scale survey as well as a semi-structured interview. However, due to the fact that the survey is supplemental to the semi-structured interview, this study's primary focus remains within a qualitative paradigm. In sum, mixed-methods research and triangulation of data, allows interpretations about complex human experiences, beliefs and behaviours. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods was also seen as advantageous due to the sensitivity of the information gathered and the hesitation the participants may experience when asked to verbalize these experiences. Rather than determining broad generalizations about a population, the primary purpose of this study is to represent a particular group of people and at a specific point in time (i.e., aspiring to be an

educational administrator and while currently employed in an educational leadership position). Both qualitative and quantitative methods can support feminist values and beliefs while embracing social change in the process.

Incorporating Quantitative Methods in Feminist Research

Although this study relied on a descriptive survey and Likert-scale survey to supplement the semi-structured interviews, it is acknowledged that some feminists may be critical of the incorporation of this quantitative method. However, although the survey that was administered in this study is a quantitative method, it still retains the potential for social change and allows women to explore their personal experiences, while also facilitating a better understanding of these experiences. This view is also supported by and consistent with Miner-Rubino, Epstein-Jayaratne and Konik (2010). Miner-Rubino et al. (2010), state that survey methods have "the potential for concrete social change in alignment with feminist values" (p. 199). Furthermore, although quantitative methods have been traditionally non-existent to feminist research, Miner-Rubino et al. (2010) cite many advantages these methods bring to feminist research.

According to Miner-Rubino et al. (2010), incorporating quantitative research methods can be seen as a catalyst for a way to introduce complex issues of sexism, racism, classism, gender equality, and other social justice concerns. Second, the incorporation of statistics may produce results that provide highly useful findings to readers, policy makers, and the public. Supporting this view, feminist researchers (e.g, Harding, 1987; O'Neil, 1995; Miner-Rubino et al., 2007) also support the benefits of using quantitative research methods to achieve feminist goals, as they

recognize that methods per se, are not strictly "feminist." For Harding (1987)

methods are simply tools for gathering data that make the research feminist or not. It

is also how one utilizes the tool, for what purpose they are using the tool, and how the

researcher uses that data that makes the research feminist or not. Lastly, quantitative

research methods can be helpful in understanding how attitudes, beliefs and

experiences differ, or are similar within a given population.

According to Lichtman (2006), qualitative research is an umbrella term that

describes the process of gathering, organizing, and interpreting information in natural

or social settings. The main purpose of qualitative research is to provide an in-depth

description and understanding of human phenomena and human interaction.

Understanding and describing human phenomena focuses on the individual(s) lived

experiences. Understanding and describing human interactions situates itself within

the subjects' culture and context. With its emphasis on the written word and inductive

analysis process, Litchman (2006), as well as Hittleman and Simon (2006) identify

several key features of qualitative research that delineate this method from other

approaches to research.

Qualitative research is comprised of several distinctive features that strengthen

its utilization in research studies. According to Hittleman and Simon (2006),

qualitative researchers: (1) are concerned with the process of an interaction, rather

than its outcomes; (2) study the actions and interactions of individuals that occur

within their natural setting, through interviews or observation; (3) collect data

verbally from participants; (4) analyze the data rationally rather than statistically, for

the purposes of generating further research questions and conjectures; (5) view

subjectivity as a strength of their research. Lichtman (2006) adds to these characteristics by stating that qualitative research is also: (6) holistic in its approach to focusing on the study of a situation in its entirety; (7) fluid and ever-changing since there are many traditions that inform qualitative research; (8) interactive, as the researcher plays a pivotal role in the data collection, analysis and iterative processes; and (9) in-depth, as the researcher looks deeply into a few elements, rather than looking at the surface of many. These characteristics combined form the basis of a proper qualitative study.

This study's methodology is consistent with the previously stated characteristics during all stages of the research process. By focusing on the interaction between both current and aspiring female educational administrators and their co-workers, this study strives to explore, describe and understand the experiences and interactions they encounter. All interviews with current and aspiring female educational administrators were conducted in either their school office or classroom (i.e., after student dismissal) or within a location in their own community. This reinforces the importance of conducting interviews within a natural setting. Following the semi-structured interviews, all data was transcribed for accuracy and analyzed inductively. The data was also analyzed holistically and examined in its entirety utilizing the tradition of phenomenology and feminist research methods. These traditions and strategies will be explored further to provide a more in-depth account of this study's methodology, data collection and data analysis.

Phenomenology

Although relatively new to the field of education, the use of a phenomenological approach in research has become more common since the early 1980s (Åkerlind, 2005 & Lichtman, 2006). Frequently used in the field of education, phenomenology as a method explores the lived experiences of those who have experienced a certain phenomenon and attempts to capture the essence of that phenomenon. The lived experience is a term that describes the particular experience or event that the researcher will focus on. The participants in the study are those who have been directly involved in the experience (Litchman, 2006). For the purposes of this research, the lived experience (i.e., application process and successful acquisition of a leadership position) is explored. The participants in this study that are directly involved in this experience are current and aspiring female educational administrators. These experiences are then deeply explored to extract the essence of the lived experience.

In phenomenological research, extracting the essence of the lived experience involves moving towards a deeper level of understanding (Litchman, 2006). During this stage of phenomenological research, the researcher describes and identifies variations in human meaning, understanding, and conceptions (Åkerlind, 2005). According to Åkerlind (2005), the notion that the essence of the lived experience represents a relationship between the experiencer and the phenomenon being experienced, leads to the conclusion that each participant's experience will be related to the phenomenon they have experienced. Exploring the lived experience provides a way of looking at the collective lived experience of phenomena holistically, despite the fact that the same phenomena may be experienced differently by each participant

(Åkerlind, 2005). Max van Manen (2007) also refers to this strategy of exploring

different meanings, as reflective inquiry. According to van Manen (2007), reflective

inquiry activities aim to interpret the aspects of meaning that are associated with the

phenomenon. The lived experience of each participant is explored using what is

referred to as a reductionist process.

Phenomenological reduction is the process that facilitates and extracts the

essence of the participant's experience. During this stage, the researcher uses

strategies such as bracketing and epoche to suspend one's own thoughts about the

topic being explored, while also removing their judgment. This is typically done by

the researcher prior to engaging with the literature and can be accomplished by

writing about one's own ideas on the topic (Lichtman, 2006). Recognizing that

participants are the experts and authorities of their own experiences is also one of the

fundamental elements of feminist research (Brayton, 2011). Utilizing phenomenology

as a method also involves close attention by the researcher, to interview techniques,

transcribing, and data analysis stages of the research process. Each of these stages

will be subsequently explored in greater detail.

Feminist Research

Conducting research within a feminist perspective involves exploring issues of

feminist relevance, with a focus on difference, social power, and scientific

oppression, while simultaneously promoting social activism (Hesse-Biber, et al.,

2004). In simpler terms, feminist research is based on doing research 'for women'

rather than 'on women' with a strong emphasis on social change (Miner-Rubino,

Jayaratne, & Konik, 2006). Feminist research differs from other traditions due to the

feminist beliefs and concerns that continually affect the guiding framework to the research process (Brayton, 2011). Although feminist theory has been discussed in the theoretical framework section of this thesis, a brief description of the defining features of feminist research methodology will be revisited.

According to Brayton (2011) feminist research differs from traditional research methodologies in three distinct ways. The differences between feminist research and other methodologies include: an active pursuit to eliminate power imbalances between the research and subject; it is politically motived and in turn intends to change social inequality; and is constantly revolving around the experiences of women (Brayton, 2011). Feminist research has traditionally relied on qualitative methods to reach feminist goals. However, as previously discussed, the incorporation of quantitative methods can offer many benefits and reach similar goals as qualitative research.

Participant Selection

Participants in this study were from a school board within the Southwestern Ontario area. There were two separate groups of participants, which included: (1) female educators who have an interest in pursuing an educational leadership position; and (2) female administrators that have successfully obtained an educational leadership position.

The selection of these participants included criteria of eligibility to participate. For example "interest in pursuing an educational leadership position" was determined by the participants' educational and professional development. More specifically, participants who demonstrated a desire to pursue an educational leadership position

must have obtained, or be in the process of obtaining, either two additional qualification specialists or a Master's degree (not limited to Education), and be employed as a teacher for a minimum of five years. These requirements were chosen based on the application standards for an educational leadership position. Female participants who have applied for an educational leadership position must have either been placed within a pool of eligible administrators or been informed that they were not successful in obtaining the position. Lastly, female administrators that have successfully obtained an educational leadership position were active in their current position of either vice-principal, principal, departmental superintendent, or director of education.

For the recruitment, this study employed both purposive sampling and criterion sampling methods. Purposive sampling involves using a series of strategic choices about whom, where and how to conduct the research (Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling was selected for this study due to the specific type of participants required (i.e., current and aspiring female educational administrators). Criterion sampling involves recruiting participants who meet certain criteria or a criterion that is essential to the purpose of the study (Palys, 2008). Criterion sampling was used in conjunction with the purposive sampling, in the subsequent stages of participant recruitment, as the participants were required to meet the previously discussed criteria in order to be interviewed. Upon confirmation of the participants' eligibility to participate in the study, the letter of information and consent were provided prior to commencing the interviews.

The Participants

A total of 10 participants were included in this study. Although this study set out to recruit 3 separate groups of female educators and administrators (i.e., current female educational administrators, female educators that have applied for an educational administration position but did not receive it, and aspiring female educational administrators), this study includes 2 groups of women, due to a lack of response from female educators that have applied for an educational leadership position, but did not receive it. Therefore, the two groups in this study are: current female educational administrators (*n*=4) and aspiring female educational administrators (*n*=6).

Table 5.

Summary of Demographic Information from Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

Name*	Tracey	Anne	Sarah	Jennifer	Patricia	Rachel
Age	44	40	49	42	41	37
Highest Degree Earned	Bachelor of Education	Bachelor of Education	Bachelor of Education, LLB	Bachelor of Education	Bachelor of Education	Bachelor of Education
Additional Qualification (s)	Special Education, Other	Other	Special Education, Other	Special Education, Other	Special Education, Other	Special Education, Other
Age at First Teaching Position	24	31	40	26	27	30
Leadership Program Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*All names have been changed

The average age of the aspiring educational administrators was 42 years and the average age of obtaining their first teaching position was 29 years. The highest level of education for aspiring educational administrators was a Bachelor of Education degree, with the exception of Sarah who also has a degree in Law. All aspiring educators were also taking part in their respective school board's Leadership program, geared towards those who are interested in pursuing an educational leadership position in the future. Table 5 contains the summative information on the aspiring educational administrators.

The average age of the current educational administrators was 48 years. The number of years of classroom experience prior to pursuing an educational leadership position ranged from 8 years to over 30 years. In terms of education, two participants in this group had obtained their Master of Education degrees (i.e., Andrea and Tiffany). One participant (i.e., Diane) was currently in the process of obtaining her Master of Education degree. All current administrators in this study were successful at obtaining an educational leadership position during their first attempt. Although this study aimed to acquire a combination of educational leadership positions (i.e., vice-principal, principal, superintendent, director) no superintendents or directors volunteered to participate in this study. Therefore, current educational administrators in this study consistent of one secondary school principal, one elementary school principal, and two elementary school vice-principals. Table 6 contains the summative information on the current educational administrators including: age, years, of experience, educational background, current positions, and number of attempts to successfully obtaining their first educational leadership position.

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Table 6.

Summary of Demographic Information from Current Female Educational

Administrators

Name *	Andrea	Lucy	Tiffany	Diane
Age	58	56	39	40
Years of Teaching Experience	30+	17	9	9
Highest Degree Earned	Master of Education	Bachelor of Education	Master of Education	Bachelor of Education
Age at Obtaining First Educational Leadership Position	57	46	32	31
Attempts Made to Obtain first Educational Leadership Position	1	1	1	1
Current Position	Elementary School Vice-Principal	Elementary School Principal	Elementary School Vice-Principal	Secondary School Principal

*All names have been changed

Data Collection

Data included in this study was collected using demographic surveys and

semi-structured interviews. These methods were deemed most suitable due to their

consistency with qualitative research methods and this study's theoretical framework.

Following is a detailed description of these data collection procedures and the

purpose of their selection.

Descriptive Survey Research. In order to collect additional information about participants' attitudes and beliefs regarding educational leadership, a descriptive Likert-scale survey was administered prior to conducting the semi-structured interview. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010), surveys and Likert-scales are utilized to target participant's opinions, beliefs, or perceptions about a current issue. Likert-scales are given scores or assigned a weight (typically 1 through 5). The purpose of a Likert-scale is to sum the scores for each participant to acquire a response rate. The intent is that the statement will represent different aspects of the participants' general attitude or beliefs towards their own experiences (Brace, 2004). For this study, a Likert-scale was utilized to assess participants' attitudes and feelings regarding their experiences with their current or prospective educational leadership position.

All surveys within this study (see Appendix F, G) contained a combination of demographic questions as well as a number of response items in the form of Likert-type questions. The Likert-type questions targeted the participants' experiences with gender equality, mentorship, work and family, and recruitment and hiring practices. For each survey, the participants were invited to select a number from 1 through 5 indicating their level of agreement for each statement. Each survey also consisted of numerical questions for demographics and an open-ended question.

Demographic questions were used in collaboration with Likert-type questions in order to obtain background information on each participant. This information was also obtained in order to be able to report the findings in a context that allows results to be better interpreted (Lodico et al., 2010). To conclude the survey, an open-ended

question was posed to allow participants an opportunity to express any concerns or experiences that were not targeted in the closed-ended survey questions.

Semi-Structured Interviews. In addition to administering a survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. In simplest terms, interview research is conducted by talking with participants, gathering their stories and learning about their experiences and perspectives (DeVault & Gross, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are also less structured and rigorous form of interviewing that allows empathetic and interpersonal dialogue, which are key components of feminist research (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2010).

Feminist research interviewing adds a deeper insight by acknowledging the complexity of human talk, the flexibility of and productive power of language, politics of interpretation and representation, and the hierarchical relations between researcher and informants. Feminist interviewing is also used to bring attention to these experiences and has been linked to social justice concerns. In fact, much of the knowledge gained on women's insights in the 1960s and 1970s was facilitated through women's collective talk However, in order to achieve such results, the broader politics of the personal and society which shapes these experiences must not be overlooked (DeVault & Gross, 2010). Keeping these points in mind, a semi-structured interview technique was chosen to allow female participants an opportunity to express their experiences within a set of guiding questions. By using questions that are relevant to social change, this study's interview protocol allows women's voices to be heard and understood within an encouraging and safe context. To ensure the

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confidentiality of the participants and uphold the highest degree of integrity for this study, many steps were taken to maintain a safe and encouraging interview context.

All interviews for this study were conducted at the location the participant chose. At no time did the interviews interfere with the natural flow of teaching or learning. For each interview, I brought with me: consent letters, a notebook, list of local mental health agencies, digital audio recorder, interview protocol, survey and numbered participant envelope, to place the completed survey and field notes in. Prior to conducting the interviews, participants were given the Letter of Information (Appendix D) and were asked to review the information it contained. Each participant was also asked to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research (Appendix E) and Consent for Audio-Taping (Appendix H) forms. After all consent forms were signed, I reminded each participant that they could withdraw at anytime throughout the research process. Participants were then given the survey for their respective group (Appendix F,G) and time was taken to explain each section to the participant to ensure proper completion. Each participant completed the survey in privacy and was asked to notify me when they were finished. Upon completion of the survey, I placed it in the participant's envelope that was labeled with their given number to ensure confidentiality. Once the survey was placed in its respective envelope, I then began the semi-structured interview. All interviews were audio taped and questions regarding gender and leadership were asked from the Interview Protocol (Appendix I). Field notes were taken during the interview for accuracy and analysis purposes.

Data Analysis and Procedures

Semi-Structured Interviews. All semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim for accuracy. Filler words (e.g., um, like, hmm) were eliminated for clarity, unless their removal interfered with context or accuracy. Transcripts were issued to the respective participants, who were then asked to verify and confirm the dialogue. The transcripts were then analyzed consistently with phenomenologic methods. Analyzing lived experiences using a phenomenological approach aims to constitute not only a set of different meanings, but an inclusive structure that relates the different meanings each participant brings to the interview (Åkerlind, 2005). This strategy allows a way of looking at the collective lived experiences of the participants, while still maintaining the differences between each.

The set of meanings that result from these categories were not determined in advance, but rather emerged from the data, and analyzed inductively (Åkerlind, 2005). An inductive approach to the analysis process begins with a search for meaning, or variation in meaning, within the interview transcripts, which is then supplemented by a search for structural relationships between meanings. While reviewing the transcripts, a high degree of openness was used to discover meanings, followed by more of a focused review of particular meanings and perspectives. Throughout this process, transcripts and quotes were also grouped and regrouped according to similarities and differences. In sum, analysis of the interviews consisted of: transcription of the audio-taped interview, review of the transcripts to discover any meanings or emerging themes, refining of categories and themes, identifying how the

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themes fit within the theoretical framework and literature, and identifying quotes that highlight key theme (Åkerlind, 2005).

Survey. The purpose of the survey was to acquire the participants' demographic information and to determine the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Likert-scale questions. The Likert-scale questions were answered using the scale of responses ranging from 1 to 5. Participants were asked to circle the corresponding number based on their agreement with the statement. Response possibilities included: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree or disagree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). This survey was utilized as a supplementary resource to the semi-structured interviews. The survey was also used a guide for the interviews and answers that were provided on the survey were revisited during the interviews if necessary.

Ethical Considerations

To maintain the confidentiality of the participants in this study, each participant was assigned a number and was given a pseudonym. Numbers were assigned to each participant for their surveys. A pseudonym was used in the reporting of this thesis and only first names were used during the semi-structured interview. The school and school board that the participants belonged to remained anonymous and were not mentioned at any stage during the interview or thesis.

Consistent with the University of Windsor's Research Ethics Board expectations, all materials used in this study were kept in a locked filing cabinet and viewed only by myself and faculty thesis advisor. Voluntary withdraw was reinforced prior to commencing the interviews. Participants were also informed that I could use

the data from this study for future publications, conference presentations, or further studies if required. Many steps were taken prior to conducting the study and interview that also ensured the highest degree of ethical consideration for this study.

Before beginning the recruitment for this study, a research proposal and application to conduct research was submitted to the University of Windsor's Research Ethics Board. The application was then reviewed by the committee and was granted clearance to proceed. The school board this study was conducted in also granted approval. During the recruitment phase of this study, a letter of information was given to each prospective participant. If the participant was still interested in participating in this study, the letter of information was presented again at the time of the survey completion and interview. Each participant was also required to sign the consent form for audio-taped interviews and consent to participate in research. Following the interview, each participant was made aware that a list of local mental health agencies was available to them by the researcher, if they felt as though their experiences motivate them to do so. All participants were given a copy of their individual transcript. Findings of this study were also made available on the University of Windsor's Research Ethics Board website.

Conclusion

This study utilizes both a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions to explore the experiences of current and aspiring female educational administrators. This study consists of both current female educational administrators (n=4) and aspiring female educational administrators (n=6). Aspiring female educational administrators were all taking part of their respective school board's

leadership mentoring program and ranged in age and years of teaching experience. Current female educational administrators consisted of the following positions: one secondary school principal, two elementary school vice-principals, and one elementary school principal. The results of both the survey and semi-structured interview provide a deeper understanding of their experiences pertaining to educational leadership positions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The data in this study were collected with the intention of understanding women's experiences with leadership. Data acquired through the semi-structured interviews and supplemental surveys, indicated four key themes: (1) *Intersection of Work and Family;* (2) *Mentoring Opportunities and Access to Resources;* (3) *Women's Work Relationships;* and (4) *Gender Politics.* This chapter will present the findings according to the four themes above.

Educational Leadership and the Intersection of Work and Family

For many female educational leaders, the typical workday extends beyond their formal paid labour work sphere, deep in to the domestic sphere, creating a "double day" for many women (Weis, 1988). Therefore, in addition to facing the complex, demanding, and challenging task of administering the responsibilities and duties of an effective school leader, many females are faced with the complex and difficult task of being the primary caregiver in their own families. Eagly and Carli (2007), contend that although men's participation in household duties and childcare is increasing, women still manage a larger majority of household duties. This juggling act between paid labour and work done in the home is what Lois Weis (1988) has described as the "double day" (p. 184). For Weis, women in the labour force, including female teachers and female administrators, are disadvantaged in their everyday life as the majority of responsibilities for childcare and housework create an additional job. The problem, according to Mason and Goulden (2002), is that the "double day" forces women to make decisions that affect their ability to advance their

careers. Eagly and Carli (2007) point out women's domestic work load and responsibilities limits their access to leadership positions by reducing the amount of time, energy, and resources they can allocate to pursuing their career goals.

The decision to postpone a move into a leadership position in order to focus more closely on fulfilling the traditional role of mother was a common theme expressed by the women in this study. For example, the importance of being present in the lives of her children was a primary motive in initially postponing a move into educational leadership for Lucy, a current educational administrator. Lucy recalled her interest in educational leadership early in her career, but admits she may have felt pressure to postpone the decision because of the personal demands placed upon her:

> Maybe I always wanted to be an administrator? But maybe I didn't let myself recognize that because of demands. I had a husband who had a career that called for him to work evenings, so you know he'd work three or four evenings per week and it was important for me to be home with my children. It was really important in their years, when they were growing up, when they were in dance and soccer and baseball that I was there for them.

Shaped by traditional understandings of gender, Lucy's response reflects to a degree the way some women postpone their decision to advance their careers by putting their husband's career first, over their own.

Lucy was not alone in her choice to prioritize being the primary caregiver to her children over her own career. Jennifer and Andrea also noted the importance of being present in the lives of their children. Jennifer, an aspiring educational

administrator, communicated this as she expressed the concern she has regarding the intersection between home and work:

> When I think about doing the administrator role and having my family. . . they conflict because my family is just as important as my career and that's why I've put things on hold because I can't do it…I can't do it until my kids are older. . . I have an almost four year old, she's just starting school and my son is in grade two and I want to give them that time, that mom time after school and I think if I wanted to do a good job as an administrator, I have to commit to the time and I don't think I can commit to the time right now.

Andrea indicated similar reasons for postponing advancing her career for marriage and children. What sets Andrea's statement apart from the other participants is her mention of embodying the nurturing mother role in order to be an effective educator:

> You know what, when I got married and decided to have a family, that was my first priority and I really believe that in order to be a good educator and in order to really understand parents and children, you have to model that too. And you know what? They were my first priority all the way through. Even after my daughter was born, I went to teaching part-time because I wanted to raise her; I wanted to be there for her. So any other aspirations that I had were put on the back burner and I have no regrets doing that.

When asked if this was something she felt was a thought that most women experience, Andrea drew on an "essentialist" understanding of gender by suggesting women's choice to focus on family and postpone their careers is women's reason for

being, while men's is work: "Oh definitely. Definitely. I mean men . . . their main reason is their position, their job. Whereas women, we have other reasons for being. Yeah. And family was definitely a priority for me." Later in the interview, Andrea stated that, "You know what? I think young women rush too soon to get into these positions." When asked if she felt that young men rush into the positions too soon, Andrea replied by stating:

> . . .when you said "what about men" that made me step back a bit. I always look at the young women I don't look at the young men . . . probably because I know the women are basically the caregivers of their family and you are always going to have to deal with that. And you know what? I think young women that go into educational leadership too soon miss out on a lot with their young kids, with their own children. And they're constantly feeling guilt. So why put yourself in the position where you have guilt?

Here, Andrea draws on a particular version of traditional gender ideology, which positions women as the 'natural' and assumed 'primary caregiver' of children. Unfortunately, there is no sense that Andrea complicates understandings of gender and gender relations by considering it a possibility that men can also be primary caregivers in their families. Finally, it is also interesting to note how Andrea also reflects a key feature of traditional gender ideology, which regulates women internally in ways that often makes them feel guilty when they do not live up to the traditional gender scripts.

The challenge of balancing work and family obligations was evident in Lucy's recollection of her earlier years in an administrative position:

. . . balance is very hard to achieve okay. We as females, and you're not there

yet in having a family and that kind of stuff, but you are there as far as being

married. It's not unusual to, you know, go home and you're making your

dinner and you're thinking about all the things that you know . . . the day is

going back over in your head and how you're going to react to a situation.

Sometimes you're absent. Your kids will be sitting there talking to you and

you're absent from the conversation because you're so preoccupied with

what's going on. I work really, really hard on trying to achieve balance in my

life. And I don't always do a great job of it.

Now in the later years of her career, Lucy continued to reflect on the personal and

professional benefits of her career and how the challenges of balancing work and

family have slightly decreased:

I'm still there for my kids, but you know what, in a very different way now,

because this is very demanding. I also think the shelf-life in this job is (pause)

. . . I think people have to be careful not to get into this too early, because I

think the burnout factor is huge.

Andrea had a similar opinion regarding the demands of the position and questions at

one point, the motives for young females to enter the position at a younger age, "I'm

going to be honest. I don't understand why young *women*, not men, who are raising

families even consider administration in that stage in their lives!" When asked why

she felt that was the case, Andrea expressed her perception of the demands of the

position by providing this rationale:

Because administration is very . . . I don't want to say it sucks the life out of

you, but it can be very draining if you really want to give it your all. I don't

know how . . . I could never balance the two and feel like I did a good job at

both, which is why I waited. Even when my daughter was young, I taught

half-time because I wanted . . . It's either all or nothing. And I don't know

how you'd balance that. And especially as a young administrator, I don't

know how they do that. I really don't.

As previously discussed, unlike men, women's decision to become an administrator is

often influenced by their plans for raising a family (Powell & Graves, 2003).

Moreover, reflected in this statement is the idea that women differ in terms of how

they manage the work and family interface and the complexities that involve a wide

array of choices, as well as constraints. As Andrea highlights, issues of balance, time,

connectedness with children and a spouse's achievement, and individuality infiltrate

women's lives, in different ways than men's.

Within this study, both groups of women experienced very unique and

different experiences regarding the work and family interface. For example, in

comparison to the other women in this study, Diane and Tiffany, tell a slightly

different story of their work and family experiences. Diane, a current administrator

who started her career as an educational administrator in her early 30s, recalls her

experience of being pregnant with her first child, her choices regarding work and

family, and the overwhelming support for family from her school board director at the

time:

I was actually 8 ½ months pregnant when they gave me the position. I had to

bring to their attention that I was pregnant and would not be assuming that

position when they gave it me because I was on a full year [maternity] leave.

In all honesty, I have to admire the director that hired me because he said to

me . . . "you're never going to have this opportunity again" he says, "what

were your plans?" and I said, "I planned to take an entire year" and he said

"you take that entire year, because you'll never have that experience again." I

have three children and with every child, work has not factored into any of

that. When I was hired, I was actually, like I said, as a vice-principal; I was as

I said 8 ½ months pregnant. I did not start the job until a year later, when I

came back.

Diane's experience with balancing work and family highlights the need for supportive

workplace policies and leaders who are concerned with equity. For example, when

asked why she felt as though her experiences have been positive, Diane responds by

suggesting that her efforts to create a workable and equitable balance was only

possible through an effective broader support system. Within her reflection is also the

acknowledgement that priorities should remain equal for both males and females:

I think we put it upon ourselves more, that we have to be everything to

everyone, and that's not realistic. You just do the best you can in every aspect

of it. Obviously your priority first, should be your family. But again, that's not

just for a female, that's for everyone. Our families should come first, your

children, your husband, wives spouses, whatever, they come first and

everything falls around it. I think it speaks more to the relationships that you

have and the support that you have than anything necessarily.

This sense of support and balance present in relation to Diane's work and family is

one of the many benefits for working mothers. Dorio et al. (2008) also highlight that

women who balance the work and family interface also experience many positive

effects such as enrichment, enhancement, and effective performance in work and

family roles. Ford, Heinen, and Langkamer (2007) also note that support from family

and work facilitates a stronger sense of satisfaction in women's lives. Eagly and Carli

(2007) maintain that increasing the number of women who can successfully have

children and uphold their careers ambitions depends on men becoming more equally

involved in the domestic sphere.

Much like Diane, Tiffany, speaks of her own personal and professional

benefits she has experienced while being an educational administrator:

I think I feel a great sense of accomplishment. I never gave up my goals or felt

I sacrificed anything I ever wanted to achieve. Sure it's busy and yes, there are

very stressful days, but I don't think that it is fair to expect there not to be. I

worked very hard for this position and I feel that by reaching my goals, I have

a sense of fulfillment in that. Being a mother and successful career woman has

only intensified that fulfillment.

Tiffany's experiences reflect the research that shows women who successfully

balance work and family through having access to systems of support that are

equitable and fair derive many benefits including: financial stability and success,

happier marriages, and greater life satisfaction (Bennetts, 2007; Ford et al., 2007;

Hirshman, 2006). Her comments also demonstrate the way in which gender relations are worked out in different ways in different family contexts.

For some women, the impact of working a 'double day' was a source of significant frustration and anger. Jennifer, for example, discusses her feelings toward an overall workload that is unfair and inequitable, compared to her husband's:

> You ask any girl in this school that's married and we're the ones that pick up a lot, along with making more than what our husbands make now too. I mean, *that's* an issue for your paper too. That's an issue for me! I make double what my husband makes, so you get into those arguments at home about well, "can you pay for this?" "well no, you make double!" The roles have reversed entirely. So, not only are we making more, we work pretty hard as a teacher and if you're an administrator you work *really* hard! Then you have to do your mom role: cooking, cleaning, homework. So I think now-a-days, we have that much more to do than we used to.

While Jennifer articulates a sense of unfairness specifically about the way the division of labour is highly gendered in her home, she also directs our attention to a new trend: the increase in the number of female primary breadwinners within families (Statistics Canada, 2011). In the past, one of the ways men were able to excuse themselves from contributing an equal share of labour at home was through appealing to the notion that they are responsible for being the primary breadwinners (Connell, 1995). As Jennifer's comment highlights, no longer able to appeal to the patriarchal logic of the primary breadwinner discourse, some men still seem reluctant to divest themselves of male privilege creating an additional source of frustration for women.

Finally, the intersection of work and family created other kinds of concerns for some women that revealed the logic of working within a male power structure. When searching for a teaching position, for example, some women expressed concern that they would be discriminated against if they were thought to be considering having a family. Anne recalls, for example, the pressure she felt to hide that she was pregnant when applying for her first teaching position, ". . . when I got hired by the board and when I went for my interview, I was expecting and I was a little worried about that." Although human rights laws across Canada (in Ontario, the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, or the *Code)* prohibit employers from discriminating against individuals in hiring, firing, or manipulating the terms and conditions of employment because of personal characteristics, including pregnancy (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2012; Commission for Labour Cooperation, 2012), the fear of being discriminated was present in some of the women's reflections. The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding* (2008) contains the Ontario Human Rights Commission's interpretation of the provisions of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* relating to pregnancy and breastfeeding. Anne was concerned her pregnancy may have prevented her from being successful in her job interview: "Um. . . I just felt that if they knew I was expecting, maybe they wouldn't want to hire me? I just thought that they'd hire somebody else. So I actually tried to hide that you know by what I wore." When women make the decision to become mothers and exercise the right to take a maternity leave, this can insinuate that they are less committed to their position than men and are more willing to remove themselves from their career path (Kellerman &

Rhode, 2007). The fear of being perceived as not as committed to the role of an educator as a man resulted in Sarah feeling it was necessary to hide her pregnancy to avoid being overlooked for a position. Finally, the sense of worry highlighted above is unique to women as it is often assumed that women will be the primary caregivers (Mason & Goulden, 2002). As such, this particular concern needs to be understood in relation to schools as structural sites for the exercise of male privilege and power.

Clearly, the complex intersection of work and family created a number of challenges to the women in this study including navigating the 'double day.' In addition to the challenges of the work and family intersection, research (e.g., Davies, 2004; Paludi, 2008; Pichler et al., 2008) suggests that access to resources is another inhibiting factor to women's acceleration into top-tier educational leadership positions. It is this factor that I turn to now.

Educational Leadership and Females' Access to Resources

That school administration has been a man's world is well documented (Blackmore, 1987; 2006). One way that educational administration remains largely a "man's world," is through the sustaining and maintaining of "the old boys' network." The phrase "old boys' network" is commonly used to describe a system that ensures male privilege and power at the expense of women. Through this type of informal gender-based network, men secure economic, social, and political advantage, reflecting the way education systems are also male power structures. The lack of connection to the informal power system has been identified as a contributing barrier to women who pursue educational leadership (Paludi, 2008; Searby &Tripses, 2006). As Paludi (2008) notes, the maintaining and functioning of an old boys' network

limits women's access to resources, career advice, and mentoring.

Some participants discussed how the 'old boys' network' secures male privilege for male educators. Tracey, for example, describes how networking experiences within the formal mentoring program allows men greater access to the informal power networks:

> Well, it depends how they're involved with their school. Because if you're a [male] coach and you're involved in athletics, you're going to find all those people and I think to a certain extent there is an old boys' club and you just. . . it's kind of like high school. All the jocks hang out together and they get more opportunities to network that way.

Tracey's comment gestures toward the way schools are structured along relations of power that reward particular kinds of males. Within the current gender regime found in and out of schools, men (and high school boys) who demonstrate athletic prowess on the basketball court, football field, or ice rink accumulate enormous amounts of social and cultural capital (Messner, 1997). By being a 'jock' or connected to 'jock' culture, men (and boys) are able to trade on their status in ways that secures for them privilege and power. Situated in the politics of gender, women and men (and boys) who are not 'jocks' often times find themselves on the lower rungs of the gender hierarchy.

Access to resources which includes formal and informal mentoring and networking, are key factors in professional development, and are also contributing factors to those who succeed in leadership positions (e.g., Davies, 2004; Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2011; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Paludi, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

According to Gardiner et al. (2000), as women have entered into educational leadership, they have experienced limited access to productive mentoring relationships, further limiting their access to top-tier educational leadership positions. This lack of mentoring results in fewer females in educational administration and therefore, limits the number of female role models for aspiring female educational administrators, especially non-white female educational administrators (Gardiner et al., 2000). This finding raises many concerns for female educational administrators in particular, since it has been noted that the most effective mentoring relationships typically arise naturally among individuals who share important similarities such as sex, race, ethnicity, background, and interests (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

In addition to limited access to productive mentoring relationships, many women have also expressed the desire for more mentoring experiences. For example, in an analysis of participant's journal entries on the topic of mentorship, Searby and Tripses (2006) found that female participants demonstrated a yearning for a mentoring relationship as well as the need for support and encouragement from a mentor. Within this study, aspiring female educational administrators noted their experiences were characterized by insufficient opportunities for networking.

The topic of mentoring and networking for current and aspiring female educational administrators has been divided into two sections, due to the differences in years of experience, specific training provided for the two roles as educator and administrator, and different opportunities to access a variety of resources. Their collective experiences will first be explored, with a focus on how gender influences access to resources, and then will be separated to focus on the specific role and

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gender relations. In comparison to the aspiring female educational administrators, current administrators expressed mixed feelings about the discussions of mentorship (i.e., networking and mentoring opportunities). More specifically, many of the current female educational administrators expressed their satisfaction with the informal and formal networks they have developed and maintained; yet at times, they also mentioned the existence of an "old boys' network" that weaved and bound together the senior leaders at the school board level. Females in this study touched upon the privilege and power attributed to one's membership in the "old boys' club." Supporting this argument is Lucy's statement that there are women, who are "waiting" to be a director and to be given that opportunity. Making reference to the senior positions in her school board, Lucy describes them as dominated by males and situated within the context of an "old boys' club", Lucy states:

> . . . I still think that the jobs, the key, top jobs in the board . . . even though I
> have no interest in aspiring to it, and I wrote that one my survey, I think that
> those directors of education are still male-dominated. I think there's a lot of
> women who would aspire to be a director and who are waiting to have that
> opportunity. I don't think that females are given that opportunity as much as
> men are.

Although employees are legally protected against discrimination based on their gender, Lucy's statement brings attention to the hidden preference for male directors, especially in the highest position on the educational leadership hierarchy. This next section will explore in more detail, the mentoring and networking experiences of current female educational administrators.

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Mentoring: Current and Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

According to Gardiner et al. (2000), as more women have entered educational leadership, they have experienced limited access to productive mentoring relationships. While exploring the mentoring of current female educational administrators, the women in this study expressed an appreciation of and satisfaction with the mentoring opportunities and mentors available to them by their school board. In comparison to aspiring educational administrators, the current female educational administrators seemed to have a wider variety of mentors to choose from. Given their years of employment with the school board or the past and current positions (e.g., a vice-principal working in conjunction with a principal), this is easy to understand. Moreover, these connections facilitate easier access to mentoring and networking opportunities via email and phone, and the desire to continue to seek out their own informal mentoring and networking opportunities when they felt it was necessary. Gender played a role in Lucy's networking when she specifically chose a male due to her already developed "female" network. Her choice to select a male for her formal mentor and network source was done so that she could develop herself professionally:

> . . . when they felt that I had enough female contacts that I could tap into, my
> female mentors who were my informal mentors and I feel that women had um
> . . . you know what along the way, I had had that network, and I continued to
> have that network. So, when I was choosing a formal mentor, I did choose a
> male, but it was for a very different reason. It wasn't because, you know what,
> we were going to share what it was like to have a family and then try to

balance family and then marriage and responsibility. It was very much as far

as developing my own self, curriculum wise.

Also highlighting how gender influences females' networks is Tiffany, who noted

who she chooses to turn to when seeking 'quick and emotionally detached' advice: "I

have a few male colleagues who are in the same position as me and when I want that

objective advice, I will call them. I'm not sure if it's a male thing, but it works for

me." What is interesting in Tiffany's comment is that she draws from the patriarchal

gender binary, whereby she conflates notions of 'objectivity' (read: logical) with

being male, while implying an assumed relationship between subjectivity (read:

emotional) and being female. Although feminist research long ago (see, for example,

Smith, 1987, pp. 70-72) repudiated this gender binary, it, unfortunately, still informs

the thinking for some educational leaders.

Traditional understandings of gender, which draw from out-dated gender

binaries, also shaped participants' relationships when they sought advice. Rachel, for

example, discussed the assumed 'differences' between male and female "teachers in

charge" in her school:

. . . if you need something done and you needed it done, and you needed it

taken care of, I'd go to him. Cause it was done, deal, finished, Tout [referring

to the male teacher in charge] . . . I'd go to the other teacher in charge [name

omitted] who is a female, same amount of experience, same amount of time,

same amount of qualifications. She gives me the perspective of "Did you think

about this? Did you try that? Did you look here? Did you go with this?" and

it's the same if I need something easy, short, sweet, to the point, I go to [name

omitted]. Take care of it . . . I don't care, tell us the fact, get me an answer. If

I need the nurturing aspect where I need to go "what do you think about

this?"; "should I call Children's Aid?"; "should we do this instead?"; "how

can we help this family?";"what do you think we can do?"; or "how can I get

this kid to be better at this?"; "Can you give me an idea?" I go to her.

Rachel's response again gestures toward the way some female administrators operate

from a simplistic gender binary, which positions women and men as essentially

different: women "take care" and men "take charge."

Rachel elaborates further:

Male was you went in, you did your job, no foo foo, no chit chatting, no

nothing. Tell me what you need to know and get out. Done. It was black and

white. But, you always knew that they had your back, you said what it is, and

they knew to take care of it, be finished.

Unfortunately, the reproduction of gender in this way, not only denigrates female

leaders by suggesting male superiority in leadership, but also strengthens the broader

social and political patriarchal discourse, which locates women as naturally the

'nurturers' and men as the 'natural' go to leaders of the organizations or educational

institutions.

Moreover, Rachel's comment reflects the way female leaders tend toward a

more consensual version of leadership, whereby they tend to help teachers and others

contribute to solutions via a focus on delegation and encouragement. Research shows

that female leaders will often support consensual decision making, but men tend to

lean toward majority rule and tend to emphasize the product, the goal (Growe and

Montgomery, 1999). Male leaders, as reflected in Rachel's comment, seem to enact a version of leadership, which operates a traditional top-down administrative style. In short, women leaders, as Growe and Montgomery (1999), tend to be "more interested in transforming people's self-interest into organizational goals by encouraging feelings of self-worth, active participation, and sharing of power and information."

Women also expressed preference for male mentors. Referring to the transparency of male mentors and administrators, Andrea describes how gender influenced her preference to work for male administrators:

I would prefer to work for a male administrator. Because you know, with males, it's black and white with a little bit of a grey area. Whereas, females, it's all grey. With females the emotions and the heart comes into play.

Similar to Andrea's reply, Lucy also expressed a preference to work with males, based on her past experiences of being stunted in her position as vice-principal, while working with a female principal. Lucy recalls feeling stunted in her former role as a vice-principal, and compares the leadership styles of her former male and female principals:

My other [former] principal was a female, who would not let me do anything. I was really stunted in that role. In fact, I remember saying very clearly, "I won't be able to do this for the whole year". And what was so frustrating to me in that role was, I was just coming out of that curriculum consulting role, I had that curriculum piece, and when staff would say can we talk about our literacy centres . . . grade one teachers, that was during my career was spent in

grade one. And so you know, I wanted so much to have those conversations,

but my principal wouldn't allow that to happen.

Not only does Lucy touch upon the perceived differences between her male and female mentors, regarding how her male principal allowed her to utilize the skill set she acquired from her previous positions, her female colleague seemed to view her as a threat or a form of competition. Lucy's female administrator demonstrates her resistance to a relational leadership style that is typically expected of female administrators by colleagues and co-workers. She also notes the presence of hostility expressed by her female colleague and resultant stunted development. Freire (2000) refers to this hostility between women and purposeful stunting of development as "horizontal violence." Freire (2000) describes the term 'horizontal violence' as a way of acting out the internalization of negative stereotypes placed upon the oppressed individual by the dominant societal group, in an attempt to regain a sense of power (p.62). Horizontal violence can occur as indirect aggression or as intentional and harmful behaviour.

Some experienced female leaders also talked about their experiences with "silencing" (Brunner, 2000). "Silencing" of women by men is typically a reality in the lives of female educational administrators. In some cases, some women will 'self-silence' for the purposes of self-preservation. Patricia, for example, felt as though she had experienced this with a former male administrator when she was in her early years as vice-principal. Here is Patricia: "I just got the sense that at times, he was apprehensive about my decision-making capabilities and took charge most of the time. It could've been my experience, but he was more old school and didn't like to

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be challenged." Patricia's comment needs to be understood in relation to the way acceptable leadership has been constructed as "masculine". The male principal's adoption and performance of a particular version of gendered male leadership is demonstrated in the way he "takes charge" and does not "like to be challenged", key features of a traditional version of masculinity. For female leaders, working with men who adopt an "old school" masculinity, may result in not being taken seriously as leaders, as they are viewed as a woman first, leaders second (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Networking: Current Female Educational Administrators

According to Kadushin (2004) a network is a formation of relationships that can be evaluated at the individual level, the organizational level, or at a larger level such as national or global. These networks may contain individuals who are considered to be acquaintances who are only peripherally connected to the set of relationships, or those who play a significant role in relationship building (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Further, "networks may involve many intersections of mutual support and cross-membership, fostering an interdependence that can provide a basis for concerted action" (Diani, 1992; cited from Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 48).

Current female educational administrators expressed a greater satisfaction with the level of networking than aspiring administrators in terms of their formal and informal mentoring opportunities. Mentoring opportunities for current administrators seemed to facilitate these networks as indicated by Andrea, who is currently enrolled in her school board's mentoring program ". . .the mentoring helps you create a network of other [people] in the same situations as you are which is really nice." Many of the current administrators also emphasized the importance of establishing a

network of support for oneself *prior* to pursuing a leadership position, for the sake of developing a positive reputation. Developing a positive reputation was something some women seemed to rely on to view as a form of acceptance in their respective school board and a validation of their success.

Discussions of having a positive reputation via networking were recognized as a contributing factor to their success and ease of obtaining their current position. This was evident when Andrea was asked if she was successful in her first attempt to becoming an educational administrator:

> Immediately. I put in my application in May, I got my interview in June and I got a position in October. So it happened very, very quickly. But I had already developed a reputation and you know what? That is *huge*! ... You have to develop that reputation because a lot goes on your reputation and I know there was one question in there, if they really looked at the qualifications? I think they look to see that you have them, but I don't think that made them decide whether you would get a position or not or even whether you would get in the pool. Like I know they talk, they ask around, and I know… I had a good reputation as an educator and I had a good reputation in the board system wide, so I had no problems at all.

The way Andrea attributed her success in securing a leadership position, is similar to the ways in which other women in leadership positions tend to be more modest when attributing their success to their skills, ultimately downplaying their success (Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000). This self-depreciation is another

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characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from the internalization of others' opinions (Freire, 2000).

Gender also seemed to influence the "way" women networked and how they utilized their opportunities to network. For example, Tiffany stated that when she and her female colleagues "network" the conversation seems to drift way from talk about careers to talk about their home life:

Well, I do see how men have a certain advantage over women in terms of networking. I feel like when women network and talk, we talk more about our personal life than work. With men, it's all business and politics. For women, it's our kids, what's for dinner, and each other.

Tracey also mentioned the ways in which women in her network tend to discuss topics that are not professional in nature, often failing to optimize the potential for professional discussions:

. . .women (pause) I don't know they tend to be more quiet. I don't. . . we talk, yes. But not about (pause) . . . it's not a natural conversation . . . "so where you headed with your career?" It's more about your home life and the kids and what they're up to. It's not really networking professionally.

The statements made by Tiffany and Tracey demonstrates to a degree the way in which topics of conversation within networks are gendered. Situated in a capitalist society, men's gender identity historically has centred on work (Connell, 1995). An ideal worker within the paid labour force-- understood to be male--was someone who put work before family, who could work long hours, and who didn't take much time off for personal matters. As such, it is easy to see how male leaders working day-to-

day tend to create and perform an 'acceptable' version of masculinity for public consumption, choose topics for their network-conversations that reflect traditional male spheres such as work and politics. Not so with many women; because many women, including those in this study, are still primarily responsible for child care, family care, and home care responsibilities, it is not surprising that the conversation between and among women take a turn to the domestic sphere.

Networking: Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

Within this study, aspiring administrators often cited their lack of networking opportunities within their school board's leadership mentoring program. Many women in this study saw the program as an opportunity to build upon their existing network, but soon realized it was far more challenging due to various circumstances. When asked if the mentoring program provided by her board provides sufficient opportunities for networking, Jennifer replied:

> No. I think it's that the leadership course is really just a (brief pause). I had heard the word *networking* was a key word in it. I have yet to hear it. I haven't heard networking yet . . .

Tracey also felt the need for more opportunities, "Personally, I'd like to have more opportunities to mentor, to shadow, to talk with people." Interestingly, as Tracey continued to discuss the networking experiences within the program, she attributed the ability and ease of networking for men to the presence of an "old boys' club" in the program as well as a mention of gender differences in networking:

. . . women (pause) I don't know they tend to be more quiet. I don't . . . we

talk, yes. But not about . . . it's not a natural conversation . . . "so where you

headed with your career?" It's more about your home life and the kids and

what they're up to. It's not really networking professionally.

Leading back to her discussion of work and family, Tracey mentions how family

responsibilities complicate her ability to engage in extracurricular coaching, thereby

limiting her access to male-dominated groups that provide and secure power and

privilege. Also noticing a gendered divide in regard to networking, Sarah commented

on the presence of an "old boys' club" in board-level leadership positions:

Well, the top of our board is a very (pause) ya know, a well connected group

of men who taught together and moved through the system together and now

they're superintendents together. They're all together and the women, who

have come along with them, are not enhancing their decision capabilities or

capacities in anyway. They're simply there um. . . just saying "yes, I'll do

whatever it is" [referring to board directives] and so this is what they're telling

us.

Also inherent in Sarah's response are indications of organizational male power and

the presence of an organizational networking structure discussed by Grogan and

Shakeshaft (2011). Access to the "old boys' club" is an additional source of social

capital, which is a catalyst for organizational power (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

For women who do not have access to this club, they in turn experience a less power

in an organization, a power that can yield tremendous amounts of influence in the

decision making process. In addition to yearning for more networking opportunities, aspiring female educational administrators also voiced their suggestions for ways to improve the mentoring program implemented by their respective school board (see Appendix C). The participants' experiences, suggestions, and observations are noted in the following section.

Mentoring: Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

The importance of formal and informal mentoring of current and aspiring leaders has been identified as a highly contributing factor to the success of employees' careers (e.g., Pauldi, 2008; Peters, 2010; Ryan & Haslam, 2007; Wallen & Crippen, 2008). It is also viewed as key in professional development and promotion (Mendez-Morse, 2004). Mentoring can also include both formal and informal mentoring strategies. Formal mentoring typically includes the establishment of goals, specific timelines and guidelines for interaction, and a pairing of a protégé and an experienced individual that is active in the protégé's training position (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; OCT, 2010; Peters, 2010; Scandura & Williams, 2001). Informal mentoring relationships are more casual in nature and develop independently of an organization (Scandura & Williams, 2001). In this study, aspiring female educational administrators referred to both types of networking relationships and reflected on their experiences with both. While all women were aware of formal mentoring opportunities within their school board, a common concern was the insufficient amount given to participate in job-shadowing experiences.

Aspiring female educational administrators were asked questions that pertained to (a) knowledge of formal mentoring opportunities; (b) their experiences

with formal and/or informal mentoring opportunities; and (c) their satisfaction with the formal and/or informal mentoring opportunities. All participants were knowledgeable about formal mentoring opportunities within their school board, as they had all either completed or were completing the formal mentoring leadership program geared towards aspiring administrators. When asked about their formal and informal mentoring opportunities, all aspiring female educational administrators expressed a high-level of satisfaction of their shadowing experience and relationship between them and their mentor. All females in this study selected a fellow female as their mentor. Mentors included females that were active vice-principals, principals, and school board consultants. Interestingly, school board consultants were a popular job shadow selection and many women regarded the consultant position as a "stepping stone" to leadership.

Each of the aspiring educational administrators who participated in this study had positive shadowing experiences and regarded the opportunity as a highly beneficial and empowering. The participants identified this shadowing experience as a practical and informative experience, but insufficient in terms of its duration. While the mentoring program serves to provide knowledge regarding the position and its responsibilities, the responses from the participants indicated that this goal of the program did not fulfill their expectations or needs. The program was reduced from a 3-year program to a 2-year program, which includes the single half-day shadowing experience. Tracey expressed her enjoyment of her shadowing opportunity and yearned for it to occur on more than one occasion and for a longer period of time, "…personally, I'd like to have more opportunities to mentor, to shadow, to talk with

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people. That's very nice because it's all arranged for you and that's all part of the course. But I would like more." Anne also expressed her desire for more shadowing opportunities to get an accurate impression of what a leadership role consists of, "Okay, I think that the main thing that came up in our leadership course when we all shared, was that we were only able to do it for a half a day and it was not enough time to get a true picture." When asked about the level of preparation the mentoring program provides, Sarah commented, "okay, so you know. . . very little in terms of ok. . . we have this leadership course and it actually used to be 3 years and it's now 2 years." Given the beneficial outcomes of a strong mentoring program, consideration of expanding the frequency of shadowing experiences could be highly beneficial for women, as many described it as "empowering". Although all women described this experience as positive and empowering, recent studies and research have shown (1970; 2000; Jones & Palmer, 2011; Litwin, 2006) that another aspect influenced by gender, is the competitiveness and hostility between female colleges, especially when the relationship is hierarchical in nature.

Female Work Relationships and Educational Leadership

Relationships between female colleagues in the workplace complicated the relationship between gender and leadership. This is not surprising, as the existing literature (Freire, 2000; Jones & Palmer, 2011; Litwin, 2006) on relationships between women in the workplace have established the conflicts that arise between and among women working and competing within the same context. Women's identity as an oppressed member of society oftentimes leads to the hostility and self-oppression inherent in women's workplace relationships.

Identification as a minority and traditionally oppressed member of society may lead women to develop covert actions to create an advantage over their competition (Jones & Palmer, 2011). Besides the most commonly cited theories of why women struggle to reach senior leadership positions, it is also thought by some researchers that women are becoming their own barrier, due to how they treat one another in the workplace (Jones & Palmer, 2011). Although not discussing women and leadership directly, Freire's (2000) work is helpful here in that he defines this kind of sabotaging behaviour as "horizontal violence" (p.62). Commonly cited behaviours that reflect this horizontal violence between women in leadership positions and between colleagues include: (1) competition between female co-workers; (2) an inability of to view one another as team members, suspicions as to how fellow female colleagues earned positions of power (insinuating inappropriate relationships with supervisors); (3) reluctance to speak out about discriminatory practices; (4) generational conflicts with younger female leaders; (5) unclear and unspoken friendship expectations between women; (6) taboos against discussing the boundary confusion of women's friendship in the workplace; and (7) the illusion of powerlessness women experience as a result of internalize negative gender stereotypes (Jones & Palmer, 2011; Litwin, 2006).

When asked to describe their past and present mentoring relationships, relationships with colleagues, and the relationships that were formed during mentoring programs offered by their respective school board, both current and aspiring female educational administrators described the many examples of horizontal violence in the workplace. The commonly discussed and experienced sabotaging

behaviours that occurred for the participants in this study included: (1) competition between female co-workers and an inability to view one another as team members; (2) generational conflicts with younger female leaders; (3) unclear and unspoken friendship expectations between women; and (4) taboos against discussing the boundary confusion of women's friendship in the workplace.

Competition Between Female Coworkers. When asked to describe the mentoring program that the aspiring female educational administrators were currently a part of, many women often referred to the complicated and sometimes negative behaviour of others within their learning group or collective program group. For example, discussion of the program often reverted to a discussion about the competitive nature of women in the program. The reality that current administrators were in an administrative position and aspiring administrators were all competing for these limited positions seemed to influence the level of competiveness. Contradicting the popular notion the men (and boys) are more naturally competitive than women (and girls), when discussing competiveness, males were often seen as the "quieter" gender, while women seemed to compete for attention and recognition:

> If anything the males tend to be quieter, where the girls are fighting more for
> the "pay attention to me" and I will be quiet. I don't, I don't bow down to that,
> I shadowed in December a principal and I expressed my concerns with that
> because if that's how you become a leader…by "look at me, look at me" I
> won't end up becoming a leader because I can't do the horse and pony show.
> Ya…it's not me.

Jennifer's experiences coincide with the findings from Jones and Palmer (2011) in that women will often view fellow colleagues as a threat rather than a colleague. Andrea also expressed being perceived as a threat and being minimized in her role as she recalled the difference she experienced between her male and female administrators:

> I have seen working with principals; some females . . . I felt, resented me coming in because I had that curriculum piece that they didn't have. So I have seen that being minimized by a female principal. Whereas a male principal I found they embraced it a little bit more.

Lucy also recalled a comparable experience in her position as vice-principal, where she felt as though her female principal at the time saw her as a threat, rather than a valuable resource for her staff:

> My other principal was a female, who would not let me do anything. I was really stunted in that role. In fact, I remember saying very clearly, "I won't be able to do this for the whole year." And what was so frustrating to me in that role was, I was just coming out of that curriculum consulting role, I had that curriculum piece … I wanted so much to have those conversations, but my principal wouldn't allow that to happen and that to me was like I can't work within, if we're going to be as females, threatened by each other.

It is easy to see how viewing fellow female co-workers as a threat may serve patriarchal interests. In other words, one way to ensure oppressed groups remain oppressed is through the method of divide and conquer, as Freire's (2000) has shown. When women see other women as a threat, they are less likely to organize collectively

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and work together to achieve economic, social and political success. This strategy ensures that those in power-- remain in power.

Many women describe different expectations for behaviours from female and male bosses, expecting more relational behaviour from female bosses (Litwin, 2006). Interestingly, Rachel describes an experience where she felt frustrated and ignored by a female colleague, who did not ignore males:

> It was just her own personal thing . . . her insecurity. It was just her as a person. She just knew how to hang out with the guys. She liked to hang out with them, say hi to them, you know whatever. And I'm like "you just walked right by, you didn't even say hi are you kidding me right now. You wonder why we're pissed? We're pissed because you don't say hi to us, like what are you doing?

Rachel's response to her treatment reflects the way some women can be let down by other women, who may be adhering more closely to the norms of the gendered workplace. Rachel goes on to discuss how some female leaders may not be supportive in ways that encourage and help aspiring leaders:

> And it was one of those (pause) where she just kind of migrated towards them [male staff] and it's when I was like "Okay, what's the deal" and she's like, "There seems to be some friction between us" and I said, "Yeah, there is. Do you want to hear what I want to tell you? You're my administrator" or, I said, "Do you want me to tell you what you want to hear?

Other females in this study also explained the difficulties they had experienced with befriending their female administrators and their shift in perspectives now that they

are the administrators. Andrea noted this boundary confusion and the complications

that arose as a result:

> You know, I've only befriended a principal [female] once, and never again.
> Big, big mistake, because of that reason exactly. You know, you're out there,
> you're drinking with them [speaking of her former female administrator], you
> see that side of them . . . and you know what? I found it really difficult to
> come back into the building and to be the teacher and you're the
> administrator.

Women have been fighting for equality and parity within an environment that of

limited positions for females. Situated in a male power structure, the limited

availability of positions results in a kind of tokenism, which further exacerbates the

challenges women already face. Viewing fellow colleagues as competitors may lead

to negative behaviours such as sabotaging career goals, which may in turn sustain,

maintain and reproduce male power.

Tensions between and among women, took on various forms. For example, in

this study one of the female participants explained how a select group of female

educational administrators are assimilating to the resultant name-calling of 'assertive'

female leaders. One of the female participants revealed that a select group of female

educational administrators within her school board proudly referred to themselves as

the "blonde bitches." This was revealed as she expressed her concern that they may

be referring to themselves as such, in order to increase their confidence as educational

administrators or to assert their control:

. . . um okay I'll just say very frankly, in our board, there is a group of women

principals who call themselves the blonde bitches. . . *proudly*! And they feel

that in order to be an effective leader, that's how they have to lead, is by

being, you know aggressive, by being it's my way or the highway, tough, and

I don't subscribe to that . . . they're making a joke that um . . . their leadership

style is uncaring, I guess . . . you know I don't know? I just think it's sad that

you know I wouldn't want to be known for that as a leader.

Working within a masculine culture, where male norms such as 'assertiveness' and

being 'tough' are conflated with effective leadership, it is not surprising that women

may adopt these attributes in order to succeed. It is only within the logic of patriarchy

that when some women display typical male attributes, thereby transgressing and

troubling gender boundaries (Butler, 1990), that the derogatory term 'bitch' is used,

whether by themselves or by others. But, it was not just the gender politics between

and among women that shaped the participant's experiences in problematic ways.

Gender Politics

Participants in this study also noted that the gender politics between

themselves as female leaders and older male students was also a cause for concern.

Anne expressed this concern as she stated:

Okay, now the only thing that comes to mind might be the perception that

students might have towards you. Especially male students, not so much in the

younger grades, but in the older grades, that they might not take you as

seriously because I find not all boys out there have respect for their mothers.

Here, Anne draws our attention to the way in which some boys internalize patriarchal attitudes toward women in general, female educators in particular. Situated in a culture that repeatedly objectifies women, repeatedly conveys the message that women are less than men, it is not surprising to find that the participants in this study felt a lack of respect toward them from the boys (Connell, 1995; Coulter & Greig, 2008; Martino, 2004; Skelton, 2010).

Tracey also expressed a similar concern about what parents and colleagues may feel towards a female educational administrator:

> I think that there are still people out there and, you know, parents, who have the stereotype and when they come in, "ugh it's just a woman, I can deal with this" compared to a man. A parent as a male versus a woman. And even perhaps some of your colleagues, you're going to have to work with some of your teachers. Some of them might have the same stereotype and absolutely. People make judgments based on your appearance, based on your gender, based on your stature.

Educational administrators, as Tracey demonstrates, communicated their first-hand experiences with the larger issues of gender politics, whereby they felt restricted by traditional gender stereotypes. For Tracey and others, they were viewed as woman first, leaders second.

Lucy discussed her perception of the relationship between cultural differences and gender in terms of how a female's leadership role is respected. When asked if she felt that her identity as a woman ever conflicted with her identity as an educational administrator, Lucy responded by stating the following:

… only culturally sometimes, with different groups. Okay, sometimes we have different um….groups and I'm thinking more of the men like the eastern Middle Eastern men, so some of your men that come from Iraq and the Chaldean and sometimes they have a hard time making eye contact with a woman, and they also have a hard time when you are dealing with anything that has to do with discipline, especially their male sons. That a woman would be disciplining their sons, and they will come in and that can be intimidating and I don't think they mean to be disrespectful, it's just that they never really had a woman in a leadership role and so that is dealt with very differently. I can see that when my vice-principal, who is a male, when he deals with the same situation with that same clientele, the manner with which he is met is very different than what I've met and my female vice-principal has met. But I think that is more cultural and it's basically what that particular group is the value they put on women and you know what just the different roles that females and males have.

When asked the same question, Andrea also expressed similar views regarding the way gender shapes the ways male parents perceive her effectiveness and how she feels the added pressure to stand her ground, "You know what, I want to say yes, but I do know when it's a male parent coming in, you really have to prove yourself. You really have to stand your ground." She then continued to reflect on a time when a male parent expressed his views regarding her participation in the workforce: "I know even when I was in the classroom, I had a one father come to me and say, 'you don't belong in the school, you belong at home!' And it was a cultural difference." These

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gendered experiences the administrators shared, highlight the complexity, challenges and issues some women leaders face due to changing immigration patterns.

The kind of gender politics female leaders had to navigate included facing issues of "gender blindness." Gender blindness includes the lack of acknowledgement or presence of gender's influence in the ongoing discrimination toward women. The problem with a gender blind approach is that it functions as an indirect act of discrimination, by overlooking the privileges that come with being a male in today's society (Connell, 1995; Sadker, Sadker, & Zittleman, 2009). The concept of gender blindness was also evident in the responses during the semi-structured interview, when asked questions pertaining to: (a) the perceived challenges to being an educational administrator; (b) whether or not they ever felt as though their gender identity, as a female, conflicts with their identity as a future or an aspiring educational administrator; and (c) the presence of females in board level leadership positions. Responses such as "to be completely honest, I don't know enough [challenges to being a female educational administrator] about it to give you an opinion because I truly don't know anything" and "in my experience, I'd have to say it [gender] doesn't really matter", "we have three female superintendents and one male superintendent. So you know, if I look at our board, I don't think there's any gender bias or preference . . . But I just think maybe that's because no females have ever applied?" and finally, "I don't like the term female. I like to just say as an educator or administrator" are all examples of how the influence of gender often goes unnoticed or unacknowledged.

Interestingly, some women did, in fact, acknowledge the preferential treatment of males in regard to senior leadership positions, but later back-tracked from their initial response. This was the case in Lucy's response, as she preceded her response with the statement that there is a balance of males and females in board level leadership positions (i.e., superintendents), but then followed it with a contradictory statement:

> Well, I think superintendent that there's an equal balance of male and female, but I still think that the jobs, the key, top jobs in the board . . . even though I have no interest in aspiring to it, and I wrote that one my survey, I think that those directors of education are still male-dominated. I think there's a lot of women who would aspire to be a director and who are waiting to have that opportunity. I don't think that females are given that opportunity as much as men are. I don't think they are considered for that role as much as men are.

Lucy then acknowledged the gendered nature of these positions by stating, ". . . but they sit heavy on the curriculum side. I think you still see male[s] in traditional administrative roles in the business department and HR [Human Resources] and in the director's office." This statement indicates that despite Lucy's first statement, she is attuned to the gendered nature of board-level leadership positions. An awareness of the gendered nature of board-level leadership positions allows women to reflect critically on how certain positions of power (i.e., human resources, finance) are more often given to men and how other positions that coincided with "taking care" (i.e., superintendent of student achievement) are typically given to women.

Patricia also felt as though overcoming the perceived difficulty women have in terms of rising to senior leadership positions:

> I think we all know that males have the upper hand for the highest positions. I think we have learned to just turn the other cheek, because what can we say? Who knows, maybe that will change? I mean I'd like to see more female directors in the future.

Patricia's statement reflects a perceived awareness of gender bias in hiring practices. However her statement also reflects a sense of powerlessness. This powerlessness Patricia demonstrated is consistent with what scholar Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) describes in her earlier work. Kanter (1977) describes this resultant sense of powerlessness that people in subordinated groups experience when they internalize the negative stereotypes of the dominant culture. This behaviour may also perpetuate the vicious cycle of self-sabotaging behaviours and horizontal violence described earlier (Freire, 2000). The inconsistency between opinions of gender equity, demonstrated in her survey and interview responses, as well as the manifestation of powerlessness in Patricia's response, are additional barriers and challenges that need to addressed.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an analysis of the results from data acquired through semi-structured interviews and a survey. Analysis of this data demonstrated that gender certainly influences educational leadership. Its influence was most evident during discussions of the following topics: the intersection of work and family; mentoring opportunities and access to resources; women's work relationships; and

gender politics. The main themes present in the discussions of work and family conflict included: the presence of role conflict between their role as a mother, wife, and current/aspiring administrator; tackling most of the domestic responsibilities; and the presence of a reinforcement of the belief that women "take care" and men "take charge." When discussing mentorship and access to resources, there was a startling difference in levels of satisfaction between current and aspiring female educational administrators. The majority of aspiring educational administrators felt dissatisfied with the level of preparation the program offered and yearned for increased shadowing and mentoring opportunities. Although most aspiring administrators were satisfied with their selected mentor, they desired more opportunities to be mentored by them. Discussions of mentoring also lead to the discussion of women's work relationships, as well as the stifling of professional development opportunities by other females, unclear friendship boundaries, and expectations of a relational leadership style and friendship from female leaders. Finally, many women in this study also expressed their experiences related to gender politics, including gender stereotypes, gender blindness, and the gendered nature of board level leadership positions. Discussions for future research as well as a way forward are offered in the subsequent section of this thesis.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This mixed-methods study used quantitative surveys and qualitative semi-structured individual interviews to examine the women's experiences with leadership. This study explored two populations: women who are currently educational leaders and women who aspire to become educational leaders. The discussion chapter will focus on and address the main question of this study: What is the relationship between gender and educational leadership? The findings of the sub-questions will also be summarized. This chapter will provide a summary of how the research questions were answered through a review of the major findings, suggestions for future research, and provide recommendations for practice and policy.

Review of Major Findings and the Research Questions

Results from the semi-structured interviews and surveys highlight the main experiences and challenges that characterize the relationship between gender and educational leadership. The results also demonstrate the complexities involved when exploring women and educational leadership. For example, while women indicated in their survey that they felt there was an equal representation of females employed in leadership positions at the board level, discussions during the interviews lead to the expression that the same women felt as though the positions were gendered. Also, some women in this study expressed their own personal experiences with gender stereotypes, yet moments after, communicated their own. Many women in this study also expressed stark perceived differences between their experiences and the experiences of males. Gender had the greatest implications for the following themes:

(1) work and family conflict; (2) mentorship; (3) women's work relationships; and (4) gender stereotypes.

In the supplemental Likert-scale survey, participants were asked to provide feedback regarding statements about gender equity, mentorship, work and family, and recruitment and hiring practices. Given that this survey was utilized as a supplementary method of inquiry to the interviews, a broad overview of the results are provided below. Broadly categorized, participants provided the following feedback:

1. Although many of the women felt as though gender did not have a direct influence on the success of educational leaders, many expressed the recognition of a gendered structure to educational leadership. All women indicated that others support their current position and have supported their pursuit of an educational leadership position. Further, when discussing their desire to be an educational administrator or their current position, gender rarely entered the conversation. The area that indicated the greatest concern about gender equity was that most women felt as though there was not an equal representation of male and female educational leaders, on all level of the school board. Those that indicated that they felt gender does not have a direct influence on the success of educational leaders, contradicted this answer by disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that there was an equal representation of male and female educational leaders, on all level of the school board.

2. When asked about their mentoring experiences, every woman either agreed or strongly agreed that they were given an opportunity to work with a mentor.

Interestingly all current educational administrators agreed that there are different needs that must be addressed during the mentoring process, for female educational administrator. Aspiring female educational administrators also shared the same desire to have women's needs addressed during the mentoring process, with the exception of one aspiring educational administrator. Both current and aspiring female educational administrators agreed that they would feel more prepared in their current position, or when they applied for an educational leadership position if they completed a mentoring program (which all were currently completing or had completed).

3. When asked if they plan to postpone/have postponed applying for an educational leadership position, all of the women with the exception of Anne and Andrea indicated that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with that statement. Anne neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and Andrea agreed that she postponed pursuing an educational leadership position for marriage. When asked the same question, but related to postponing educational leadership for family all women, with the exception of Tiffany and Diane, indicated that they agreed with this statement. Tiffany and Diane disagreed with this statement. When asked if they often worry about the effects an educational leadership position will have or has on their personal life, the answers were a combination of both agree and disagree. There was also the acknowledgment that an educational leadership position would impact their personal lives, despite their efforts to avoid this from occurring, which were expanded upon in the interviews.

4. Lastly, and perhaps the most indicative of gender equity in the field of educational leadership, were the perceptions of recruitment and hiring practices by the participants' respective school board. When asked if they were confident that their educational credentials would be or were considered when applying for an educational leadership position, all women, with the exception of one, agreed that they would be. However, some women indicated that they disagreed and in some cases strongly disagreed that their gender will have no influence on the hiring practices for an educational leadership position. This contradiction of replies indicates a sense of gender blindness that was explored in the previous chapter. Finally, when asked if they felt as though women have achieved equal status in both the recruitment and hiring process of educational leadership, all but 3 women indicated they felt this was the case. Again however, many of the same women that agreed with this statement indicated earlier in the gender equity questions that they felt as though there was a gendered structure to educational leadership positions, thereby contradicting this reply.

The main themes present in the discussions of work and family conflict were: the presence of role conflict between their role as a mother, wife, and current/aspiring administrator; tackling most of the domestic responsibilities; and the presence of a reinforcement of the belief that women "take care" and men "take charge." When discussing mentorship and access to resources, there was a startling difference of opinion in terms of satisfaction between the current and aspiring educational administrators. The majority of aspiring educational administrators felt dissatisfied

with the level of preparation the program offers as well as a yearning for increased shadowing and mentoring opportunities. Although most aspiring administrators were satisfied with their selected mentor, they desired more opportunities to be mentored by them. Gender influenced the mentoring process mainly when current administrators were already in their active vice-principal and principal position. This influence occurred when certain women experienced a stifling of their abilities and potential by their female counterparts they worked in conjunction with.

Due to the fact that the mentoring programs for current and aspiring educational administrators provided were offered in a group setting with both male and female colleagues, and were given in partnership with Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines (i.e., for current educational administrators), gender did not seem to influence the mentoring women received while enrolled in these programs. Current educational administrators expressed a higher level of satisfaction with their school board's mentoring program. Both current and aspiring female educational administrators also noted a difference in the level of mentoring offered by male and female colleagues when the candidates pursued their own individual mentor and while receiving mentoring outside of the program. A discussion of mentoring also led to the discussion of women's work relationships, the stifling of professional development opportunities by fellow females, unclear friendship boundaries, the ability to identify and model effective female educational administrators, and generational conflicts between females. Finally, although the women in this study felt as though their identity as a female did not interfere with their decision and aspirations to become an educational administrator, many women did express their

experiences and concerns with gender stereotypes, while in their past and current positions. Aspiring educational administrators in this study also expressed and reflected on the perceptions of others (i.e., colleagues, parents, society) about their role as a female educational administrator. Although some women demonstrated a sense of gender blindness, there was an overall awareness of how gender influenced the structure of board-level leadership positions when this topic was discussed. Although this study yielded interesting findings on women and educational leadership, this study does contain limitations.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is needed in this area of study, as educational environments remain gendered, racialized, class-based contexts. This was most apparent when the implicit findings of this study highlighted the lack of diversity within this particular school board's educational leadership representation. The following recommendations emerge from the findings and the limitations of this study:

1. Future research that incorporates the perspectives of both men and women would be insightful. The inclusion of men in future research on the topic of educational leadership would foster a broader perspective to compare and contrast the experiences of female educational administrators and facilitate a deeper understanding of the relationship between gender and educational leadership and how these are constituted within relations of power.

2. Future research studies on the experiences of current and aspiring female educational administrators would also benefit by gaining insights from women that are marginalized more in society than white women (i.e., racial and ethnic

minority women). Future studies that address other areas of diversity such as culture, race and ethnicity, or sexual orientation would strengthen the potential abilities of research and theory.

3. Exploring the experiences of retired female educational administrators would also be a useful comparison, to explore how gendered experiences are made and unmade within specific historical contexts.

4. Finally, this study could also include women from other school boards across geographical regions in order to include a greater representation of ethnically and racially diverse women, to help gain a much broader and more complex perspective.

Recommendations for Future Practice and Policy

Despite its limitations, this study also makes distinct contributions. First, this study incorporates the voices of females who are aspiring to be an educational administrator. Although a vast majority of the current literature presents the experiences of women while in educational leadership positions, this study also includes the experiences prior to the commencement of an educational leadership position. This study also conveys the experiences candidates encounter while in their respective school board's leadership mentoring program. The experiences expressed by most of the aspiring female educational administrators with the level of preparation they have received can be insightful to system leaders. These insights into mentoring can provide some awareness for future programs to ensure the needs of all aspiring leaders are met and produce the very best school and system leadership, while also addressing issues of gender equity. Based primarily on the Conference

Board of Canada's 2011 Report, *Women in Senior Management: Where are They?*
examples of the ways in which school boards or others can address issues of gender
equity include the following:

- **Ensure Ongoing Measurement.** Implementing gender diversity indicators to
  measure, identify, and monitor current gaps. Doing so will create transparency
  in organizations, identify the level of women in the "pipeline" (i.e., vice-
  principals, principals) eligible for promotion, and help school boards define
  and shape their priorities and programs (McKinsey, 2008)

- **Create an Inclusive Work Environment through Awareness Training.**
  Schools boards can develop and plan workshops that address the macro and
  micro-level policy implications that can educate students, teachers and
  administrators to become aware of their biases and gender role assumptions,
  as these often shape future views and decision-making by stakeholders.
  Keeping gender equity at the forefront by organizing internal and external
  initiatives can sustain and maintain awareness (Olgiati & Shapiro, 2002).

- **Set Up Mentoring and Coaching Programs.** Establishing coaching,
  mentoring, and networking programs that are geared towards women's unique
  needs not only give women opportunities to broaden their professional
  exposure, but can also raise the profile of female leaders in school boards.
  In addition to these strategies offered by the Conference Board of Canada's
  2011 Report, other strategies that may be used to address issues of gender
  equity include:

- **Ensure Sustainable Flexibility.** Flexibility that is capable of harmonizing the

potentially conflicting needs of work and family without exacerbating

segregation or marginalization, may encourage more women to apply to

leadership positions.

- **Conduct Gender-Based Analysis and Research Initiatives.** Conducting

    gender-based analysis and research brings issues of gender equity to the

    forefront and can provide insight on the respective school board's level of

    gender equity.

These strategies can be useful in addressing gender equality and assist school boards

in developing representations that reflects the composition of those that are qualified

to assume leadership positions. In addition to policy implications, this research also

provides other contributions to the field women and educational leadership.

This study also highlights the relations between women and can be used as an

opportunity to reflect critically on their experiences and experiences of others to

promote a positive working environment. Each of these contributions comprises the

greatest contribution of this study, which is giving voice to those who participated. By

giving voice to the women, this study achieved one of the primary goals of feminist

research, which is to "ask new questions that place women's lives at the center of

social inquiry" (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p.3).

Conclusion

Throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis, my

perspectives on women and leadership have undergone a transformation. I have

gained many new insights and resourceful knowledge on the organizational, personal,

and societal experiences and challenges women have experienced while attempting to

become and being and educational administrator. As an educator who is passionate about gender equity and social justice, I still feel as though there are many steps that must be taken to reach the point of equal opportunity. While I certainly acknowledge the positive gains women have made in the realm of educational leadership, this study has uprooted many experiences that were at times, inconsistent with the facts and figures presented in mass media and other statistical sources.

Prior to venturing into the research process on this topic, I often asked myself whether we as women, "were there yet?" in terms of educational leadership. An exploration into the data on females who hold qualifications to be in these positions and the increasing presence of women in elementary school leadership and secondary school leadership (in some cases) lead me to believe that perhaps we are well on our way. While speaking to the women who so graciously gave their time and offered to share their experiences with me, I realized that there are still many obstacles that women must overcome while aspiring to be, or while being, an educational administrator, all influenced in part by gender, among other factors. The findings from this study have urged me to continue exploring the topic of women and educational leadership, and in the process of doing so, I will continue to ask others, and myself "are we there yet?"

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary of Ontario College of Teachers' Principal Qualification

Program

Ontario College of Teachers' members earn principal qualifications by taking the PQP, Parts I and II. The PQP is "designed to educate future principals to lead and manage efficiently in contexts characterized by change and complexity" (OCT, 2011). The PQP is also designed to "support candidates in becoming reflective educational leaders who function effectively in dynamic, diverse contexts characterized by rapidly changing events and circumstances" reflected in the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* (OCT, 2011). Additionally, the PQP "provides a foundation for candidates for assuming the role of principal or vice-principal in Ontario schools" (OCT, 2011).

The PQP consists of two parts and is open to teachers with five years teaching experience, qualifications in three divisions including Intermediate and a master's degree or two specialists or one specialist and half a master's degree. Part I concentrates on an introduction to the program, course work, and the formation of the practicum proposal. Part II includes of an exploration into theoretical and operational aspects of the principalship, with a focus on concepts and issues related to leadership and program planning (OCT, 2011). The content of the PQP is organized into five domains as reflected in the Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals found in *Putting Ontario's Leadership Framework Into Action/Mise en application du cadre de leadership de l'Ontario* and include: Setting Directions, Building Relationships and Developing People, Developing the Organization, Leading the

Instructional Program, and Securing Accountability. In order to successfully obtain

full accreditation in the PQP, candidates must complete a Leadership Practicum

experience before being recommended for Part II of the program (OCT, 2011).

The Leadership Practicum is intended to "provide an opportunity for

candidates

to act as a member of a school administrative team in a leadership role working with

students, staff, parents and the community" (OCT, 2011). Before commencing their

Leadership Practicum, candidates must develop a Leadership Practicum proposal.

Candidates are responsible for seeking their own setting (the practicum must apply to

a school setting) and ensure a practicing qualified principal or vice-principal mentors

them. The duration of the practicum must total a minimum requirement of 60 hours,

20 of which can be observation (OCT, 2011). In this study, the experiences acquired

through both formal and informal mentoring opportunities are explored.

Appendix B: Summary of the Ontario Ministry of Education's Board

Leadership Developmental Strategy for Current Educational Administrators

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, newly appointed principals

and vice-principals receive mentoring support in their first and second years of

practice. Experienced principals and vice-principals also receive support and

resources to prepare them to become effective mentors and continue developing their

own leadership skills. Since 2008, the government has invested $9.7 million to

support mentoring across the province of Ontario. Support will continue in 2011-12

as part of Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) funding (Ontario Ministry

of Education, 2012). To foster strong leadership, the government launched the

Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS). The OLS is "a comprehensive plan of action

aimed at attracting and developing skilled and passionate school and system leaders"

(Ontario Leadership Strategy, 2011, p. 6). The strategy promotes "a collaborative

approach through which schools, districts, education partners, and the ministry work

in partnership to support student achievement and well-being" (Ontario Leadership

Strategy, 2011, p. 6-7). Utilized within this program are resources embedded in the

Ontario Leadership Framework, which identifies five Core Leadership Capabilities.

The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) remains the key foundation of

initiatives being undertaken within the OLS. The OLF includes a leadership

framework of practices and competencies for individuals (i.e., supervisory officers,

principals and vice-principals) and system practices and procedures for districts. The

five Core Leadership Capabilities include: setting goals, aligning resources with

priorities, promoting collaborative learning cultures, using data, and engaging in

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courageous conversations.

In addition to the mentoring opportunities funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, mentoring for newly appointed system leaders (i.e., superintendents and directors) was implemented province-wide in 2009-10 following a field test in 2008-09. System leaders in their first and second year receive mentoring from their director and supervisory officer associations in partnership with school boards. The ministry has currently continued to provide funding to the associations to implement mentoring based on requirements set out in the Mentoring for Newly Appointed System Leaders Guideline (forthcoming) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012). Resources made available to both school and system leaders include: *Supporting Effective School Leadership: A Handbook for Implementing Mentoring for Newly Appointed School Leaders in Ontario*, as a companion to the *School Board Guideline for Implementation of Mentoring for Newly Appointed School Leaders* (2010). This mentoring handbook was written by a development writing team representing the Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO), the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO), and the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), in partnership with the Ministry of Education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012). Other resources made available on the Ministry's website for school and system leaders include a variety of handbooks, tools, templates, conversation starters for mentors and protégés, links to other association websites, and webcasts (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012).

Appendix C: Summary of Participants' Respective School Board Mentoring

Program for Aspiring Educational Administrators

Both the current and aspiring educational administrators in this study were either a part of or had completed the mentoring program initiated by their school board. All but one current female educational administrator (i.e., Andrea) within this study had completed their school board's mentoring program initiated in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Education. All aspiring female educational administrators were either in their first or second year of the leadership program offered by their school board. Although current educational administrators complete a program in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Education's guidelines, the leadership program is not guided or funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. This section will explore the objectives, goals, and components of this particular school board's leadership program.

Aspiring educational administrators interested in pursuing a school leadership position are provided with the option of participating in this particular school board's leadership program. In addition to having an interest in pursuing an educational leadership position, interested educators must complete a leadership course application, obtain a principal recommendation, have 5 years of teaching experience, and pay a fee of $125.00. The goals of this school board's leadership program include: identification and recognition of future leaders in the system, networking, system knowledge of strategic plans, and leadership development. This two-year program involves two distinct phases that include a personal growth phase (year one) and a professional growth phase (year two).

During the personal growth phase, candidates are asked to read a book pertaining to leadership and share information obtained from this book at a subsequent session. The personal growth phase also includes a shadowing component. Candidates are required to shadow an administrator, consultant, or department head for one half day. Candidates are asked to record their experiences and hand their notes into the team leader. Upon completion of the showing component, candidates are asked to share the highlights of their experience and submit a 1-2 page reflection of their shadowing experience.

Upon completion of the personal growth phase requirements, candidates are then required to complete the professional growth phase. During the professional growth phase, candidates are asked to attend a board meeting and submit a one-page reflection of the meeting. Candidates are also required to complete a leadership practicum during the professional growth phase that is intended to accomplish the following objectives: provide an opportunity to directly apply the knowledge and skills developed during the program, develop teamwork skills through a group learning experiences, and link candidates to the board and or community. This final practicum has the following characteristics and requires candidates to: (1) initiate, develop, and implement a program designed to each a large number of staff and students at the board or school level; (2) be time-limited (i.e., completed by the end of the program); (3) facilitate the development of strong leadership skills; (4) provide an opportunity for clarity; and (5) challenge leadership candidates. Upon development of such program, candidates must complete a summary of their program and develop a presentation on the outcomes of their practicum.

University of Windsor

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: **Women & Educational Leadership: Exploring the Experiences of Current and Aspiring Female Educational Administrators**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kimberly Crosby-Hillier, a graduate student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results of this study will contribute to the completion of the researcher's thesis. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please do not hesitate to contact Kimberly Crosby-Hillier (crosby4@uwindsor.ca; 519-981-6924) or Dr. Christopher Greig (cgreig@uwindsor.ca; 519-253-3000 ext. 3819).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between gender and educational leadership. More specifically, the researcher will explore the experiences of three populations of female educators/administrators: (1) female educators, who have expressed a desire to pursue an educational leadership position. Demonstration of their desire to pursue an educational leadership position will be determined by their preparation for applying to a posted position (i.e., additional qualifications, post-graduate education); (2) female educators, who have at one point in their career, attempted to obtain a leadership position, but did not receive the position; (3) female administrators, who have successfully obtained a leadership position (e.g., vice-principal; principal; superintendent). This study is being conducted in order to explore and understand the various experiences females encounter while preparing to secure a leadership position and while maintaining their current leadership position. Doing so will allow the principal investigator, participants, and all members of society to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between gender and leadership as well as the ways in which females of the school board have been given opportunities to succeed in a leadership position.

PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

1. You will participate in a face-to-face individual interview and complete a brief survey. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. The interviewer will ask open-ended questions. The interview will focus on your experiences while attempting to become an educational administrator or your experiences with being a current educational administrator. The interview will be audio taped. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time and can be completed at the time of your interview.

2. Once all of the interviews have been transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcription to review for accuracy.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
While there are no significant physical or psychological/emotional risks to you, it is possible that you may feel uncomfortable discussing your personal experiences as a current/prospective educational administrator with a fellow employee of your school board. Please note that all information during the interview, and all information contained in the survey will be kept confidential. Should you feel any psychological or emotional discomfort during the interview or survey, you may stop the interview or survey.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
By providing an opportunity to discuss your experiences with educational leadership, this study will allow you to critically reflect on the current status of women and educational leadership. By engaging in critical dialogue about your experiences, this research will assist in developing a greater understanding about the social structures that oppress some members of society, while advantaging others. By gathering detailed information about your experiences, this research may also assist other administrators within the school board to continue to develop strategies that ensure your professional needs are being met (e.g., access to resources, mentorship).

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
In appreciation of your participation, a $15 gift card to Scholar's Choice will be given.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Several steps will be taken to ensure your confidentiality. While the interviews will be audio-recorded, first names will only be used during the interviews. The interview tapes will be held under lock and key in the principal investigator's home and will remain there for the duration of the data collection and once the study has been completed. The transcripts from the interviews will remain confidential and will contain a pseudonym in place of your name. Your school board and school to which you are affiliated with will also be kept confidential and will not be mentioned within any part of the researcher's thesis. Only the principal researcher and the faculty thesis advisor will have access to the information contained within the audio-tapes and transcripts. The principal researcher maintains the right to review all audiotapes and

transcripts with the faculty advisor, throughout the duration of the study. All audio taped recordings will be kept under lock and key in the principal investigator's home, should the information be used for subsequent studies.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
It is entirely optional and voluntary to participate in this research study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering and still remain in the study. Should you choose to withdraw yourself from this study, the information you provided regarding your current or prospective administrative position will not be used in the researcher's thesis. All participants will still receive their compensation in appreciation of your time. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS
The results of this study will be made available to all participants. A brief reader-friendly summary of the initial findings will be available at the following website after April, 2012:
Web address: **www.uwindsor.ca/reb**
The researcher will also send via email a brief reader-friendly summary report of the initial findings that details the results of the collection and analysis of data. This report will be made available to you by the end of April, 2012.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA
This data may be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

University
of Windsor

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Women & Educational Leadership: Exploring the Experiences of Current and Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kimberly Crosby-Hillier, a graduate student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results of this study will contribute to the completion of the researcher's thesis. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please do not hesitate to contact Kimberly Crosby-Hillier (crosby4@uwindsor.ca; 519-981-6924) or Dr. Christopher Greig (cgreig@uwindsor.ca; 519-253-3000 ext. 3819).

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PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:
1. You will participate in a face-to-face individual interview and complete a brief survey. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. The interviewer will ask open-ended questions. The interview will focus on your experiences while attempting to become an educational administrator or your experiences with being a current educational administrator. The interview will be audio taped. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time and can be completed at the time of your interview.

2. Once all of the interviews have been transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcription to review for accuracy.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

While there are no significant physical or psychological/emotional risks to you, it is possible that you may feel uncomfortable discussing your personal experiences as an educational administrator with a fellow employee of your school board. Please note that all information during the interview, and all information contained in the survey will be kept confidential. Should you feel any psychological or emotional discomfort during the interview or survey, you may stop the interview or survey.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

By providing an opportunity to discuss your experiences with educational leadership, this study will allow you to critically reflect on the current status of women and educational leadership. By engaging in critical dialogue about your experiences, this research will assist in developing a greater understanding about the social structures that oppress some members of society, while advantaging others. By gathering detailed information about your experiences, this research may also assist other administrators within the school board to continue to develop strategies that ensure your professional needs are being met (e.g., access to resources, mentorship).

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

In appreciation of your participation, a $15 gift card to Scholars Choice will be given.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Several steps will be taken to ensure your confidentiality. While the interviews will be audio-recorded, first names will only be used during the interviews. The interview tapes will be held under lock and key in the principal investigator's home and will remain there for the duration of the data collection and once the study has been completed. The transcripts from the interviews will remain confidential and will contain a pseudonym in place of your name. Your school board and school to which you are affiliated with will also be kept confidential and will not be mentioned within any part of the researcher's thesis. Only the principal researcher and the faculty thesis advisor will have access to the information contained within the audio-tapes and transcripts. The principal researcher maintains the right to review all audiotapes and transcripts with the faculty advisor, throughout the duration of the study. All audio taped recordings will be kept under lock and key in the principal investigator's home, should the information be used for subsequent studies.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

It is entirely optional and voluntary to participate in this research study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable

answering and still remain in the study. Should you choose to withdraw yourself from this study, the information you provide regarding your current or prospective administrative position will not be used in the researcher's thesis. All participants will still receive their compensation in appreciation of your time. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS
The results of this study will be made available to all participants. A brief reader-friendly summary of the initial findings will be available at the following website after April, 2012:
Web address: **www.uwindsor.ca/reb**
The researcher will also send via email a brief summary report of the initial findings that details the results of the collection and analysis of data. This report will be made available to you by the end of April, 2012.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA
This data may be used in subsequent studies.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE
I understand the information provided for the study *Women & Educational Leadership: Exploring the Experiences of Current & Aspiring Female Educational Administrators* as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Subject

_____   _____
Signature of Subject   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____ _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix F: Survey for Current Female Educational Administrators

Survey for Current Female Educational Administrators

Part I

Directions for Part I: Please answer the following questions. Doing so will allow the researcher to get to know you.

1. Please provide your birthdate: (month/year)

    _____

2. How many years did you teach, prior to apply applying for your first educational leadership position?
    A) 5-7
    B) 8-10
    C) 10-12
    D) 12-15

3. In order to prepare yourself for applying to an educational leadership position, please
    select the most accurate description of your post-graduate education:

    A) Master's Degree in Education

    B) 2 Specialists (Please Specify):

    _____   _____

    C) Master's Degree in another field besides Education (Please Specify):

    _____   _____

    D) Other (Please Specify):

    _____

4. Please provide the age at which you obtained your first educational leadership position:
    _____.

5. How many attempts did it take to successfully obtain an educational leadership position?
    A) 1
    B) 2
    C) 3
    D) 4 or more

(Continue to next page please)
Part II
Directions: Please evaluate the following statements and circle the number below the question, that you feel most accurately represents your experiences. Use the "1" to "5" scale below and circle each applicable number.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Gender Equality
1. Gender does not have a direct influence on the success of educational leaders.
1   2   3   4   5

2. The presumption that men are more competent leaders initially discouraged me from applying for an educational leadership position.
1   2   3   4   5

3. I feel as though there is a gendered structure to educational leadership.
1   2   3   4   5

4. I have been told that leadership positions (i.e., vice-principal, principal, superintendent, director) are more suitable for male leaders.
1   2   3   4   5

5. When I discuss my current position in educational leadership with others, my gender as a women does not enter the conversation.
1   2   3   4   5

6. I feel there is an equal representation of male and female educational leaders, in all levels of the school board.
1   2   3   4   5

Mentorship
1. As a formerly aspiring female educational administrator, I was given the opportunity to work with a mentor.
1   2   3   4   5

2. Based on my experiences, I feel as though there are different needs that must be addressed during the mentoring process, for female educational administrators.
1   2   3   4   5

---

3. I would feel more prepared to advance as a female educational administrator, if I completed a mentoring program prior to applying for the position.

1   2   3   4   5

Work and Family

1. I plan to postpone/have postponed applying for an educational leadership position for marriage.

1   2   3   4   5

2. I plan to postpone/have postponed applying for an educational leadership position for family.

1   2   3   4   5

3. I often worry about the effects my educational leadership position will have on my personal life.

1   2   3   4   5

4. I do not feel that an educational leadership position has impacted my personal life.

1   2   3   4   5

Recruitment/Hiring Practices

1. I am confident that my educational credentials (e.g., degrees, additional qualifications) were considered when applying for my current educational leadership position.

1   2   3   4   5

2. If I choose to advance to a higher educational leadership position in the future, I believe my gender will not influence the hiring process.

1   2   3   4   5

3. I feel as though women have achieved equal status in both the recruitment and hiring process of educational leadership positions.

1   2   3   4   5

Optional Question:
Please describe any additional experiences or concerns you have in relation to gender and your current educational leadership position.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. Please place your survey in the envelope when completed.

Appendix G: Survey for Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

Survey for Aspiring Female Educational Administrators

Part I
Directions for Part I: Please answer the following questions. Doing so will allow the researcher to get to know you.
 Part I:
1. Please provide your birthdate: (month/year)

    _____

2. How many years did you teach, prior to considering an educational leadership position?
A) 5-7
B) 8-10
C) 10-12
D) 12-15

3. In order to prepare yourself for applying to an educational leadership position, please
    select the most accurate description of your post-graduate education:

A) Master's Degree in Education

B) 2 Specialists (Please Specify):

    _____   _____

C) Master's Degree in another field besides Education (Please Specify):

    _____   _____

D) Other (Please Specify):

    _____

    _____

4. Please provide the age at which you obtained your first teaching position:

    _____.

(Continue to next page please)

Part II

Directions for Part II: Please evaluate the following statements and circle the number below the question, that you feel most accurately represents your experiences. Use the "1" to "5" scale below and circle each applicable number.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Gender Equality

1. Gender does not have a direct influence on the success of educational leaders.
1   2   3   4   5

2. The presumption that men are more competent leaders has discouraged me from applying for an educational leadership position.
1   2   3   4   5

3. I feel as though there is a gendered structure to educational leadership.
1   2   3   4   5

4. I have been told that leadership positions (i.e., vice-principal, principal, superintendent, director) are more suitable for male leaders.
1   2   3   4   5

5. When I discuss my interest in educational leadership with others, I am encouraged to pursue them.
1   2   3   4   5

6. I feel there is an equal representation of male and female educational leaders, in all levels of the school board.
1   2   3   4   5

Mentorship

1. As an aspiring female educational administrator, I am aware of mentoring opportunities within my school board.
1   2   3   4   5

2. I feel as though there are different needs that must be addressed during the mentoring process, for female educational administrators.
1   2   3   4   5

3. I would feel more prepared to apply for an educational leadership position, if I completed a mentoring program prior to applying.
1   2   3   4   5

Work and Family
1. I plan to postpone/have postponed applying for an educational leadership position for marriage.
1   2   3   4   5

2. I plan to postpone/have postponed applying for an educational leadership position for family.
1   2   3   4   5

3. I often worry about the effects an educational leadership position will have on my personal life.
1   2   3   4   5

4. I do not feel that an educational leadership position will impact my personal life.
1   2   3   4   5

Recruitment/Hiring Practices
1. I am confident that my educational credentials (e.g., degrees, additional qualifications) will be considered when applying for a future educational leadership position.
1   2   3   4   5

2. I believe my gender will have no influence on the hiring process for an educational leadership position.
1   2   3   4   5

3. I feel as though women have achieved equal status in both the recruitment and hiring process of educational leadership.
1   2   3   4   5

Optional Question:
Please describe any additional experiences or concerns you have in relation to gender and obtaining an educational leadership position.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. Please place your survey in the envelope when completed.

Appendix H: Consent for Audio Taping of the Semi-Structured Interview

CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING

Research Participant:

Title of the Project: Women & Educational Leadership: Exploring the
Experiences of Current and Aspiring Female Educational
Administrators

I consent to the audio-taping of interviews, procedures, or
treatment.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free
to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I
also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that
taping will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and
store in a locked cabinet.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audio-
tape will be for professional use only.

_____
(Research Subject)

Appendix I: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Group A: female educators, who have demonstrated a desire to pursue an educational leadership position. Demonstration of their desire to pursue an educational leadership position will be determined by their preparation for applying to a posted position (i.e., additional qualifications, post-graduate education).

1. Tell me a little about your background. For example, where did you live? Where did you go to school? Did both your parents work?

2. Tell me about your educational background.

3. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

4. What interests you about being an educational administrator?

5. How many years of experience have you had in your current teaching position?

6. At what point in your teaching career did you develop an interest in educational administration?

7. How have you prepared yourself, in terms of qualifications, to apply for a leadership position?

8. How have you prepared yourself, in addition, to your qualifications, to apply for a leadership position (i.e., community involvement, leadership experience)?

9. What personal and professional benefits do you think there are to becoming an educational administrator?

10. In relation to gender, what, if any, are the perceived challenges to being an educational administrator?

11. What type of leadership style do you see yourself adopting upon being hired as an educational leader?

12. Are you aware of any formal or informal opportunities for prospective educational administrators to work with a mentor within your school board?

13. If yes, have you utilized these mentorship opportunities?

14. If you have utilized mentorship opportunities within your school board, please describe the preparation and guidance they provided you.

15. Describe, as best as you can, the leadership style you would like to adopt in the future.

16. As a female, do you ever feel as though your gender identity, as a female, conflicts with your identity as a future educational administrator?

17. Where do you see yourself in your career in approximately 5-10 years?

18. What advice would you provide to aspiring female educational administrators?

Group B: female educational administrators, who have successfully obtained a leadership position (e.g., vice-principal; principal; superintendent).

1. Tell me a little about your background. For example, where did you live? Where did you go to school? Did both your parents work?

2. Tell me about your educational background.

3. How long have you been in your current leadership position?

4. At what point in your teaching career did you develop an interest for educational administration?

5. At what point in your teaching career did you formally apply for an educational leadership position?

6. Were you successful in your first attempt to becoming an educational administrator?

7. In what ways did you prepare yourself to be eligible for an educational administrative position, at the time of your first application process (e.g., additional qualifications, years of experience, community involvement, leadership experience)?

8. If no, what explanation were you given as to why you did not receive the position (if applicable)?

9. Describe the outcome of your subsequent attempts.

10. Relating to your current position, were you given any formal or informal opportunities to work with a mentor?

11. If yes, describe your experiences while being mentored.

12. In relation to gender, what, if any, are the perceived challenges to being an educational administrator?

13. Do you feel respected as an educational administrator by your colleagues (i.e., both male and female colleagues)?

14. How would you describe your leadership style?

15. As a female educational administrator do you ever feel as though your identity as a female conflicts with your identity as an educational administrator? If yes, can you think of a time when this occurred?

16. In what ways has your school board/additional qualifications/post graduate education prepared you for your current position as a female administrator?

17. Were any of these methods geared specifically towards the needs of female administrators?

18. Have you ever considered pursuing a position as superintendent/director? Why or why not?

19. What personal and professional benefits do you think there are to being an educational administrator?

20. Have you ever felt a sense of obligation to lead in a specific way as a result of your gender?

21. Has anyone ever made you feel doubtful about a decision you were once confident with?

22. Where do you see yourself situated in your career in approximately 5-10 years?

23. What advice would you provide to aspiring female educational administrators?

Appendix J: List of Local Mental Health Agencies

1. Canadian Mental Health Association- Windsor-Essex County Branch
CMHA Windsor-Essex County Branch
1400 Windsor Avenue
Windsor, Ontario, Canada
N8X 3L9
Telephone: (519) 255-7440

2. Regional Mental Health Care
875 Ouellette Ave, 2nd Floor
Windsor, Ontario
N9A 4J6
Telephone: (519) 254-3486

3. Windsor Regional Hospital
Community Mental Health Clinic
1453 Prince Rd,
Windsor, Ontario
N9C 3Z4
Telephone: (519) 257 -5125

4. Community Crisis Centre of Windsor and Essex County
Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital
1030 Ouellette Ave,
Windsor, Ontario
N9A 1E1
Telephone: (519) 973 – 4411 ext. 3003
Crisis Phone: (519) 973 - 4435

VITA AUCTORIS

Kimberly Crosby-Hillier was born in Windsor, Ontario, in 1984. She began her studies at the University of Windsor in 2003. In 2007, Kimberly graduated "*With Distinction*" from the University of Windsor, with an honour's degree in Psychology. After obtaining her Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Kimberly pursued her passion for teaching and began her studies in the University of Windsor's Faculty of Education in 2007, graduating with her Bachelor of Education in 2008. Upon the completion of her Bachelor of Education degree, Kimberly began teaching in Alberta with the Fort McMurray Catholic School District. In 2009, she began her teaching career with the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and decided to pursue a graduate degree in Education. Kimberly is currently in the final stages of her Master's degree in Educational Administration and has recently been accepted into the University of Windsor's Joint PhD in Educational Studies program, where she will pursue a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.