2014

Beneath the Glass Ceiling : What Causes Some Qualified Female Educators to Remain in the Classroom While Others Obtain Leadership Roles?

Allison J. Jordan

Beneath the Glass Ceiling: What Causes Some Qualified Female Educators to Remain in the Classroom While Others Obtain Leadership Roles?

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of Lynchburg College

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education (Ed. D.)

By
Allison J. Jordan
July 11, 2014

Lynchburg College
Lynchburg, Virginia

APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation, Beneath the Glass Ceiling: What Causes Some Qualified Female Educators to Remain in the Classroom While Others Pursue Leadership Roles, has been approved by the Ed.D. Faculty of Lynchburg College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree.

Committee Chair: Signature	7-11-14 Sally Selden Printed Name	7-11-14 Date
Committee Member: Signature	Nichole Sanders Printed Name	7/11/14 Date
Committee Member: Signature	JOHN WALKER Printed Name	7/11/14 Date

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Nick and Kate. I am so proud to be your mama. No matter my career path, being your mother will always be my most important job. I hope I instill confidence in your abilities as my own parents did for me. Never let there be any doubt how much I love you!

Acknowledgements

I have day-dreamed about writing this acknowledgement section throughout the four-year process of finishing this doctoral program. Forgive me if the acknowledgements are as long as chapter one. I could not have done this alone and I give thanks in no particular order.

Former Teachers

First, I would like to thank my teachers who inspired me along the way. Without your support and encouragement, I would have never had the confidence to pursue my goals in higher education or a career in PK-12 education. Specifically, I am grateful to Diana Duckworth who showed me as a freshman in high school that I was something special. Before meeting Ms. Duckworth I felt like an average student with bad handwriting. I came alive academically because of her. I had the pleasure of being her colleague for about a decade when I entered education. I hope I can inspire a fraction of the students that she inspired. Mr. Dodgion was my freshman algebra teacher and I did not like math before entering his class. Mr. Dodgion made math fun. He made everything entertaining. A piece of my heart died with him on that April day during my freshman year, but he has continued to inspire me to be 'that' teacher. I kept a rocking chair in my classroom just to keep his memory alive. I still haven't 'seen Hunka.'

I was lucky to befriend a number of professors during my time at Mary Washington College (it will always be MWC). Dr. Campbell gave me a D on my first history test and because of that I sunk my teeth in and became a history major. I modeled my style of teaching and storytelling after Dr. Campbell. I could have listened to him talk about anything and I'm confident I would have never been a history major without knowing him. Dr. Crawley helped me become a better writer

and taught me the difference between creative writing and historical writing. I took every class he offered during my time at MWC. He truly had a gift with words. I hope I've always presented history as a story just like Dr. Crawley. Dr. Blakemore exposed me to military history. If I ever go back to get another degree, it will be in military history because of Dr. Blakemore. (I hope someone stops me before I ever get another degree!) Dr. Blakemore took me along on a summer tour of Europe and this young lady from Rustburg, Virginia was exposed to the world. That will forever be the best summer with the Prague City Wild Girls from MWC. The reference librarian at MWC, of all people, shared his passion for historical research. Jack Bales is the coolest librarian I have ever met! He has continued to be a friend and a reference some fifteen years later.

Dr. Van Hover at the University of Virginia helped me learn the theory, but most importantly, the practice of becoming a social studies teacher. I will be forever grateful for her guidance and preparation. Dr. Carol Tomlinson showed me the importance of nurturing in the classroom. I had to deliver social studies content, but first I had to guarantee a good learning environment. I have always been the 'fox tamer' of the history department because of Dr. Tomlinson.

Finally, I have had the pleasure of working with some of the most talented educators in Central Virginia while pursuing my doctorate at Lynchburg College. I debated whether or not to try a new program at a small school, but I am so glad I did. Dr. Jones and Dr. Walker offered practical experience from their long tenures as PK-12 educators. Dr. Jones assigned the 360 degree evaluation and that was the most frightening thing I've ever done. I learned much more about myself through that than any other assignment. Dr. Walker challenged me to read two of my favorite books. I now recommend Switch and Who Moved My Cheese to anyone who will listen.

My dissertation committee attempted to keep me grounded when I tackled a topic as big as gender. Dr. Walker kept reminding me I had to finish when I would say, 'I just need to read a few more things.' Dr. Sanders challenged me to think about topics that went along with gender. I feel like I hit the jackpot with Dr. Selden as my dissertation chair. Not only was she a brilliant professor, but she also helped me take these crazy ideas and put them on paper. I told her at the beginning of this process that I wanted this dissertation to be 'good.' I regretted that after my sixth draft of the literature review, but as I am finishing the process, I am so proud of the work I have done on this dissertation. Thank you, Dr. Selden for understanding the emotional roller-coaster of being a young sleep-deprived mother who works full-time who just can't handle one more set of harsh comments. Thank you for not giving in to my madness! I always loved talking to you in person because you would talk me out of the crazy place and into the productive mindset. I continue to think you are one of the smartest people I know. You inspire me to do great things!

Former Students

I am starting my career as an administrator as I complete my doctoral program. I am forever grateful for the students I taught for the past eight years. I am certain you taught me more about life than I ever taught you. I worried about you, laughed with you, and learned from you constantly. I was so proud to be your teacher. Your encouragement over the last four years has been magnificent. I was constantly surprised that you thought I was going to be a medical doctor at the end of this process. Don't call me if you get sick!

Colleagues

I had the pleasure of working with some of the most amazing people while I was in the classroom. I was constantly in awe of some of you. I always said I

wanted to be like Cathy Cocke and Roz Phillips when I grew up because you could make anything in history fun. I was constantly amazed at how sweet Lisa Kelley was while teaching calculus and Mary Bailey while teaching poetry. Students always said, 'Mrs. Kelley and Mrs. Bailey give us hugs.' Well, Mrs. Jordan doesn't hug!

I was lucky to work in a history department that valued humor. I could not have done this without the humor of Meagan 'Bulletin', Assistant Professor Berlin, Will Cartwright, and Michael Nagy (heeee). Your constant bantering made me forget how bad things really were during this process. I am lucky to have worked with such a group.

Denise Moran brought me food, gave me hugs, and offered to edit every single thing I ever wrote. She was my constant cheerleader. I finally took her up on the editing and she was my final editor of this dissertation. Blame all of the mistakes on her!

Martha Wilson was my saving grace over the last few years. She worked every after school game for me, provided humor and sarcasm, and was my rock at RHS. I told her I would retire when she retired. I can't afford to retire quite yet, but I don't think I could work at RHS without you!

Friends

I was constantly amazed at how many people encouraged me through this process. I was often getting e-mails and Facebook messages from people I rarely talked to in person encouraging me through whatever stage of the dissertation. I appreciate the constant support even when I couldn't talk about it. There were times that I just couldn't talk about it. Thank you for believing in me when I was too tired to

believe in myself. Thank you especially to Dr. Z who talked me down off the data analysis ledge; Nathan who chatted with me during my late night dissertation marathons; and Brianne for the hilarious affirmation that I wasn't the only person who had ever felt this way during a dissertation.

Being a doctoral student is a lonely, lonely process and I could not have done it without the support of my cohort from LC. I learned as much about leadership from our cohort as I did through the coursework, and I think the cohort was designed that way. We will forever have a bond that nobody can understand, and honestly, nobody would want to understand. Thank you for showering me with love and support especially when I was 9 months pregnant or post-partum and crazy! I am forever grateful to Sharon who even went as far as to save my kid's life. I will pay you back right after I pay off these loans.

Participants

Fourteen female educators graciously allowed me to invade their worlds to conduct this research. I feel like we are friends now after I've spent hours with you during the interviews, the transcribing process, and late-night data analysis sessions. Your stories were unique and provided such a rich piece of research. I made some major career choices because of you and I will never forget some of your wisdom—especially the bald man comment.

Family

I come from a family of female educators. I never wanted to be an educator because it was so common, but it was my destiny. I tell people I come from a long line of strong women. My great aunts, my grandmothers, my aunts, my older cousins, and my mom all worked outside of the home while raising children and

keeping a family together. Thank you for providing a model for me when I was too young to realize the importance of your actions.

Specifically, I admire my great aunts Pete and Helen who were life-long educators in Central Virginia. My aunt Becky and uncle Rick are leading educational reformers who took a young teacher on the road for a few summers. I value those summers for more reasons than you will ever know. I was exposed to countless experiences that I would have otherwise missed. Thank you for always being a motivational force even when I didn't want to be a building level administrator.

My aunt Ann and I are cut from the same cloth. I turn to her for advice as well as companionship. I will never be able to repay her for the telephone and e-mail counseling sessions during this doctoral process. She helped to talk me out of the crazy place many times, but sometimes she just let me be crazy. For that, I thank you. You have spent countless hours editing my terrible drafts, babysitting my children, and being my cheerleader. I promise to take really good care of you when you get old, but please don't get old yet.

My in-laws had no idea what they were getting when they got me. For four years out of my marriage, I have been a sleep-deprived stressed out maniac. Thank you for providing refuge for the boys when 'Mama had to do school work.' Thank you for feeding them dinner and giving Nick baths on Monday nights when I was in class. Thank you, Toni, for all of the inspirational messages, snacks, and offers to babysit when I had almost hit rock bottom in the dissertation process. I hope I can repay you one day.

My parents are the perfect combination of stability (mom) and risk-taking (dad). I always had a stable and comfortable environment in which to grow. They

have supported me through every stage of life. I could not have done this doctoral program without them. They were my babysitters most Monday nights, many Saturday and Sunday mornings, and lots of times in between. They constantly supported me even when they may not have really understood the process. I hope I can be half as supportive of my kids as they grow. Mom and Dad, you will never know how important your support has been. I love you!

I owe many apologies to my husband Jeff and subsequent years of gratitude for supporting me through this journey. You have lived through the doctoral process and should probably be given a medal of honor. We had a 3-month old baby when I started this program and you never said, 'Are you nuts?' You never questioned the financial risk I was taking. You have always supported my endeavors and frequently said 'I don't know how you did this.' Thank you for taking Nick out on weekend adventures so I could lock myself inside to finish this dissertation. There were times when I let this program take a toll on our marriage and for that I am sorry. I could always hear Dr. Ratliff's wise voice saying, 'stay married!' I hope this program helps to provide stability for our family for many, many years. Please stop me if I *ever* try to go back to school. I am so glad you were the one by my side during this process.

Nick, you were 3 months old when I started this program. I missed every Monday night of your life for a few years and a lot of other times in between. I hope that I spent quality time with you even if I didn't have lots of quantity time. You have never made me feel bad about going to school. You loved to come see me at LC and proudly announced, 'Mama goes to college.' I came in every Monday night after class and scooped you up out of your bed because I ached to be near you. I let you scribble on my papers because you thought you were doing schoolwork, too. Thank you for keeping your daddy company while I wrote. You became best buddies with him during this process. I love you more than you will ever know.

Baby Kate, you were born right in the middle of this doctoral program. My cohort joked that you should get a doctorate, too. I truly think God gave you to me because you have been a calming presence ever since I found out I was pregnant. I did not stress about my schoolwork as much because there were far greater things to merit worry. You have been with me during every step of this dissertation. I have nursed you many an hour while writing, reading, or editing. You learned to crawl and cruise as I transcribed data in the dining room. You really could have slept a little bit more over this last year. I probably could have been finished on time! I hope you are too young to remember this stressful time for me, but I know your baby-hood made this time so much sweeter! I love you!

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Chapter I: Introduction

Public education, as a whole, has been a female-dominated field for over a century (Blount, 1998). However, the composition of educational leadership: principals, central office staff, and superintendents, has been a completely different story. Females were at the helm of the majority of the classrooms across America in the most recent data; approximately 70 percent of teachers were women (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). On the other hand, men typically assumed a majority of the leadership positions with males representing 60 percent of the administrators[1] in 2004 (Adams & Hambright, 2004). The percent of female leaders is not proportionate to the number of female teachers across school divisions in the United States.

The concentrated efforts of leading feminists during the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s ushered in a period of higher female representation in educational leadership during the 1990s, but women have not achieved a level of representation that mirrors their representation on the front lines of the classroom or in the general population (Blount, 1998; Shriver, 2009). More than 40 years after the passage of Title VII, which eliminated legal barriers for women in achieving their educational goals, and the Civil Rights Act of 1967, which prohibited discrimination based upon gender, women have not achieved parity in the ranks of educational

[1] *Administrator* will be used interchangeably with *educational leader* in this study.

leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Questions remain whether this lack of achievement is the result of invisible barriers or a glass ceiling or whether the lack of representation is reflective of the intentional choices by women. This study seeks to contribute to this discussion by examining the choices qualified female educators make with regards to their career paths as educational leaders.

Statement of the Problem

There has been an overall shortage of qualified male and female educational leadership applicants across the nation for decades, especially in hard-to-staff rural and urban areas (Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004). The removal of legal and societal barriers during the latter decades of the twentieth century led to a greater degree of choice among female educators. The literature base suggested many women have chosen instead to remain in the classroom, take an alternate route to the top, or pursue a career completely outside of public education (Harris, Arnold, Lowery & Crocker, 2000; Noel-Batiste, 2009; Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Brown & Wynn, 2004). There was a shortage of applicants, but not a shortage of qualified female leaders within PK-12 education.

Female Representation in Educational Leadership. Since the year 2000, there has been a sense of stagnation, or even a reduction, in the percentage of new female educational leaders (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). The data were sparse and the statistics appeared disjointed, but scholars agreed that there was an underrepresentation of female leaders in PK-12 education. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) argued that females represented approximately 25 percent of superintendents nationwide, but earlier work by Tallerico and Blount (2004)

suggested women represented approximately 10 percent of superintendents in 1998. More recently, females have made up approximately half of all principalships in the United States, with larger percentages of female leaders represented at the elementary level (Gupton, 2009). Women have always had greater representation in elementary school settings and leadership has been no different (Gupton, 2009). Arlton and Davis suggested, “It is clearly evident that the proportion of women administrators decreases as the level of position and responsibility increases” (Arlton & Davis, 1993, p. 95). While females represented half of all elementary principalships, there was still a great divide amongst other levels of educational leadership. Teaching had always been viewed as a woman’s profession, but males led education as a whole serving most often in leadership positions (Blount, 1998).

Women and Achieving Higher Education. Women were pursuing and completing higher education degrees at a much greater rate than ever before and much more than their male counterparts (Shriver, 2009). In 2009, women earned 57 percent of all the undergraduate degrees awarded in the United States and earned 67 percent of the doctoral degrees awarded in the area of Educational Leadership (Branch-Brioso, 2009; Gupton, 2009). Women had the qualifications, but many were neither pursuing nor obtaining careers in educational leadership (Branch-Brioso, 2009; Gupton, 2009).

Although fragmented, the research has consistently demonstrated that female educational leaders are underrepresented at all levels. Women in educational leadership within the PK-12 organizational structure had been anticipating equity since the beginning of the 1900s (Blount, 1998). The 1990s brought about a surge

of academic research on the topic and a surge of new female leadership in education, but equity has not been achieved within PK-12 educational leadership.

Purpose of the Study

This study focused on qualified women in Central Virginia who possessed similar academic credentials and a wide range of career experiences.[2] The study featured narrative accounts from women at various levels of educational leadership, from the classroom to the superintendency, with an emphasis on career development, decision-making, and leadership. The purpose of the study was to uncover the differences between qualified classroom teachers and women who held positions of educational leadership. This study also attempted to uncover common themes among female educators in Central Virginia.

Research Questions

The study centered on the general question: For women with similar educational qualifications, how did the experiences of females who have remained in the classroom differ from females who held positions of leadership in PK-12 education? This broad question was broken down into three subsequent research questions.

R_1: How do the participants' backgrounds differ?

R_2: How did they describe their entrance into and paths through careers in PK-12 education?

R_3: How and why do the participants' career development paths differ?

The aforementioned research questions guided the researcher to create a unique

[2] For the purpose of this study, Central Virginia will be defined as Lynchburg and the surrounding counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, and Halifax.

interview protocol designed specifically for this study (see Appendix A).

Search Terms

The following constituted a list of terms used to search previous research regarding females in educational leadership. The following terms were used to search for relevant studies: "females in educational leadership," "women in educational leadership," "females in educational administration," "women in educational administration," "females in PK-12 leadership," "women in PK-12 leadership," "females in education," and "women in education."

Definition of Terms

To aid the reader in understanding topics from this study, a list of terms and associated definitions are included in Table 1-1.

Table 1- 1

Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition	Source
Glass Ceiling	Metaphor for barriers preventing females from reaching leadership positions. "the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements"	Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986 United States Department of Labor, 1995, p. 4
'Good Ole Boy' Network	Reference to traditional male leadership within school systems. Controlled by unspoken rules and traditional male-dominated social norms.	Archer, 2003
Self-imposed Barrier	"A delay of or failure to obtain an administrative position due to a personal decision to delay or avoid the position because of family responsibilities, inflexibility to relocate, and/or family and motherhood influences."	McGee, 2010, p. 1
'Tap on the	Endorsement from a current or former	Marshall & Kasten,

Shoulder'	leader encouraging someone to pursue a leadership opportunity	1994

The following Table 1-2 shows how terms were applied in this study.

Table 1-2

Application of Terms in this Study

Term	Application of Term in this Study
Barrier	Inhibitor to female educational leadership: legal, political, or societal
Bureaucracy	Organizational structure imposed by central office and/or government: local, state, or federal
Gender	Male or Female. Used interchangeably with sex.
Higher Education	College or university level
PK-12	Public schools from kindergarten to graduation.
Educational Leadership	Positions other than classroom teaching, including, but not limited to the following: assistant principal, principal, director or other central office instructional position, assistant superintendent, superintendent, and professor.

Significance of Study

This study was significant because it focused on females at all levels of PK-12 educational employment in Central Virginia. Participants in the study included: classroom teachers, principals, district leaders, and other female leaders who had taken positions outside of the traditional school system after working in the PK-12 organization. The study was important because the data will be used to inform local policy. Finally, the study was personally significant to both the researcher and female educators in Central Virginia. This study captured the unique journey of each participant.

Organization of the Dissertation

This first chapter provided the introduction to the study by outlining the purpose

of the study as well as the research questions. The second chapter of the dissertation will provide a foundation of the previous literature on the topic of women in educational leadership. The literature review is organized by categories in the literature: history of women in educational leadership, descriptive studies on women in educational leadership, barriers to female educational leadership, advantages to female educational leadership, and studies on the field of women in educational leadership. The third chapter outlines the methodology used in the research study. This chapter also provides information about the participants in the study. Chapter four presents the data from the study and will be organized into eight of the most significant themes. There are two universal themes in the study: support during childhood and making a difference. There are two themes external to the PK-12 organization: role models and personality characteristics. There are four themes internal to the PK-12 organization that impacted the phenomenon of female leadership: financial compensation, encouragement and recognition, the job search process, and gender. Finally, chapter five of this study presents the findings, interpretations, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

Criteria for Inclusion

As previously stated in the introductory chapter, the following terms were used to search for relevant studies to be included in the literature review: "females in educational leadership," "women in educational leadership," "females in educational administration," "women in educational administration," "females in PK-12 leadership," "women in PK-12 leadership," "females in education," and "women in education." The studies were pared down to relevant literature on women in educational leadership by including studies that only discussed PK-12 leadership, specifically studied gender with regards to leadership, and were conducted after the women's rights movement in the 1970s.

The search demonstrated that the academic literature on the subject of women in leadership in PK-12 education was limited. The information regarding the historical trends of women in PK-12 leadership stemmed from one prominent study by Blount in 1998. Prominent scholars who study women in educational leadership have been troubled by the lack of organized data on the women in PK-12 educational leadership (Blount, 1998; Bjork, 2000; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Tyack and Hansot elaborated on the lack of organized data in their 1982 work *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership 1820-1980*:

> Amid the proliferation of other kinds of statistical reporting in an age enamored of numbers—reports so detailed that one could give the precise salary of staff in every community across the country and exact information on all sorts of other variables—data by sex became strangely inaccessible. This silence could hardly have been unintentional. As a result of this failure to record by gender, those who took an interest in what was happening to women in school administration and to comparative male and female salaries had to compile figures laboriously from scattered sources (Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 187).

Tyack and Hansot (1982) argued this was no mistake. Scholars collected data on every other variable, but gender. Blount described it as the *conspiracy of silence* (Blount, 1998). Male policy makers, educational leaders, and academics made the conscious decision to ignore the underrepresentation of female educational leaders. The trend of silence began as far back as the early 1900s because the National Education Association (NEA) filed a complaint in 1928 about the lack of data by gender (Blount, 1995). Throughout the 20th century, many stakeholders acknowledged the shortage of female leaders, but there were few statistics available to inform educators about the severity of the problem (Blount, 1998).

The trend of silence continued for a century. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) questioned the continued silence of data in their most recent work on women in educational leadership. "Ironically, as many have noted in the past, there is a more accurate and detailed account of reindeer in Alaska than of women in educational leadership at the Pre-PK-12 level Nationwide" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 103). In summary, there has been an absence of data on the underrepresentation of female educational leaders since the early 1900s.

Trends in the Literature

After deep examination, a number of patterns emerged from the literature

review. Most studies on female leaders in education began with a discussion of the shortage of female leaders or educational leaders in general. Scholars and educators agreed that there was a shortage of women PK-12 leaders. Most studies discussed barriers to female leadership, as well. There were a number of important trends.

Many studies compared female leaders to male leaders. There were a few studies that compared women to their male counterparts and focused specifically on the search process to obtain leadership jobs (Adams & Hambright, 2004; Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Brown & Wynn, 2004; Young & McLeod, 2001). There were a number of studies comparing female to male leaders in specific leadership roles (Archer, 2003; Blount, 1998; Tallerico & Blount, 2004; McGee, 2012; Noel-Batiste, 2012; Stockard & Kempner, 1981; Skrla, Reyes, and Scheurich, 2000). Most of these studies compared female leaders to male leaders especially at the superintendent level.

Research studies focused on the female leader as a whole without putting emphasis on the various leadership roles within PK-12 education, with the exception of Stockard and Kempner in 1991, McGee in 2010, and Young & McLeod in 2001. These three studies examined leadership levels beneath the superintendent level. Most studies were conducted based on the female superintendent (Archer, 2003; Blount, 1998, Sharp et al., 2004, Skrla et al., 2000). There was little attention paid to the leadership positions of assistant superintendents, district level leadership positions within central offices, principals, and assistant principals. In the education realm, the role of superintendent equated to the role of CEO in the corporate world

(Blount, 1998). A female superintendent has always been the embodiment of a female leader to society and researchers alike. The subsidiary levels of leadership in education have often been ignored by the scholarly research and consequently devalued the positions (Blount, 1998). While the literature clearly asserted the predominance of female teachers, there were only a few studies uncovered in this literature review that concentrated on classroom teachers who were qualified to become leaders (Adams & Hambright, 2004; Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Brown & Wynn, 2004). Although teachers constitute a majority of the educational workforce, literature about teachers as qualified leaders is scarcer.

While in general the literature on female leaders in education is parsimonious, the review identified a select group of scholars with a sustained interested in studying women and educational leadership. Jackie Blount is the preeminent scholar on the history of women in educational leadership (1998). Most other studies on the history of female leaders in education stem from her original work concerning female superintendents throughout the 20th century (Tallerico & Blount, 2004; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Blount's work became the seminal piece of descriptive research on women in educational leadership and her work only concentrated on the number of female superintendents in American history. Recently, a contemporary group of researchers began to focus not only on the superintendency, but other roles of leadership within public school systems (Grogan, 1999; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Leading scholars, such as Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011), who have widely criticized the lack of simple comprehensive descriptive and historical data collection

on women in educational leadership have celebrated the more recent trend of exposing the lack of females in educational leadership through essays and literature reviews. In the decades following the women's movement, there was an increase in articles on women in educational leadership, although many researchers have questioned their experimental nature (Bjork, 2000). Scholars were aware of the shortage of female leaders, even though statistics were hard to obtain, and literature began to focus on other aspects of women in educational leadership. These more recent articles on women lacked empirical data and instead focus on anecdotal essays and reflective pieces (Grogan, 1999; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2012).

Organization of the Literature Review

This literature review was not a comprehensive overview of every research study on gender, education, and/or leadership, but instead exposed the trends related to women in educational leadership throughout the 20th century (Shakeshaft, 1999). This literature review is organized into five categories of research:

History of Women in Educational Leadership. The literature review begins with a historical overview of women in educational leadership. In order to conduct a study on the current reality of women in educational leadership, the historical patterns must be first understood. The first section focuses mainly on the work of Blount (1998) who offered a comprehensive look at women in superintendency throughout American history.

Descriptive Studies on Women in Educational Leadership. This section reviews the few studies that describe the number of women in educational leadership in various positions throughout the past few decades.

Barriers to Female Educational Leadership. The literature review features an abundance of studies that highlighted the barriers and obstacles to women obtaining educational leadership positions. This category also contains studies that present females who decide not to pursue educational leadership positions. A number of articles

connected barriers and female decision making.

Advantages to Female Educational Leadership. This category reveals the advantages of female leadership in education. This category is more limited than others, but merits discussion as well.

Studies on the Field of Women in Educational Leadership. The first four categories of the literature review focus on educational leadership at the micro level: the individual female leader. This final category focuses on the macro level by looking at the literature that focuses on the field of educational leadership. These studies expose trends both in the research and the number of women in educational leadership positions.

History of Women in Educational Leadership

It is important for the current study to begin with the history of female leadership throughout the 20th century. The historical trends help to inform the modern-day literature. The history of women in educational leadership in America is complicated (Blount, 1998; Tallerico & Blount, 2004; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Women have dominated the teaching workforce since the turn of the 20th century yet substantially fewer held upper level positions including principalships, central office positions, and district-level leadership positions (Blount, 1998; Tallerico & Blount, 2004; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Ella Flagg Young, the first female superintendent in Chicago, rose to her position in 1909 and exclaimed “Women are destined to rule the schools of every city” (Blount, 1998, p. 1). Female educators such as Young thought the early 1900s were going to be the golden age of female leadership. It would only make sense for such a highly feminized profession to be controlled by female leaders who had risen from within the teaching ranks. Blount (1998) highlighted the trends of female superintendents throughout the 20th century showing that not only did women fail to rise in leadership roles, but their presence as

superintendents decreased significantly between 1930 and 1970 nationwide from 10.98 percent to 3.38 percent (see table 2-1). According to Blount (1998), most historical data focused on the position of the female superintendent. Blount argued, "To understand clearly the mechanism of gender-role polarization in educational employment, it is important to look closely at the cases of persons who have crossed socially defined gender lines, in this case women who have challenged the bonds of a traditionally male domain" (Blount, 1998, p. 3). The position of superintendent had always represented the pinnacle of PK-12 educational leadership.

Table 2-1

Percentage of Female Superintendents in the United States

1910	**1930**	**1950**	**1970**	**1990**	**1998**
8.94	10.98	9.07	3.38	4.94	10.00

(Data from Blount 1998; Tallerico & Blount 2004)

Jackie Blount, author of *Destined to Rule the Schools: Women and the Superintendency, 1873-1995,* offered the most comprehensive look at the role of females within educational leadership in America dating from colonial times to contemporary America and her work is the seminal study from which all other descriptive historical studies of women in education have stemmed. Blount (1998) provided the only comprehensive study of female superintendents throughout the 20th century in this work. This study provided data from 1920, which showed women at the helm of public education with females holding 85 percent of all positions in public education, including administration (Blount, 1998). In reaction to more than three-fourths of positions being held by female educators, male educators in the 1920s pushed for a new type of leadership model (Blount, 1998).

Grogan (1999) discussed bureaucratization of the schools during the 1920s. During this decade, male educational leaders crafted the position of the superintendency to represent a more masculine or corporate model (Blount, 1998). Education morphed into a hierarchical chain of command that mirrored businesses of the day. Education then went from an atmosphere of intimacy within a building to a system where a central office controlled the leadership of a number of schools in the area and served as a headquarters for management personnel (Blount, 1998). Blount's recognition of this physical shift correlated with the distance between central office leadership and individual school leadership. Females remained teachers and males became more distant educational leaders. Most school systems continue to use this system of organization today, which in turn impacts the number of female leaders (Blount, 1998).

Blount (1998) and Grogan (1999) both identified the period surrounding women's suffrage, 1920s and 1930s, as a key time in American educational leadership. As women received the right to vote, many superintendent positions shifted from elected to appointed positions. Prior to women's suffrage, the people often elected superintendents, but male educational leaders and bureaucrats feared the new female electorate would flood the superintendency with an abundance of female leaders (Blount, 1998). As the result of newly recognized rights during the Progressive Movement, women educators pushed for equal pay during the 1920s. The Great Depression silenced female wants and needs very quickly. During the Great Depression men were displaced from other economic sectors and replaced women in many educational positions (Grogan, 1999). It was more important for

male breadwinners to have employment at this time (Blount, 1998).

After the Great Depression there was little attention and interest in cultivating and promoting female leadership in education (Blount, 1998). The 1930s and 1940s were a low point for the representation of women in leadership positions. This trend was exacerbated following World War II when many veterans used the GI Bill to receive further education. As a result, men received their administration and supervision credentials at a much higher rate than ever before (Blount, 1998). According to a 1971 study conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), 70 percent of all acting superintendents had used the GI Bill to receive further education (AASA, 1971). Women were not excluded from the GI Bill, but the overwhelming majority of veterans were men and they benefited from programs such as this. The proportion of female leaders working in education was among the lowest during this postwar period, as a result. This trend continued from 1950 to 1970.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of government involvement in civil rights. Grogan (1999) described this as a period where society was at odds with leadership in both society and within PK-12 education. Civil rights legislation and educational policy changes impacted females in educational leadership by breaking down barriers that prohibited them from obtaining educational leadership positions. In 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 allowed women to sue for sex-based job discrimination. In 1972, Congress passed Title IX which is best known for creating female athletic teams. This piece of legislation prohibited the practice of restrictive quotas,

described below, that were often used to keep women from obtaining higher education. Before Title IX, higher education institutions would set restrictive quotas and only admit small numbers of female applicants. In 1974, the Supreme Court case of *Cleveland Board of Education v. LaFleur* overturned the common state and local government policies prohibiting pregnant female educators from working after their fifth month of pregnancy. The legal barriers preventing women from obtaining higher education, educational leadership positions, and keeping their employment during pregnancy were fading away. These legal changes laid the groundwork for one of the largest shifts in culture and practice during the 20th century. Following the legal changes of the 1960s and 1970s, barriers for women were diminished.

The 1980s ushered in the period shaped by modern school reform and accountability, which was the most scrutinized decade in modern American education (Glazer, 1991). Marshall (1993) described the late 1970s and 1980s:

> By the late 1970s, liberal policy makers had lost faith in the ability of the compensatory programs. In addition, the liberal social agenda was in disarray, with its leaders fighting over the meaning of equality of educational opportunity…The election of President Reagan in 1980 marked the political ascendance of a new conservative consensus…in education, an emphasis on excellence and quality rather than equity. (p. 2)

The Moral Majority, which concentrated on the traditional hierarchical masculine style of leadership, supported Ronald Reagan. At the same time, the Reagan administration pushed for more accountability within education (Bastian & Greer, 1985). Scholars who focused on gender and equity within educational leadership feared the new emphasis on reform during this decade (Bastian & Greer, 1985). Glazer (1991) presented equity as a polar opposite to accountability. In the earlier decades, the push for equity meant numerous paths towards female leadership, but

accountability advocates during the 1980s and 1990s presented a typical hierarchical pathway for educational leaders with many policy requirements such as licensure and testing (Glazer, 1991). Equity and accountability were presented as competing forces in the 1980s and 1990s.

The 1980s were a time in which gender equity was not a focus of school reform. Glazer (1991) mentioned the 1989 educational summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, organized by President George Herbert Walker Bush, in which no women and no teachers were featured as keynote speakers. This summit was organized to draft the blueprint for modern educational reform. Female educators were not a part of the reform process which was indicative of the masculine focus of the decade. Glazer (1991) acknowledged the two paths school reform would take: top-down male biased models versus feminist models. The top-down male biased models would focus more on accountability and outcomes whereas feminist models would focus on restructuring teaching and administration. The renewed emphasis on school reform and accountability seemed to negate the gains in gender equity in education during and directly after the women's movement (Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1999).

The 1990s were the anticipated decade of gender equity in leadership both within the educational and the corporate worlds (Blount, 1998; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Tallerico and Blount (2004) suggested the legal barriers removed during the 1960s and 1970s were making an impact on PK-12 educational policies. By the end of the decade, the percentages of female superintendents were again falling (see Table 2-1). Glazer (1991) argued this decline happened because

of the shift from equity to accountability in education during the 1980s. The increase in female leadership was short-lived. Grogan argued women had experienced significant growth within the 'supporting roles' in education, but not the staring role of the superintendency (Grogan, 1999). The lower-level leadership gains were not celebrated throughout the literature, however. Scholars, such as Blount, continued to focus on the position of the female superintendent.

While the 1990s were the anticipated decade of equality, contemporary scholars used the most recent data to refute the notion of gender equity. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) used the 2007-2008 NCES data on superintendents to suggest that women would reach full equality with men in educational leadership in approximately 77 years. This calculation was based on the 0.7 percent annual increase as found in the 2007-2008 data. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) called attention to the disconnect between women who earned doctoral degrees in educational leadership, 67 percent of all doctoral degrees in educational leadership were earned by females and women who became superintendents. The number of doctoral degrees awarded in educational leadership has not correlated with the percentage of female superintendents in recent decades (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

Table 2-2

Percentage of Female Educators Nationwide in 2000 & 2010

Position	2000	2010
Educational Administrators	60.7	63.8
Pre-K & Kindergarten Teachers	97.8	97.4
Elementary and Middle School Teachers	79.0	79.3
Secondary Teachers	58.7	58.7
Special Education Teachers	86.6	85.7

** 2000 data from EEO Data tool U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-10 data from EEO1R- 5 year ACS data (used same reporting categories)

Table 2-3

Percentage of Female Educators in Virginia in 2010

Officials/Administrators (central office and district level staff not delineated)	52.80
Principals	61.03
Assistant Principals	58.99
Elementary Teachers	90.90
Secondary Teachers	67.50
Other Teachers	83.41
Guidance Personnel	84.78

** Data from the EE05 data tool 2010 VA specific

Descriptive Studies on Women in Educational Leadership

The second category of research in this literature review is descriptive research. This research focuses on the lack of female leaders, but it does not collect data on the underlying causes for the scarcity of women in educational leadership positions. In the 1970s, scholars began to collect limited data on the number of women who were either trying to obtain leadership roles or had already secured leadership positions. Although there were limited studies on gender throughout the 20th century, there are a few relevant studies providing descriptive statistics on women in educational leadership. The studies featured in this category of the literature review met the following criteria: focused on women in PK-12 educational leadership and provided descriptive statistics about their representation. The information in this category of research is presented chronologically.

Stockard and Kempner (1981) set out to research women in educational

leadership following the modern women's rights movement. Stockard and Kempner (1981) suggested the 1970s were the lowest point for females in educational leadership for four reasons: women did not aspire to educational leadership positions, higher education curricula was structured to promote males, hiring practices promoted males, and females were typically excluded from day-to-day practices or interactions which would lead to greater hiring potential. The literature prior to this study suggested the women's movement impacted females in educational leadership in two ways: women aspired to move into higher positions and the legal barriers to their employment were gone. The purpose of this study was to see how much things had changed as a result of the women's movement.

Stockard and Kempner (1981) collected data from 1974 to 1979 from thirteen graduate schools in the western United States (Oregon, California, Washington, Idaho, and Colorado), professional meetings nationwide and in western states, and statistics from women in the profession in three western states (Oregon, California, and Colorado). The professional data were aggregated down into four categories of leadership: superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals, and directors and supervisors. The data were then compared to data on men.

The findings suggested there was a recent increase of women in educational leadership. The percentage of women in educational leadership graduate programs had increased slightly in all states included in the study: women's representation increased from 32.3 percent in 1974-75 to 35.6 percent in 1978-79 (Stockard & Kempner, 1981, p. 87).

Stockard and Kempner (1981) found that females were participating in educational leadership organizations more at the state and local levels. Their participation was lower at the national level in similar organizations. Stockard and Kempner (1981) reported an increase from 19 percent female participation to 32 percent female participation in a state leadership organization from 1976 to 1979 versus data from the National Organization of School Administrators that reported 12 percent female participation to 14 percent female participation over the same time period (Stockard & Kempner, 1981, p. 85).

Stockard and Kempner (1981) argued hiring practices and trends showed the most growth at lower levels of leadership. The greatest area of growth was reported in leadership positions such as coordinators, consultants, directors, and supervisors, central office positions, with an increase from 22.9 percent females in 1973-74 to 31.2 percent females in 1978-79 (Stockard & Kempner, 1981, p. 88). Leadership positions such as principals and vice principals in the study rose from 14.1 percent in 1973-74 to 18.6 percent in 1978-79 (Stockard & Kempner, 1981, p. 88). Stockard and Kempner (1981) reported the lowest increase from 1.7 percent of female superintendents and assistant superintendents in 1973-74 to 2.7 percent of females in 1978-79 (p. 88). Based upon these trends, the authors predicted sex segregation by leadership position in the future (i.e. female elementary principals and male superintendents).

Using existing data collected by Blount (1998), Tallerico and Blount (2004) conducted a secondary analysis to investigate the changing proportions of male and female superintendents between 1910 and 1990. They sought to understand the

patterns using sex segregation theories: job queue theory, resegregation, and ghettoization. Tallerico and Blount (2004) found that the superintendency had been dominated by males in the 20th century, ranging anywhere from 85 to 96 percent male dominance. There were only two brief periods where women represented 10 percent or more of the superintendency positions: 11 percent female superintendents in 1930 and 10 percent in 1998 (Tallerico & Blount, 2004, p. 640). The modern women's rights movement ushered in growth from 3 percent in 1970 to 10 percent in 1998 (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). Tallerico and Blount (2004) also suggested ghettoization took place in educational leadership with women in the lower profile leadership positions such as elementary principalships and instructional leadership positions. They defined ghettoization as the separation of women into specific and lower spheres within educational leadership. Tallerico and Blount (2004) called for further research through 2030 because the cyclical nature of the data suggested an imminent decline of female superintendents in 1998. They attributed a future decline to changing requirements of the superintendency, especially opening the position to former CEOs from the corporate sphere.

Conclusions from descriptive studies. This literature review features two studies highlighting descriptive data of women in educational leadership. This category supports the theory of silence of data presented by earlier scholars in the field (Blount, 1998; Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2011; Tyack and Hansot, 1982). In 1971, Betty Friedan and Anne West, leading female activists in society, demanded the "publication of annual reports showing the number of men and the number of women holding school-related jobs at each level of rank and salary" (Friedan &

West, 1971). Despite their demands, there has always been a lack of substantial quantitative data on females in educational leadership. In the 1960s, individual researchers attempted to fill in the gaps because the larger government organizations remained silent on the topic of gender (Blount, 1995). The organizations that could have easily collected data on females in educational leadership did not do so. Blount (1995) described the attempt to fill in the gaps: "Many of these reports conflicted with each other as researchers labored to recreate a past for which little or scattered documentation existed at best" (Blount, 1995, p. 2).

Most research studies, even today, contain bits and pieces of descriptive data. The table below provides data that was found interspersed in numerous studies throughout the review of the literature.

Table 2-4

Descriptive Data on Women in Educational Leadership

Source	Nationwide Findings Presented Chronologically
NEA Department of Elementary School Principals, 1968	55 percent of all elementary principals were female in 1928
Stockard & Kempner, 1981	50 percent of all elementary principals were female in the 1930s
NEA Department of Elementary School Principals, 1968	41 percent of all elementary principals were female in 1948
Tyack, 1976	99.4 percent of all superintendents were male in 1952
Skrla et al., 2000	6.7 percent of superintendents were female in 1952
NEA Department of Elementary School Principals, 1968	38 percent of all elementary school principals were female in 1958
NEA Department of Elementary School Principals, 1968	22 percent of all elementary principals were female in 1968
Stockard & Kempner, 1981	20 percent of all elementary principals were female in the 1970s
NEA Professional Women in	.6 percent of superintendents were female in 1971

Schools, 1971	
Knezevich, 1971	1.3 percent of superintendents were female in 1971
Stockard & Kempner, 1981	95 percent of all secondary principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents were male in 1972-1973
Department of Health, Education, & Welfare, 1976	94.6 percent of superintendents and assistant superintendents were male in 1976
Glazer, 1991	71 percent of teachers were female and 29 percent were male in 1988
Skrla et al., 2000	6.6 percent of superintendents were female in 1992
Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000	The percentage of female superintendents rose from 6.6 percent in 1992 to 13.2 percent in 1993
Tallerico & Blount, 2004	10 percent of all superintendents were female in 1998
Hodgkinson, H. & Montenegro, X., 1999	57 percent of central office positions and 33 percent of all assistant superintendent positions were filled by females in 1999
Archer, 2003	Approximately 10 to 15 percent of superintendents were female in 2003
Adams & Hambright, 2004	Females represented 75 percent of the teaching workforce, but males represented 60 percent of the administrators in 2004
Sharp et al., 2004	Females were an average of 50 years old when seeking the superintendency when compared to male counterparts who sought the position at the average age of 40 years old
Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2011; Gupton, 2009;	Females earned 67 percent of the doctoral degrees in educational leadership in the modern era

The data above are very fragmented and sometimes inconsistent or contradictory, therefore it is hard to find patterns of comparison; for example, the data collected in both 1952 and 1971 conflicts. Blount (1995) described this dilemma, "…little other data has been collected on the number of women in school administration. Taken collectively, these studies are difficult to interpret since each has employed different research techniques, counted different samples, of the superintendent population, and occurred at erratic intervals" (p. 3). Researchers such as Blount (1995, 1998) and Tyack (1976) blame the underrepresentation of females in educational leadership partly on the lack of data collected concerning the problem.

Barriers to Female Educational Leadership

Research on barriers became more prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s

following the modern women's rights movement. This type of research has continued for decades. It became common to highlight both the legal barriers prohibiting women from obtaining leadership positions within PK-12 education as well as the policies within school systems that hampered women's ability to climb the leadership ladder. As a result of the legislation passed during the 1960s and 1970s, mentioned earlier in the historical category, these barriers evolved into a question of local practices instead. Contemporary studies argue that women are no longer faced with barriers but are making conscious choices to pursue, or not pursue, educational leadership opportunities (McGee, 2010).

History of the barriers to educational leadership. The women's movement surged in the 1960s and 1970s in America. The full impact of the movement still remains unclear today (Barreto, Ryan & Schmitt, 2009). Eagly and Carli (2007) described the barriers prior to the women's rights movement as a concrete wall. These were often legislative barriers that prevented women from reaching equal ranks in employment. Women were not invited to the leadership table. Hymowitz and Schellhardt coined the phrase 'glass ceiling' in 1986 in a Wall Street Journal column to describe the changing conditions since the movement. Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) used this phrase to describe the barriers, salary discrepancies, corporate cultures, work/life balance, and networking which corporate women faced in career advancement in the 1980s. Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) argued these barriers were more subtle than ones faced before, but equally as damaging. Eagly and Carli (2007) argued that the glass ceiling was a misleading description for the 21st century and instead proposed the metaphor of a labyrinth.

The glass ceiling was impenetrable, but the labyrinth offered a maze-like route in which women could reach the top (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Finally, Kaye and Giulioni (2012) offered the idea of a rock wall as a way to describe contemporary female career advancement. Women have not ascended a traditional career ladder, but they may have to move down and across before they could move up the rock wall.

The literature base regarding barriers to women in educational leadership has evolved greatly over the last twenty to thirty years. Although the percentage of female leaders has increased slightly at the superintendent level and more gains have been made elsewhere, women are no longer barred from leadership positions in education. They had been pursuing alternate avenues for leadership. Most studies regarding females and barriers to leadership in education has begun with a similar introduction: there has been a shortage of female leaders. There has not been a shortage of qualified women, but qualified women were not applying for jobs. To explain this phenomenon, more recent studies suggest a shift from barriers and constraints to female decision-making in which women are not opting to pursue or accept said positions (Brown & Wynn, 2004).

Literature on barriers to female educational leadership. The criteria for inclusion of studies reviewed in this section included: studies must be focused on PK-12, studies must be based on barriers to female leadership and/or female decision making, and studies must be conducted after Blount's historical research which was published in 1998. This category was limited to the years 1998-2013 because the research in this field is plentiful and it would overwhelm the review to include the literature from earlier decades. The below literature review is presented

chronologically.

Boulton and Coldron (1998) conducted a study to investigate why some qualified women teachers were turning down promotions to more prestigious educational leadership positions. Boulton and Coldron (1998) acknowledged that most early studies on women in educational leadership operated from the deficit model; which assumed that women were not qualified for leadership positions. This deficit model did not seem to fit any longer given the increasing share of women who held post-baccalaureate degrees in administration or supervision. They suggested that barriers had been replaced by choices for potential female leaders.

Boulton and Coldron (1998) conducted a case study surrounding one woman who was considering and later declined to pursue a leadership position. This study also included a set of reflective interviews from multiple people involved with the decision. Boulton and Coldron (1998) conducted a thematic analysis of the interviews and presented the findings by significant themes mentioned by different of stakeholders.

Boulton and Coldron (1998) found that most stakeholders acknowledged the impact of budget issues on the hiring process. The female candidate was concerned about whether she was being considered to simply fill a quota or because she was the best fit for the job. Boulton and Coldron (1998) suggested the participant was anxious about the logistics and implications of obtaining the new job over other qualified applicants. The candidate was worried about the reactions of others, the animosity from her peers because it would have been an internal promotion, and hostility from other women within the organization. Boulton and

Coldron (1998) suggested that a male candidate would not obsess over such 'what if' scenarios after male stakeholders commented over the absurdity of such worries. The study discussed the importance of encouragement from current leaders. The female candidate did not feel as if current leaders were encouraging her to seek the leadership position. This study also highlighted the lack of formal mentorship opportunities for the female candidate.

Skrla, Reyes, and Scheurich (2000) were interested in the silence surrounding women superintendents on both the individual and professional levels. Prior research showed women superintendents were reluctant to discuss individual maltreatment and barriers. The educational research base was scant on the female superintendent's perspective of barriers to success. They hoped to provide an outlet for female superintendents to discuss their careers. Few studies prior to this included the women themselves. Skrla et al. (2000) conducted three qualitative case studies in order to expose sexism, if it existed, and encouraged participation from women superintendents. The researchers were an integral part of the research process. They were guided by the following four questions:

1. How do women who have been superintendents perceive the way that gender is socially represented?
2. How do women who have been superintendents perceive the way that the role of the superintendent is socially represented?
3. How do women who have been superintendents experience and deal with the differences and/or similarities between the way that gender is socially represented and the way that the role of superintendent is socially represented?
4. How do women who have been superintendents experience the role gender plays in understanding and managing problematic work situations?

All four questions focused on how the themes of gender and society impacted female superintendents. Participants were chosen using intensity sampling,

focusing on women who would provide rich information. The sampling criteria included in the study were fairly complex. Former superintendents who left voluntarily were chosen in hopes that they would and could talk more freely than females who were currently employed as superintendents. All participants were employed as a superintendent for at least three years and they left for another profession. Participants remained anonymous because of the perceived fear or reluctance to participate. All three were white, middle aged women from the southwest who served medium-sized, demographically diverse districts as superintendents (Skrla et al., 2000). All participants were married, one had a school-aged child, all were involved in the community, but none of them belonged to a professional women's organization.

The research design was unique because interviewers wanted collaboration from interviewees and took an 'interactive-relational approach' to data collection (Skrla, et al., 2000). "The interactive-relational approach to interviewing was designed to balance the professional responsibility of the researcher with the goal of understanding the interviewee" (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 54). Skrla et al. (2000) informed the participants about as much of the background of the study as possible. Each participant was involved in two individual interviews and one focus group interview. The researchers allowed and encouraged the participants to help generate interview protocol for subsequent interviews. All interviews were taped and transcribed. The researchers used 'deductive content analysis' and 'sequential analysis techniques' to analyze the transcripts (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 56).

Skrla et al. (2000) found three recurring themes throughout the research:

sexism, silence, and solutions. The participants acknowledged sexism in the following ways: males and females questioned the women's competence, the doubt that they were business-minded, and pervasiveness of sex-role stereotypes (Skrla et al., 2000). Sex-role stereotypes were problematic with the researchers suggesting the concept of the double bind, "the impossibility of being seen as assertive as a leader while also maintain an appropriately feminine demeanor" (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 60). Participants admitted their identity was wrapped up in being a female. This presented a dilemma because female superintendents were not judged by ability, but instead by gender.

Participants acknowledged silence personally, in administrator preparation programs, and within the profession of the superintendency. Women were conditioned not to dwell on gender issues individually because this made them seem weak or "bitchy" (Skrla et al., 2000). The participants acknowledged that their superintendent preparation programs did not adequately, or ever, discuss the role of gender. Professional organizations, state agencies, and state governments practically ignored the issue of gender. One participant claimed, "We don't want to talk about these things. We want them to go away. Pretty much the way we've done race in schools" (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 63). Women in this study realized the hierarchical form of succession where superintendents often pass the position to the male heir apparent. Skrla et al. (2000) highlighted the prevalent barriers to female superintendents in this study. The study also acknowledged the overarching theme of silence: nobody wants to talk about the issues facing women in educational leadership, including the women themselves.

The following year, Young and McLeod (2001) conducted an exploratory study on female decision making in PK-12 educational leadership entitled *Flukes, Opportunities, and Planned Interventions: Factors Impacting Women's Decisions to become School Administrators*. The authors conducted the study because of the lack of emphasis on gender in Educational Leadership research. Young and McLeod (2001) joined Skrla et al. (2000) by focusing on the missing link in the research. According to Young and McLeod (2001), there were very few studies on how and why women choose to enter the field.

This study focused on career aspirations of female educational leaders in Iowa. There were two parts to the mixed method study: open-ended interviews with candidates, principals, central office staff, assistant superintendents, and superintendents. An analysis of graduate students' records was also used: 241 graduate students, 127 of them being female. Most participants were white females. This study was unique in that it looked at data based on different levels of leadership.

Young and McLeod (2001) found that men aspired to climb the career ladder in the traditional hierarchical manner. The study suggested that women were more focused on career commitments, positional goals, and leadership orientations. Women's career commitments were to facilitate the learning process. Women spent an average of ten years in the classroom before seeking an administrative position and they did not enter the education field thinking about a career in educational leadership. "Even when enrolled in educational administration programs, many women indicated that they were not certain whether they would pursue an

administrative position" (Young & McLeod, 2001, p. 471). In an earlier article, Shakeshaft (1987) argued that teaching and administration were completely separate spheres of education. Young and McLeod (2001) argued that men embraced them as separate spheres, but women in this study did not.

Young and McLeod (2001) found three main factors that emerged as impacting female leadership: role models, exposure to leadership styles, and endorsements. All three of these factors needed to be present for women participants to seek an administrative career. Participants lacking even one of these had less confidence when deciding to enter administration. The lack of a role model, exposure to various leadership styles, and endorsement from a current leader served as barriers to female leaders (Young & McLeod, 2001). Female principals acknowledged the importance of their teaching background much more than district-level leaders such as central office staff, assistant superintendents, and superintendents. Women in the study aspired to be elementary leaders, not secondary leaders. Women who were in secondary leadership positions gave credit to luck or evolution instead of individual worth. Women participants devalued their ambitious behavior in this study, just as they had done in Skrla et al.'s previous study in 2000. Females were reluctant to discuss their strengths.

Young and McLeod (2001) found that role models were very important to the participant's decision-making process to pursue leadership opportunities. Female teachers usually felt one of three emotions towards an administrator: satisfaction, similar to, or resistance (Young & McLeod, 2001). Female role models were very instrumental in the career development of other women. Another key finding

centered on the concept of endorsement and support from others. In an earlier study, Marshall and Kasten (1994) described this phenomenon as the 'tap on the shoulder.' The study found a strong connection between endorsement from a current leader, male or female, and a female applying for a job. Support from educators and family members and friends was pivotal to a female seeking a position in leadership. The women in higher-level leadership positions such as assistant superintendents and superintendents had more spousal support. Teachers did not feel a sense of support from higher positions, which helped to support the idea of a chasm between teaching and leadership. The lack of endorsement from current leaders and the participant's family served as a barrier to leadership.

Two years after Young and McLeod (2001), Archer (2003) wrote an article about a study conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) earlier that year. The AASA study compiled data from 1,350 female superintendents and assistant superintendents nationwide. The purpose of the study was to examine the prevalence/impact of the glass ceiling in education.

Archer (2003) cited a number of findings as a result of this study. Female participants perceived the candidate search process for superintendents to be biased towards males who had only been in the classroom for a few years. Most female candidates for superintendent had been in the classroom for more than 10 years and were at an advanced age when compared to male counterparts (Archer, 2003). The study mentioned the lack of formal networking and mentoring programs for female educational leaders, just as earlier Skrla et al. (2000) and Young and

McLeod (2001) had suggested previously. Many women expressed the belief that if there were already too many women in lower levels of central office then a female superintendent would signal too many women in the division. Many women cited the usual family demands such as balancing professional demands, child-rearing, and having a 'commuter marriage' as a result of being hired away from home (Archer, 2003). These were all typical barriers or constraints listed by a number of other studies which have been reviewed here.

This study suggested a unique barrier for female candidates: golf. Female participants in the study mentioned informal networking and mentoring that took place at country clubs on the golf courses (Archer, 2003). Women were allowed to play golf, but most of the participants were not avid golfers, themselves. Females felt inhibited by the lack of exposure to their male counterparts in informal settings, such as the golf course.

Similar to Skrla et al. in 2000, Archer (2003) argued that female superintendents were risk takers. Most of the participants acknowledged barriers were present before they became leaders and would probably persist long after they left their positions of leadership. The study did highlight positive change related to females and educational leadership, however. Many participants acknowledged a shift in attitude since the early 1990s. A number of women felt more valued for their instructional expertise as a result of the higher accountability standards brought about in the most recent decades. Archer (2003) concluded with the notion that societal norms served as a greater barrier to female leadership than the qualifications for leadership or the job constraints.

The following year Adams and Hambright (2004) conducted a study to investigate why many teacher leaders were not becoming administrators. They noticed female educators, although qualified, were not choosing to become administrators. They cited an article by Tallerico (2000) that suggested women chose not to seek positions of leadership. All of the earlier studies reviewed here have also argued the same point (Archer, 2003; Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Skrla et al., 2000; Young & McLeod, 2001).

Adams and Hambright (2004) informally polled an undisclosed number of participants, male and female, in a graduate-level teacher leader program to determine their perceptions of administrators and why females do not pursue administrative positions. Most comments about the job description of an administrator were overwhelmingly negative. Participants had varying experiences with female administrators, but many expressed concern that females worked harder to prove themselves and, in turn, burned out in their leadership capacity. Participants listed common barriers to leadership, including but not limited to: family, education, salary, management of personnel, and feeling out of touch with students (Adams and Hambright, 2004). Adams and Hambright (2004) argued women were making the choice not to become leaders or stay in current leadership roles rather than encountering traditional barriers for entry into higher level leadership roles.

That same year, Brown and Wynn (2004) conducted a study to determine why some qualified female teachers were choosing to remain in the classroom instead of pursuing leadership positions. They began with the usual description of the shortage of qualified leadership applicants, but acknowledged there was no shortage

of qualified women. These women were not applying for vacant jobs. In 2003, just a year before this study was published, Cusick wrote an article in *Education Week* arguing that qualified teachers were choosing not to seek jobs as principals. Brown and Wynn (2004) concentrated on women who chose not to pursue leadership opportunities.

Brown and Wynn (2004) conducted a qualitative case study experiment centered on data from in-depth interviews. The study was structured around the following question and sub questions:

1. Why do leadership-skilled women teachers choose to remain in the classroom rather than seek administrative positions?

    a. How do leadership-skilled women teachers perceive the principalship role?

    b. What barriers related to school administration do leadership-skilled women teachers identify?

Principals identified possible participants who then completed surveys and questionnaires based on leadership styles (Brown & Wynn, 2004). A total of 12 participants were then interviewed based on the preliminary data.

Brown and Wynn (2004) found that women were remaining in the classroom because they valued the nurturing role of the classroom teacher. The idea of being a nurturer emerged in this study as both a choice and a constraint for the participants (Brown & Wynn, 2004). Women did not feel as much pressure from external barriers, but instead gave value to their internal choices and constraints. The participants also felt a great sense of efficacy in the classroom. Brown and Wynn (2004) found that these women felt as if they were making a difference on a daily basis. Most of the participants, 8 out of 12, were on school-based leadership

teams and believed they were already leading in some capacity. The participants generally viewed the principalship in a negative manner. Brown and Wynn (2004) found the principalship was associated with the following things: discipline, personnel issues, and politics. Participants emphasized the choice to remain in the classroom. Brown and Wynn (2004) found that participants chose to remain in the classroom because the principalship seemed an 'unsuitable match' for them (p. 707).

Also in 2004, Sharp, Malone, Walter, and Supley conducted an experiment entitled *A Three-State Study of Female Superintendents*. The purpose of this study was to survey female superintendents to see if participants mentioned the barriers frequently cited in the literature. The supporting literature suggested the superintendency was "the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States" (Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004, p. 8).

Sharp et al. (2004) conducted this quantitative study. A survey was sent to all female superintendents in the states of Illinois (102 females), Indiana (26 females), and Texas (84 females). Some statistically significant findings emerged. The typical career path for most female superintendents was ascension from the assistant superintendent position, following the traditional hierarchical career path. Most women superintendents had male references when they were hired for the job: the authors questioned whether this was because there were more male leaders or because male leaders carried more clout in the hiring process. The majority of the females surveyed did not have school age children at home, 66 percent of women, and 92 percent of the respondents were white females. Perhaps most importantly,

the majority of respondents did not recognize discrimination in the hiring process, but half of the respondents acknowledged the 'Good Old Boy' network in their surveys. These women did not cite family responsibilities as a barrier. This study found that women were reluctant to talk about barriers to their individual success just as earlier Skrla et al. (2000) found.

The next study was conducted three years later and focused on the concept of the glass ceiling in British schools. Moreau, Osgood, and Halsall (2007) presented trends in Britain that were consistent with barriers in America: lack of emphasis on gender in educational research, females dominated teaching, and females were underrepresented in administrative positions. The purpose of this study was to identify factors influencing career development and female access to management positions.

Moreau et al. (2007) collected various forms of data from fifteen case study schools from geographically diverse areas and varying levels of English schools: nursery, primary, and secondary. Moreau et al. (2007) collected data from equal opportunity documents, semi-structured interviews from each school, and conducted focus group interviews from six schools. They interviewed female teachers, head teachers, the governor, and various stakeholders from national or local organizations with vested interest in education or gender equity. The study did not control for race or class, but instead focused solely on gender. The study was structured with the hope that the methodology would relate policy to actual practice and compared experiences across various levels of leadership. The authors admitted most of the findings emerged from the teacher interviews. The interview questions focused

around topics such as: entry into the profession, career development, job satisfaction, aspiration, factors impacting careers, and experiences with equal opportunity polices.

Moreau et al. (2007) presented a number of key findings. First, school managers did not notice or acknowledge an underrepresentation of women leaders and all participants agreed that education was a female friendly environment. Women managers followed the typical linear masculine path to the top and felt an individual responsibility in relation to gender inequalities. Participants believed as if they were experiencing unique gender issues and gender inequities did not permeate all of society in similar ways. Female leaders did find the policy of recruiting male teachers to be noteworthy to gender equity because it seemed to send a message that men should be the 'rightful managers' (Moreau et al., 2007, p. 247). Many female leaders attributed their success to luck or serendipity as others, Skrla et al. (2000) and Young and McLeod (2001), also suggested. The findings in this study support the findings in Skrla et al. (2000) where female superintendents were reluctant to acknowledge and discuss gender issues.

The most significant finding emerged about gender inequities at home. Female educators were much more willing to acknowledge inequities in their personal lives and more reluctant to do so professionally (Moreau, 2007). This is the opposite of Skrla et al.'s (2000) finding. Women acknowledged the stereotypical gender role of child rearer.

Two years later, Sandra Gupton wrote a reflective piece drawing upon her original 1995 study in which she and a colleague, Gloria Slick, surveyed 150 female

administrators: superintendents, assistant superintendents, and high school principals. As discussed previously in this review, the 1990s were projected to be the decade of full female equality in PK-12 education administration and society as a whole (Blount, 1998). The original study was designed to be a quantitative study, but many participants submitted additional text that was later analyzed thus the participants themselves turned the study from quantitative into qualitative. This 2009 article was a reflection on the earlier study.

In 2009, Gupton's reflections were varied. Much of her article focused the barriers to female leadership that still existed in 15 years following the original study. Gupton (2009) argued that women were not politically prepared in comparison to their male counterparts. They lacked the networking connections as well as the stomach for political games that seemed to accompany traditional leadership positions as discussed in Archer's (2003) work reviewed earlier. Women acknowledged the challenges of balancing work and family demands as Moreau (2007) highlighted in a previous study in this literature review. Women claimed to work harder than men at the same levels (Gupton, 2009). Also, Gupton (2009) acknowledged that women do not support other women. This article admitted that barriers to leadership were far more subtle in the 21st century than they were during the original study in 1993. Gupton (2009) cited the conflict between work and family as the most important issue facing modern women. Society, she said, presented working and mothering as mutually exclusive choices (Gupton, 2009).

The same year, Noel-Batiste (2009) conducted a study involving female leaders to describe obstacles and enablers affecting their career paths towards

educational administration. The study began with the typical description of the shortage of female leaders across the nation and in Virginia specifically. This was a quantitative non-experimental descriptive study of 111 female principals in Virginia. Noel-Batiste used Gupton and Slick's aforementioned 1993 survey to determine the female perceptions about barriers and enablers on their paths to leadership.

There were a number of important findings from the study. The participants believed that qualified women sought administrative jobs with 92 percent strongly agreeing or agreeing. Seventy-eight percent of the participants thought women were supportive of other women seeking administrative positions (Noel-Batiste, 2009). Almost half of the participants, 42 percent, were undecided about the impact of family responsibilities on their career paths. Approximately 80 percent of the participants thought women were present in stereotypical leadership roles such as elementary principalships and central office positions and that there was a 'good ole boy' network that impacted female leaders (Noel-Batiste, 2009).

Noel-Batiste (2009) reported that 49 percent of women wanted their educational leadership position for the challenge offered by the job, 33 percent of women wanted to make a difference in the lives of others, and two percent of women were motivated by the salary of the job. The participants felt that women were underrepresented in leadership roles because of the lack of female role models, networking opportunities, and mentoring programs (Noel-Batiste, 2009). The female participants were the most hesitant to acknowledge the existence of the family and career conflict.

One year later, McGee (2010) conducted a study to investigate the decision-

making behaviors of female educators. As discussed earlier in the review, most legal barriers had long since been erased, but McGee theorized/hypothesized that self-imposed barriers, such as family responsibilities, unwillingness to relocate, and other social norms associated with motherhood, were influencing women's decisions to avoid higher-level administrative positions (McGee, 2010). McGee emphasized it was the woman's choice to pursue or not pursue a leadership position, instead of barriers, that was preventing women from achieving the highest levels of educational leadership.

McGee (2010) conducted a mixed-method study. The data used descriptive statistics as well as qualitative reflections on the amount of female superintendents in Florida where 21 out of 67 districts were led by a female. The purpose of the study was to determine the percentage of women at various levels of leadership and determine the similarities and differences between the various leadership positions, elementary, middle, and high school leadership positions as well as district level leadership positions were analyzed. Three research questions drove the study:

1. Was there a demographic difference between gender and leadership level?
2. Was there a relationship between gender of the superintendent and gender of the principals and assistant principals in the same district?
3. What was the relationship between superintendents and lower-level administrators from the district who were hoping to advance?

The methodology was two-fold. First, descriptive statistics were collected from the Florida Department of Education to examine gender representation by leadership level. Second, 90 female administrators within 21 districts with female superintendents in the state were surveyed. These females served in various leadership positions such as assistant principals, principals, and assistant

superintendents.

Based upon the survey responses, the self-imposed barriers mentioned in the study were ranked based on the average responses (n= 9) in order of their importance or significance from most to least:

1. Anxiety/Family
2. Politics—'good ole boy' Network
3. Lack of Network
4. Lack of Confidence
5. Job Location
6. Childcare Issues
7. Employers Negative Gender Attitudes
8. Lack of Assertiveness
9. Spouse's Career Conflict
10. Reluctance for Risk
11. Desire to Start Family
12. Lack of Peer Support
13. Lack of Family Support
14. Lack of Motivation

(McGee, 2010)

McGee (2010) found that women stayed in the classroom longer than their male counterparts. In addition, women were more academically prepared. Women who held higher positions such as assistant superintendent and superintendent were less likely to have children at home. Women focused on balancing work and family demands. Women acknowledged the importance of networking with other female leaders. This study also found that women tended to focus on women who were a mirror image of themselves. For example, a female teacher may have aspired to be like a female administrator who also had a husband and kids. Role models were very important to the participants. Women needed formal mentoring. Most successful women in this study did not see barriers as obstacles, but instead viewed these things as challenges. Female leaders in this study did not delay their career

progression for children, 76 percent of the participants went ahead and had kids, regardless of the impact on their careers (McGee, 2010). McGee's findings focused on the choice that female administrators made when responding to self-imposed barriers.

Conclusions on the barriers to female leadership. Many of the research studies converged on a set of modern-day barriers or constraints: compensation had been limited when compared to corporate leadership, time demands, accountability to stakeholders, stress levels, societal demands and norms, bureaucracy at all levels, inadequate preparation, political demands, scrutiny from all stakeholders, lack of networking and mentoring opportunities, the 'good ole boy' network, and balancing family demands with professional obligations (Boulton & Coldron, 1998, Harris, Arnold, Lowery, & Crocker, 2000; Archer, 2003; Brown & Wynn, 2004; Gupton, 2009; Noel-Batiste, 2009). Most studies presented similar barriers to female educational leadership, but various studies debated the impact of these barriers/constraints on the modern-day female leader. The more recent studies argued many qualified female applicants, and males alike, were consciously choosing to avoid a career in educational leadership (Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Brown and Wynn, 2004; McGee, 2010).

The studies made similar suggestions for reducing the impact of barriers on female leadership in education. A few studies in this literature review called for the overhaul of administrator preparation programs to benefit female leaders more (Skrla et al., 2000; Young & McLeod, 2001). Two studies, conducted by Adams and Hambright (2004) and McGee (2010), suggested a stronger school/university

partnership in which female leaders could be in constant contact with mentors at the university level. Most studies called for a larger systemic change that would shift the social paradigms to include female leadership as a norm (Adams & Hambright, 2004; McGee, 2010; Sharp et al., 2004; Skrla, 2000; Young & McLeod, 2001). While the topic of barriers dominates the research on female leaders in education, the next section reviews the few studies that highlight the advantages of female leadership in education.

Advantages to Female Educational Leadership

This literature review uncovered two studies that highlighted the female advantages[3] to educational leadership (Frasher & Frasher, 1979; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). In 1999, Shakeshaft predicted that this literature base would become more popular as barriers to entry facing female educational leaders became more subtle. In order to be included in this category of research, a study had to meet the following criteria: focus on PK-12 educational leadership and highlight the advantages of female leadership within education.

Frasher and Frasher (1979) conducted a meta-analysis of the research on women in educational administration from 1950 to 1976. The purpose of this study was to highlight the advantages of female leadership in education. The description of the methodology was sparse. Articles were analyzed from 1950 to 1976 and focus on the positive aspects of female leadership within PK-12 education.

Frasher and Frasher (1979) found three patterns in the literature: career

[3] Female advantages were presented at the organizational level. The typical female leader presented a leadership style that would be advantageous to PK-12 education as a whole.

development, instructional leadership, and administrative style. First, female career development was linked to the idea of women as nurturers. Teachers were the most prominent female role models. Teaching was a woman's 'first choice.' Second, women did not enter the profession thinking about leadership opportunities unlike their male counterparts (Frasher & Frasher, 1979). The 'teacher first' mindset seemed to compel female leaders to concentrate primarily on instructional leadership, as a result. Frasher and Frasher (1979) argued this emphasis on instructional leadership was not a valued leadership trait of researchers in the 1970s. The authors indicated that school administration preparation programs did not focus on instruction as a leadership skill. Third, the female administrative style was not authoritative, but accommodative; women leaders tended to use more of a democratic and participatory style of leadership (Frasher & Frasher, 1979). Frasher and Frasher (1979) used words such as: accommodative, compliant, other-directed, sensitive, nurturing, compromising, patient, and empathetic to describe female leadership (p. 9).

Frasher and Frasher (1979) concluded with the statement that females are not necessarily better than males as educational leaders. They went further to say

> We do, however, condemn the past practices of administrator selection that have not only ignored documentation that women have been highly capable administrators, but, further have failed to acknowledge the evidence that most 'feminine' types of behaviors exhibited by principals have been judged by experts, supervisors, and teachers as the more effective administrative behaviors (Frasher & Frasher, 1979, p. 10).

The authors worried that females would continue to 'act like a man' to get hired. The article concluded with the following statement, "Despite the fact that the data have been ignored, they clearly reflect a bias in favor of the 'feminine'" (Frasher and

Frasher, 1979, p. 11).

More than three decades later, Margaret Grogan and Charol Shakeshaft, pioneers in the field of women in educational leadership, wrote a short book in 2011 to bring the field up to speed on the female approach to educational leadership. This volume focused on styles of educational leadership associated with women, specifically what they referred to as the 'diverse collective leadership.' Unlike many other studies, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) looked at research from the past 20 years and sought to highlight the advantages of female leadership. They acknowledged the overwhelming amount of existing literature that focused on barriers to female leadership. Unlike earlier scholars, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) were not preoccupied with these barriers. They wanted to capitalize on the advantages of female leadership. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) used prior studies to condense characteristics of female leadership into the following five categories: leadership for learning, leadership for social justice, relational leadership, spiritual leadership, and balanced leadership.

A great deal of Grogan and Shakeshaft's (2011) book discussed the female desire to change the status quo. Even though they claimed not to be writing a comparison of male and female leadership, there was a lot of discussion about how women have more passion for the mission of PK-12 education, a greater sense of spirituality and balance, and more appreciation for diversity when leading. They frequently mentioned women leaders as having power 'with' others instead of having power 'over' others. Although the authors did not make a direct comparison to men, it was often insinuated in their observations. Women in education felt more

comfortable with relational power and often did not feel the need to seek formal, legitimate power over others.

Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) also noticed that women typically focused on curriculum and instruction more than their male counterparts. Women stayed in positions longer, especially in the classroom. The principalship had become more appealing to women since the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001. Brunner and Grogan (2007) predicted a rise in female educational leaders as a result, "The increased focus on academics and accountability should make the job more attractive to more women who tend to have more focus on curriculum, teaching, and learning" (p. 88). Women were reluctant leaders, according Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011), because the traditional hierarchical pull did not get them out of the classroom as much as the desire to clean up another's mistakes.

Grogan & Shakeshaft (2011) acknowledged the complicated nature of motherhood in educational leadership. Typically the motherly traits had been devalued in educational leadership because society expected women to behave this way by default. Many studies in Grogan and Shakeshaft's (2011) review cited motherhood as an advantage because the extra burden brought on by child rearing made them work smarter, not harder. Women leaders often talked about how much work their mothers handled almost as a rite of passage for themselves. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) acknowledged the common belief that women must be as stressed as their mothers were. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) presented a modern-day review of the advantages of female leadership in their work.

Conclusions on the advantages to female leadership. Both Frasher and Frasher (1979) and Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) made the strongest argument about the advantages of females as instructional leaders. Women have always dominated the classrooms across America and the modern-day push towards instructional leadership could be benefiting the female educator (Blount, 1998; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This most recent emphasis on females as instructional leaders might explain why women have chosen central office positions focusing on instructional leadership instead of the superintendency, which has been modeled after a corporate leadership position. Although both of these pieces of literature claimed to focus on the advantages of females in education, there was a great deal of comparison to their male counterparts. The discussion of female advantages does not stand alone in this literature.

Studies on the Field of Women in Educational Leadership

This final category of research will focus on the macro level of women in educational leadership from the vantage point of the entire field of educational leadership research. The criteria for inclusion of studies in this category were: the studies must focus on women in PK-12 educational leadership and the studies must be researching the field of educational leadership instead of individual female leaders. There were four meta-analyses and literature reviews that met the criteria. The literature is presented chronologically.

In 1991, Glazer explored feminism with regards to education in a meta-analysis of the research on educational leadership. This study concentrated on the lack of feminist theories in the school reform movement. Glazer (1991) pointed out the

patterns of male dominance in helping/feminized professions such as healthcare and education: men as doctors and principals with females as nurses and teachers. Glazer (1991) also noticed that research studies seemed to treat gender as one of many variables instead of a stand-alone category, taking emphasis away from the female educator. Glazer (1991) warned of separating data by gender, race, and class because white middle class women have always dominated education. Glazer (1991) mentioned that most of the literature on women in educational leadership focused on conformity to male standards: act like a man at work and a female at home. This 'act like a man' phenomenon connected to Frasher and Frasher's 1979 work referenced in the previous section. The duality of the female leader, wife and mother at home and professional woman at work, was the focus of most literature during the 1980s (Glazer, 1991). Researchers were not studying education through a feminized lens, but instead women were compared to men in most studies.

Almost ten years later, Lars Bjork (2000) conducted a review of the literature surrounding women in educational leadership because of the increased focus on feminist scholarship in PK-12 education. Bjork (2000) recognized the emphasis on school accountability and the superintendency, too. Bjork (2000) reviewed literature from three prominent educational leadership journals: *Education Administration Quarterly, Journal of School Leadership,* and the *Journal of Education Administration*, published during the years 1990 to 2000. He also reviewed books focusing on the superintendency during the same time period.

Bjork (2000) found that women scholars were contributing significantly to the body of literature during this time period, with women authoring, co-authoring, and/or

editing a large majority of the empirically based works. Most scholarly works had focused on the barriers to female leadership or offered the female perspective on leadership. Bjork (2000) called for more universal theories on the superintendency instead of focusing on gender, race, and class. He also called for further qualitative studies to delve deeper to understand why many women were turning down the opportunity to become or remain superintendent. Bjork (2000) highlighted the notion of females choosing, or not choosing, to be leaders instead of remaining focused on the barriers to female leadership.

In 1995, Acker conducted a review of the literature in education to see how much emphasis was placed on female elementary school teachers in the academic research. Acker (1995) found that there was very little research in education that focused on gender. Many gendered studies focused on women dominating teaching in a negative way. Acker concluded that "women teachers are deemed subpar even within a feminized profession" (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012, p. 245). Galman and Mallozzi replicated Acker's study in 2012. They reviewed relevant articles back to 1995 when the original study took place.

Galman and Mallozzi (2012) struggled to find studies that met their criteria: focused on elementary teachers in the United States, focused on gender, and were empirically based. The authors excused 42 of the 54 articles because gender was not the central focus of the study. Race and class usually overshadowed gender in the studies reviewed; therefore, this meta-analysis was relatively small-scale in comparison to others.

Galman and Mallozzi's (2012) systematic review of the literature produced

some key findings. Women were portrayed negatively when articles did focus solely on gender. For example, many of the articles discussed the overrepresentation of female teachers instead of the underrepresentation of female leaders. Gender was a fringe topic overpowered by race and class. Galman and Mallozzi (2012) constantly questioned and highlighted the lack of gender-specific literature and said "even the ubiquitous young, white, middle-class female teacher remains a veritable unknown, so commonplace she is forgotten and spoken for" (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012, p. 287). Galman and Mallozzi (2012) acknowledged that most gender specific literature lacked scholarly qualities and referred to them as "non-empirical thought pieces" (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012, p. 276). The majority of the studies compared women to their male counterparts in education. This study recognized that many female elementary teachers struggled with the choice to become a teacher because it was a devalued position. Most of the studies were qualitative in nature with small sample sizes, usually six to ten participants. Galman and Mallozzi's 2012 study was the only one found that focused on female teachers.

That same year, Lemasters and Roach (2012) conducted a large-scale meta-analysis of the literature on women in educational leadership. The authors acknowledged the dated nature of most sources on this topic. The 1990s brought about a huge spike in literature on females in educational leadership, but by 2000 there was a sharp decline in published materials. Even though there was an abundance of literature in the 1990s, it was 'passive literature' where statistics were given, but the stories behind the statistics were missing. This finding is similar to Galman and Mallozzi's (2012) claim that most scholarly work in the field of women in

educational leadership resulted in 'thought pieces' that lacked any relevant research. Lemasters and Roach (2012) went further to categorize literature in the field of gender in educational leadership as mainly focusing on career paths, barriers to leadership, and obtaining the positions. Few studies highlighted the experience of females who were actually in leadership positions. There were only a select group of researchers who dominated the field, as well.

Lemasters and Roach (2012) presented data to show that a higher percentage of females were employed as superintendents in hard-to-staff rural or urban school districts. Lemasters and Roach (2012) brought up the theory that women obtained leadership positions when 'no one else would take the job.' Were females the most qualified for these challenging positions or were they the only ones willing to take the jobs? Lemasters and Roach (2012) suggested further study of the phenomenon was needed. They also suggested studies of women in leadership roles as a result of the 2001 No Child Left Behind legislation. Women had traditionally been viewed as instructional leaders whereas men had been viewed in more administrative roles (Lemasters & Roach, 2012). The recent emphasis towards instructional leadership and accountability may have helped the female plight. Females have been viewed as the more qualified instructional leaders in research since the early 2000s.

Conclusions on studies in the field of women in educational leadership. Similar themes emerged from most of the studies in this category of the literature review. The most common theme was the lack of research focusing on the topic of gender. Glazer (1991) discussed how gender has been devalued in the literature.

Bjork (2000) called for further qualitative studies to delve deeper into the topic of gender. Aker (1995) and Galman and Mallozzi (2012) conducted similar reviews of the literature and both found there was not enough emphasis on gender in the field of educational leadership research. In 2012, both Galman and Mallozzi and Lemasters and Roach conducted reviews of the literature to find the lack of scholarly research on the topics. There were more essays and reflective pieces, but scholarly research, quantitative or qualitative, was limited in the field of women in educational leadership. Bjork (2000) and Galman and Mallozzi (2012) found that a number of studies highlighted the overrepresentation of females in the teaching profession instead of presenting the underrepresentation of females at the leadership level. Most studies in this literature review found that females were compared to males within the research on educational leadership instead of being studied independently (Glazer, 1991; Bjork, 2000; Galman & Mallozzi, 2012). Bjork (2000) called for further qualitative studies that focus on female participants' choices to pursue or not to pursue higher level leadership opportunities.

Conclusion

The review of the literature within the five categories uncovered a number of findings/themes. The reviewed literature showed that women have been underrepresented as educational leaders for the entirety of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Although greatly underrepresented, scholars had been predicting gender equity in educational leadership positions since the early 1900s (Glazer, 1991;Gupton & Slick, 1995). Females appeared to be the instructional leaders within PK-12 education, but not at the symbolic positions of leadership such

as superintendents and secondary principalships. Much of the research focused on female superintendents or female principals instead of focusing on the entirety of educational leadership positions (Blount, 1998; McGee, 2010; Sharp et al., 2004; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Small gains in the number of female superintendents had been made periodically in the 1930s and 1990s specifically, but trends showed a cyclical pattern has remained up through the contemporary age (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). Women leaders were more likely to be found at the elementary level (Gupton, 2009). There were very few studies that compared females in the various forms of leadership within school systems (McGee, 2010; Stockard & Kempner, 1991; Young & McLeod, 2001). No studies were found that compared female teachers to female leaders. There was an obvious divide between teaching and leadership within the reviewed literature (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011).

There was a large body of literature focusing on barriers to female leadership within education and most of the studies concluded with similar barriers (Archer, 2003; Gupton, 2009; McGee, 2010; Skrla et al., 2000; Young & McLeod, 2001). There was a more recent shift with the focus on female decision-making instead of barriers to leadership (McGee, 2010; Young & McLeod, 2001). If barriers remained, most of them were presented as self-imposed barriers (McGee, 2010). Most women acknowledged the presence of barriers, but were reluctant to talk about the specifics because it signaled a weakness in leadership, especially work and family conflict (Skrla et al., 2000). The topic of the glass ceiling was ignored or avoided within the literature (Skrla et al., 2000). While the glass ceiling within education was taboo, studies were quick to point out the pervasive influence of oppressive social norms

impacting the leadership capabilities of qualified female educators (Archer, 2003; Gupton, 2009; McGee, 2010, Skrla et al., 2000; Young & McLeod, 2001).

Female leaders in education valued relationships with role models, male and female, opportunities to network with other leaders, and the connection to formal mentors within educational leadership (Archer, 2003; Gupton, 2009; McGee, 2010; Skrla et al., 2000). Potential female leaders wanted to be tapped on the shoulder by role models and/or existing leaders before seeking leadership positions within educational systems (Young & McLeod, 2001).

A few research studies were found that highlighted the benefit of female leadership in education (Frasher & Frasher, 1979; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). This category was fairly scant in comparison to other parts of the literature review. No studies were found that presented an integration of leadership theories. Leadership theories and models remained separated by gender in all studies.

Gaps in the literature. As a result of this literature review, a number of gaps emerged in the research on women in educational leadership. Most studies focused on only females in leadership instead of all females in education. The large majority of the teaching workforce has always been female, but few studies focus on female teachers, with or without a comparison to female educational leaders. Gender, while a seemingly obvious topic in education, was rarely studied. Gender was not the main focus of literature, but often became one of multiple variables within a study. Race and class typically trumped the topic of gender. When studies focused on females in education, the female perspective was often missing. Few studies included the dialogue and story of the female in education.

Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011), leading researchers in the field of women in education, call for further quantitative and qualitative research. There is simply a lack of data on the current state of females in educational leadership. Leading researchers acknowledge the lack of descriptive data within the field and hope interviews, although more subjective, will elucidate long-silenced stories of females in educational leadership (Blount, 1998; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). "The research context should encourage an empathetic dialogue that provides a comfortable place for women to tell stories of successful professional work, interwoven with acknowledgements of their own silence" (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 34). While data is lacking, there is a great deal of interest regarding the current state of females in educational leadership.

Relevance of this study to existing literature. This research study served to fill in some of the gaps exposed in the literature review. While the study acknowledged the shortage of female leaders and the existence of multiple barriers to female leadership, this was not the focus of the study. Instead, the study provided an avenue for qualified females in various positions throughout education, classroom teachers and traditional leadership roles alike, to tell their personal stories. Lincoln (1993) described the need for this type of qualitative study:

> Until we have…a literature from the silenced, we will probably not have a full critique of the social order from their perspectives, nor will we have their proposed solutions, or the means of sharing their daily worlds. (p. 44)

This study was unique because female participants with similar qualifications who remain in the classroom were included in a study with females who held various positions of leadership within the PK-12 organization. Traditionally, female

classroom teachers have been left out of the educational leadership equation. The inclusion of the various leadership roles was unique in itself because most studies focused on specifically females in the superintendency.

The research study provided the participants an opportunity to discuss their personal and professional backgrounds as well as their present realities and future professional and personal goals. The data was analyzed for emergent themes that will guide the researcher to both build theory on female leadership, specifically female ascension to educational leadership. This data will then impact the researcher's practice within local school systems. Most of the research studies concluded with a call for the overhaul of social norms and practices that prohibit women from reaching their leadership potential. While this study will not change pervasive social norms in America, it will expose social norms that participants feel are most important to their successes and failures as females in education.

Chapter III: Methodology

This research study was designed around the following question: How do women in positions of leadership in Central Virginia, superintendents, central office staff, and principals, differ from experienced classroom teachers with the same qualifications? This guiding question steered the researcher away from quantitative inquiry that strived to answer the 'what' questions and instead focused on the more in-depth nature of qualitative research. Qualitative inquiry should be used when variables are unknown at the beginning of the research process (Cresswell, 2005). Emergent themes later shaped the qualitative process.

Prior to this study, there were more studies that reported the lack of females in educational leadership positions, but fewer studies existed that answered why some qualified women were not making the leap to leadership careers within the PK-12 organizational structure. Female classroom teachers had been studied to see why they were not climbing the ranks of educational leadership, but there were no studies found that compared female classroom teachers to female leaders. This study was unique because it compared female teachers to female leaders with the

same educational qualifications. This study was also unique in that it compared various levels of female leadership within PK-12 with participants ranging from assistant principals, principals, central office directors, to superintendents. The study also included a few participants who retired from PK-12 careers and were working in higher education. These female retirees offered a greater historical perspective of PK-12 as well.

Research Design

This was a multiple case study design with a phenomenological focus. Each participant in the study was treated as an individual case. The phenomenon in question was female leadership in PK-12 organizations with a particular interest in why women with the same qualifications were remaining in the classroom while others were pursuing careers in leadership. All females in the study possessed the qualifications to obtain a position of leadership, but only eight out of fourteen had assumed a position of leadership at the time of the study. Cresswell (2003) described how a phenomenology uncovered the 'essence' of the experience being studied. Yin (2008) emphasized the importance of explanation building in case study research.

Miles and Huberman (1994) defend the process of qualitative research not as a simple tool for storytelling, but as a way to understand causality. One of the strengths of qualitative inquiry was, "It is well equipped to cycle back and forth between variables and processes—showing that stories are not capricious, but include underlying variables, and that variables are not disembodied, but have connections over time" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 147). The participants told their

stories and presented their realities. Whereas quantitative studies, as highlighted by Merriam (2002), seek to find a single, provable truth, qualitative studies attempt to uncover meaning (Arghode, 2012). Wiersma and Jurs (2009) further describe the process of uncovering meaning in qualitative research:

> It is the perceptions of those being studied that are important, and, to the extent possible, these perceptions are to be captured in order to obtain an accurate "measure" of reality. "Meaning" is as perceived or experienced by those being studied' it is not imposed by the researcher. (p. 232-233)

The qualitative interview data was based on historical memory. The participants presented information that may or may not have been accurate. The researcher in this study focused more on the perceived meaning instead of the accuracy of the data (Arghode, 2012). This interpretivist approach, or meaning-making research, was more appropriate for a broad topic like *women in educational leadership* (Merriam, 2002). There were a number of different ways to explain the data uncovered in this research. The researcher accepted the concept of multiple truths (Lather, 1991). The participants presented reflections and these reflections represented their truths.

Sampling

This research study employed criterion-based sampling. "With a small number of cases, random sampling can deal you a decidedly biased hand" and is not often used in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; p. 27). There were 14 participants in the study, which allowed for data saturation as recommended by Cooper and Endacott (2007). Phenomenological research allowed for a relatively small sample of subjects (Moustakas, 1994). The criterion requirements included: educational level, job title, years of experience, and geographic location. All

participants possessed at least a master's degree in administration and supervision; they were qualified for a traditional leadership position such as a principal or central office staff member. The participants worked in Central Virginia. The study contained the following: 6 classroom teachers: 2 elementary, 2 middle, 2 high school, and 8 educational leaders, 1 assistant principal, 2 principals, 1 central office staff member, 1 superintendent, 1 professor and former central office staff member, 1 professor and former principal, and 1 female who chose to leave PK-12 education after serving as principal.

Each participant in the study had at least 10 years of experience. Experience levels ranged from 11 years to more than 40 years in the PK-12 environment. There was no limit for maximum years of experience because the literature suggests many females in education reach their highest positions later than their male counterparts; most female superintendents do not reach this position until much later in their careers (Archer, 2003). All participants lived and worked within Central Virginia. For the purpose of this study, Central Virginia encompassed the geographic area of Lynchburg City as well as Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, and Halifax counties. While the participants were chosen based on specific criterion, a snowball technique was employed to identify additional participants.

Participants

There were fourteen total participants in the study with six teachers and eight females who held or had previously held leadership positions in a PK-12 organization. All participants were given a pseudonym for the purpose of this

research study. The participant table below has teacher information presented first, organized by two elementary, two middle, and two high school teachers. Then, females in leadership positions were listed from assistant principal, elementary principal, high school principal, central office director, and superintendent. Three participants formerly held leadership positions in a PK-12 environment and they were listed as former elementary school principal, former elementary and middle school principal, and former central office director.

Table 3-1

Participants

Name	**Age**	**Race**	**Experience in PK-12**	**Position**	**Marriage Status**	**Children**	**Salary Range**
Karen	37	White	15 years teaching	5th grade teacher	Married 14 years	2 living at home	$45,000 to $60,000
Kathy	50	White	24 years teaching	4th grade teacher	Married 24 years, divorced, remarried 3 weeks	2 adult	$45,000 to $60,000
Brooke	42	White	20 years teaching	7th grade teacher	Married 10 years, divorced	None	$45,000 to $60,000
Gayle	39	Black	16 years teaching	Middle school teacher	Single, significant other for 17 years	None	$45,000 to $60,000
Susan	46	White	18 years teaching	High School teacher	Married 22 years	1 in college, 1 living at home	$30,000 to $45,000
Jennifer	32	White	11 years teaching	High School teacher	Married 2 years	1 living at home	$45,000 to $60,000
Tori	46	White	19 years in PK-12, 14 teaching	High School Assistant Principal	Married 20 years	None	$60,000 to $75,000
Sunny	38	White	16 years in PK-12, 7 teaching	Elementary Principal	Married 9 years	1 living at home	$90,000 or above

Tara	43	Black	17 years in PK-12, 5 teaching	High School Principal	Married 20 years	2 living at home	$90,000 or above
Cierra	39	White	16 years in PK-12, 4 teaching	Central Office Director	Divorced	None	$90,000 or above
Paula	60	White	40 years in PK-12	Superintendent	Married 38 years	3 adult children	$90,000 or above
Linda	39	Black	11 years in PK-12, 6 teaching	Former Elementary Principal, Personal trainer/ fitness instructor & childcare director for a local nonprofit	Divorced	1 living at home	$45,000 to $60,000
Minnie	65	Black	34 years in PK-12, 17 teaching	Former Elementary and Middle Principal, Assistant Professor	Married 46 years	1 adult child	$45,000 to $60,000
Marcia	62	White	40 years in PK-12	Former Central Office Director, Assistant Professor	Divorced, Remarried	3 adult children	$45,000 to $60,000

Elementary school teachers. Karen was a 37-year-old white female with 15 years of teaching experience. She taught 5th grade in an elementary school in Central Virginia. Karen had been married for 14 years and had two young children living at home. Her salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Kathy was a 50-year-old white female with 24 years of teaching experience. She taught 4th grade in an elementary school in Central Virginia. Kathy divorced after 24 years of marriage and recently remarried. She had two adult children and one grandchild. Her salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Middle school teachers. Brooke was a 42-year-old white female with 20

years of teaching experience. She taught 7th grade in a middle school in Central Virginia. Brooke was married for 10 years and then divorced. She had no children. Brooke's salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Gayle was a 39-year-old black female with 16 years of teaching experience. She taught various grades and subjects at a middle school in Central Virginia. She had never been married, but had a significant other of 17 years. Gayle had no children. Her salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

High school teachers. Susan was a 46-year-old white female with 18 years of teaching experience. She taught various subjects at a high school in Central Virginia. Susan had been married for 22 years and had one child in college and one child still living at home. Her salary ranged from $30,000 to $45,000.

Jennifer was a 32-year-old white female with 11 years of teaching experience. She taught special education in at a high school in Central Virginia. Jennifer had been married for 2 years and had one young child living at home. Her salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Assistant principal. Tori was a 46-year-old white female with 19 years total experience in PK-12. She spent 14 years as a classroom teacher. Tori currently served as an assistant principal at a high school in Central Virginia. She had been married for 20 years and had no children. Tori's salary ranged from $60,000 to $75,000.

Elementary school principal. Sunny was a 38-year-old white female with 16 years of experience in PK-12. She spent 7 of those years as a classroom teacher. Sunny served as a principal of an elementary school in Central Virginia. She had

been married for 9 years and had 1 small child living at home. Sunny's salary was above $90,000.

High school principal. Tara was a 43-year-old black female with 17 years experience in PK-12. She currently served as a principal at a high school in Central Virginia. Tara had been married for 20 years and had 2 children living at home. Her salary was above $90,000

Central office director. Cierra was a 39-year-old white female with 16 years of experience in PK-12. She spent 4 of those years as a classroom teacher. Cierra currently served as a director in central office for a school division in Central Virginia. She was divorced with no children. Cierra's salary was above $90,000

Superintendent. Paula was a 60-year-old white female with 40 years experience in PK-12. She served as the superintendent for a school division in Central Virginia. Paula had been married for 38 years and had 3 adult children. Her salary was above $90,000.

Former elementary school principal. Linda was a 39-year-old black female with 11 years of experience in PK-12. She spent 6 of those years as a classroom teacher. Linda left PK-12 after being a principal of an elementary school in Central Virginia. Linda was serving as a personal trainer and fitness instructor as well as a childcare director for a local nonprofit. She was divorced with 1 child living at home. Linda's salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Former elementary and middle school principal. Minnie was a 65-year-old black female with 34 years of experience in PK-12. She spent 17 of those years as a classroom teacher. Minnie was a former elementary and middle school principal.

Minnie served as an assistant professor at a college in Central Virginia. She had been married for 46 years and had 1 adult child. Minnie's salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Former central office director. Marcia was a 62-year-old white female with 40 years of experience in PK-12. She served as an assistant professor at a college in Central Virginia after being a principal and central office staff member in a PK-12 organization. Marcia had been married, divorced, and remarried with 3 adult children. Her salary ranged from $45,000 to $60,000.

Data Collection and Measures

The researcher, solely for the purpose of this research study, constructed the interview protocol. The interview questions were designed based on popular themes in the literature such as: background of the participant, barriers to leadership, and the career paths of female educators. The interview protocol was not based on an existing set of questions, but stemmed from common themes throughout the literature found in the previous chapter. The interview protocol was used to guide the participants through the re-telling of their personal story. Probing questions were used to keep the interviews on track, but participants told their unique story for the purpose of this research. The researcher engaged in dialogue when appropriate in order to create a positive interview atmosphere with each participant as recommended by Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011).

The researcher recorded participant observation data in addition to the interview data, which was an integral part of interpretivist methodology. The observation data allowed the researcher to learn more about the phenomenon in

question (Lather, 1991). The researcher personally conducted each of the fourteen interviews. The researcher completed a post-interview report in order to record any immediate reactions to non-verbal or verbal communication during the interview. Participants were interviewed at their places of employment or at sites chosen by the participants. The sites ranged from classrooms, to offices, to local restaurants, to the cafeteria of the local hospital. This allowed the participants to be more comfortable with the study from the outset. Interviews were audio recorded with the consent of each participant in the study. The interviewer, to ensure for better quality transcriptions, transcribed all of the interviews. A software known as ExpressScribe was used to transcribe the interviews.

Data Analysis

The researcher coded transcripts using Atlas TI a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software program (CAQDAS) designed to aid in qualitative research. Atlas TI mainly served as an organizational tool for the researcher's coding schemes. Yin (2008) described the benefit of using a CAQDAS such as Atlas TI, but warned that the computer software does not analyze data alone. Atlas TI was mainly used to organize a large amount of data for this study.

The researcher began analyzing the data set by coding the participant interviews. Yin (2008) described the importance of iterative coding, or gradually building the code scheme. The researcher identified codes using participant language, researcher language, and themes from the literature review. Invivo coding was used whenever necessary because the participant language proved to be powerful in the data analysis process. The transcripts were coded four times

each to ensure that the researcher recognized the meaning of the dataset.[4]

The researcher also used a technique known as memoing to further conceptualize the data during the analyzing process. Glaser (1978) defines memoing as "the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding…it exhausts the analyst's momentary ideation based on data with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration" (p. 83-84). Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend memoing to conceptualize the data in more general terms.

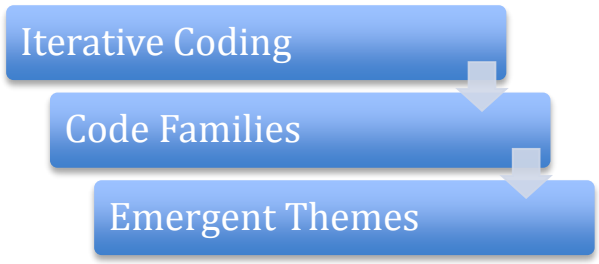
After all transcripts were finalized, the researcher conducted cross-case comparisons to recognize and highlight shared codes between participants using Atlas TI software. Yin (2008) emphasized this step in the data analysis process because it the researcher has to go beyond the computer assisted data analysis to really make meaning of the data. The researcher then condensed the codes to code families, which encompassed similar codes.

The code families were then grouped into themes based on their frequency or patterns of co-occurrence. The researcher organized the themes from the ground-up as suggested by Yin (2008). This helped to explain the phenomenon of female leadership in PK-12 education by simply looking at the data presented from this research study alone. After the initial ground-up approach, the researcher referred to the existing literature to recognize existing themes that were presented in the previous literature discussed in chapter two of this study. This approach allowed the data to drive the current research instead of prior research driving the current data.

[4] The coding scheme can be found in Appendix E.

Process Map

Figure 3-2



Trustworthiness

This study used two strategies to ensure qualitative trustworthiness, member-checking and a detailed audit trail, as suggested by Cooper and Endacott (2007) and Miles and Huberman (1994). First, interview transcripts were shared with the participants to increase reliability and validity of the data. This is a process known as member-checking that is recommended in the qualitative inquiry process (Cooper & Endacott, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Participants were allowed and encouraged to edit the researcher's transcripts. This was both for the accuracy of the transcription, but also gave the participants a chance to add to their story or delete portions that were not representative of their story after the fact. The participants remained an important part of the research study until the final product was achieved.

Second, the simplest way to ensure trustworthiness in a qualitative study was to keep a clear paper trail of the entire research process as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). This audit trail was completed at various steps during the data collection and data analysis process. The interview transcripts, researcher commentary, codes schemes, and memos were transparent throughout the process.

The audit trail was created to increase the credibility of the research process and to allow for the replication of a similar study in the future.

Chapter IV: Research Results

Overview

The researcher began the data analysis process by being fully immersed in the data set. Yin (2008) emphasized the importance of working with qualitative data from the 'ground up:'

> Whether as a result of your earlier "playing with the data" or noticing a pattern for the first time, you may now find that some part of your data suggests a useful concept or two. Such an insight can become the start of an analytic path, leading you farther into your data and possibly suggesting additional relationships (p. 207).

As a result of data analysis, eight significant themes emerged from the data set. The themes were categorized into universal themes, themes external to the PK-12 organization, and themes internal to the PK-12 organization. The majority of the data revolved around themes internal to the PK-12 organizational structure.

Universal Themes

Two clear patterns emerged from all participants' stories. First, participants received similar family support and encouragement during their childhoods. All fourteen participants described genuine encouragement from parents or guardians to pursue the career of their choice. Second, all participants were motivated to enter education and/or stay in the field of education in order to make a difference in the lives of children. Making a difference motivated all fourteen participants. There were no differences between teachers and leaders in this section. The participants had

commonalities that motivated them to pursue higher education and helped to bring them into PK-12 careers in the first place.

Themes External to the PK-12 Organization

Two themes emerged from the data that revolved around information external to the PK-12 organization. First, participants had some similarities and differences when it came to the topic of role models. Eleven of the fourteen participants cited their mother or maternal grandmother as their most important role model. The eight females in positions of leadership in a PK-12 organization had a wider variety of role models in their adult lives. Second, there were distinct differences between perceptions of teacher personalities and leader personalities. Teachers were more stressed and anxious about their professional responsibilities. Leaders were much more detailed with their descriptions of their personality characteristics. Leaders were forthcoming with both positive and negative personality characteristics.

Themes Internal to the PK-12 Organization

Four themes emerged that were internal to the PK-12 organizational structure. First, financial compensation did not appear to motivate teachers to pursue leadership, but low salaries were a point of contention for five out of the six teachers in the study. Financial themes did not emerge for leaders in the study who made substantially more money than the teachers. Second, encouragement and recognition within the PK-12 organizational structure seemed to be the missing link between teachers and leaders in this study. Teachers in this study seemed to lack the ‘tap on the shoulder’ phenomenon as described by Marshall and Kasten (1994) as an endorsement from a current or former leader encouraging someone to pursue

a leadership opportunity. Many of the leaders credited constant taps on the shoulder as the reason they explored new leadership opportunities throughout their careers. Encouragement from colleagues and superiors was integral to female leadership in PK-12 organizations. Teachers in the study also valued recognition from their peers and superiors for accomplishments in the classroom. The third theme in this section revolved around the job search process. Four out of the six teachers in the study had initially applied and interviewed for leadership positions. Only one of the younger teachers was still seeking a position of leadership in a PK-12 organization at the time of the research study. Three of the six teachers mentioned feeling anxious and unprepared for the interview process to obtain a leadership position. Although they were not actively seeking a leadership position, three of the teachers were hurt by the fact that their superiors often neglected to recognize their leadership potential with either accolades or promotions. Finally, gender within the PK-12 organization was a major theme for the research study. Participants mentioned various challenges revolving around balancing family responsibilities and a professional career in PK-12 education. There were also a number of gender-related challenges that emerged at the organizational level such as: the lack of professional female role models, negative female reputations, double standard for female educators, the prevalence of the ‘good ole boy’ network, and the glass ceiling. Gender was discussed on many levels: individual, PK-12 organization, and region. The topic of gender was pervasive throughout the study. The interconnectedness of all of these themes wove a unique fabric of female leadership in Central Virginia within PK-12 organizations.

This chapter is organized around three sets of thmes. First, it presents the two universal themes, family support and encouragement and making a difference. Second, themes external to the PK-12 organization will be discussed. Third, the chapter examines themes internal to the PK-12 organization.

Universal Theme 1: Family Support and Encouragement. The participants in the study all shared two common themes, family support and encouragement was the first universal theme. The support from family members seemed to motivate the participants to pursue the higher education qualifications necessary to be PK-12 teachers and then leaders. This study found that parents and guardians were equally supportive of each participant during childhood. Parents or guardians, especially mothers and grandmothers, encouraged all participants to be whatever they wanted to be. Most parents encouraged the importance of obtaining an education over pursuing specific careers. This encouragement during childhood did not seem to impact whether or not they went into leadership roles, but impacted their early decision-making to obtain higher education and enter PK-12 careers. Gayle, a middle school teacher, said “Honestly, my mom just told me I could do whatever I wanted, but I just needed to figure out what that was.” Paula, a superintendent, remembered her parents encouraging her as a child, “They just encouraged me to be a hard worker. They gave me a strong work ethic and I was never held back from anything. And, you know, be what you want to be.” Tara, a high school principal, recalled no specific encouragement from her grandmother, but education was always important from a very young age. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, recalled her parents encouraging her to

receive an education, “They taught me that you had to get an education and there was no option. You got an education and that was it. You were going to college.” Sunny, an elementary school principal, recalled:

> My parents always encouraged me to pursue a career, a job, that I was going to be able to support myself and that I would not have to depend on anyone to support me. Um, they really, they both really pushed that finishing high school is not an option. Going to college is not an option. You know, continuing with your college future, you know, they just really pushed that. It wasn’t did I have an option. And I don’t even think I had an option to go to a two versus a four-year college. It was, you are going to do this!

Karen, an elementary school teacher, remembered the same type of encouragement:

> I could do whatever I wanted. I mean, like, I could be what I wanted. There was no you should do this or you should do that. I was just expected to go to college. I never thought about not going to college.

Brooke, a middle school teacher, echoed this by saying, “They definitely pushed college. I mean, that was just a given that I would go to college.” Tori, an assistant principal, and a few other participants could not remember a specific conversation with their parents. Tori recalled:

> You know, it’s funny. I don’t remember us ever talking about what to be. I know they always expected we would go to college. And it’s funny, because I don’t remember us talking about that expectation. I just remember it just always being there that of course I would go to college. I remember not ever, ever thinking there would be another option.

Linda, a former elementary school principal, had more specific guidance from her mother, also an educator, who said, “You need to be in education. That’s always going to be around. It’s a good job to be in, it has benefits, it has good retirement.” Marcia, a former central office director, was encouraged early on by her mother to work in the family business, but once it became apparent she had a passion for

education her mother completely supported her endeavors. Marcia was married during college and remembered her parents fear that she would not finish college because of her early marriage, “When I married my ex, he asked for my hand in marriage, that’s one thing my dad made him promise that she will finish. She will finish.”

In general, all fourteen participants were encouraged by their parents and guardians at an early age to be educated and pursue the career of their choice. This unwavering support from immediate family members impacted the participants’ decisions to obtain higher education and pursue careers in PK-12 organizations. This support did not seem to impact whether or not the participant became an educational leader later in her career.

Theme 2: Making a Difference. In addition to family support and encouragement, making a difference in the lives of children in the PK-12 organization motivated all participants. Although teaching appeared to be an afterthought for many participants in college, making a difference in the lives of children was the reason for many to go into teaching in the first place, to remain in the classroom, and even the reason for many to go into higher levels of leadership. Jennifer, a high school teacher, chose to become a teacher after having dreams of working at a sports camp for underprivileged children. She felt as if teachers could “make a difference on a long-term basis.” The participants in this study were motivated throughout their careers by the success of individual students and valued those success stories. Jennifer said:

> I think as a teacher it’s like your successes are when you see your children or your students make their goals and when they’re able to walk across the

> stage and say that they graduate. And more successfully say that they've made and established their careers. Um, those are my successes. Um, I mean, I've had so many students who have come through and said that they couldn't make it and I just had one graduate from nursing school and one who is going to be a fashion designer. It's just awesome to see them fulfill their goals.

Gayle, a middle school teacher, echoed similar sentiments when she described a former student, " And she's like, I love history because of you. And I'm a history major because I want to teach." Karen, an elementary school teacher, became emotional when she recalled a student she taught and mentored as a second grader. The former student visited her last year to tell her how much of an impact she made on his life. These recollections of former students clearly motivated the participants to continue making a difference within the PK-12 organization. Tara, a high school principal, reflected about making a difference both in the classroom and in a leadership role:

> To me, it's having a student first from being in the classroom and then a teacher now, or an adult in the building, saying you made a difference. You made a difference in my life, you made a difference in my career. That's everything!

Tara went further and described how she was further motivated to make a difference in the lives of students and colleagues:

> Keeping a kid in school that was on the verge of dropping out, having someone reach their goal from a diploma to a degree, having a teacher say, you know, I didn't think I could be an administrator, but after looking at you and talking to you I think I can.

Ceirra, a central office director, described how she measured success in her career by remembering specific students saying, "I've done national presentations, I've travelled to Boston, I've travelled to different places, but nothing really to me at least compares with specific kids I can say we did right by." Brooke, a middle school

teacher, stopped and thought in the middle of the interview about how many students she had impacted over her twenty-year career in the classroom. “I’ve taught for twenty years and taught 100 kids a year, a lot of years have been more. That’s about 2,000 students. That’s kind of impressive!” Susan, a high school teacher, reflected about what motivated her professionally and said, “It’s not the salary. It’s that I love kids and I think I make a difference. I know that’s trite and cliché, but I do. If I didn’t think I made a difference I would have to leave.” Tori, an assistant principal, recalled a time earlier in the year where she was out and numerous former students stopped her and told her how much of an impact she made. She went further to say:

> You know, when people say I remember this happened in our class and you know when you hear good things about people that you had an impact on and you don’t know if you are the reason that they are in law school and you don’t know if you are the reason that they’re a teacher, but you feel like maybe you have something to do with it. Even if it was for 45 minutes a day for 180 days.

Every participant in the study mentioned the importance of making a difference in the lives of individual children.

Participants in the study also cited making a difference as the reason for pursuing leadership positions within the PK-12 organization. Paula, a superintendent, described her decision to leave the classroom to pursue leadership:

> I was trying to level the playing field for my little children who were having difficulties in reading and math and I saw some of the areas maybe not working as hard. And I thought, you know, maybe I could do more for children if I were a principal. And then, then that’s how I feel like I progressed to where I am. Then at some point after 18 years at principal I said, well you know, maybe I could do more at the central office and then maybe I could do more as a superintendent.

The participants showed a great deal of passion when reflecting about individual students they had impacted over the years. Making a difference in the lives of students motivated female educators, regardless of their position of leadership.

Conclusion. All participants experienced similar types of encouragement from family during childhood with most participants being encouraged to pursue the career of their choice. The participants felt more emphasis was placed on education when they were children rather than encouragement to enter a specific career field. Every participant was passionate about their desire to make a difference in the lives of individual children and the greater school community. There were no differences between teachers and leaders when these two themes emerged. These two universal themes highlighted the commonalities amongst the fourteen participants in the study. The participants were motivated by family support to get an education and pursue careers in PK-12 education. In addition, participants were intrinsically motivated to make a difference in the lives of children. There were no discrepancies between teachers and leaders with regards to these two themes.

Themes External to the PK-12 Organization

The interview protocol used in this research study began with questions designed to elicit information on the backgrounds of participants. Many of the first questions did not have a direct connection to the PK-12 organization, but instead framed the story of the individual participant. As a result, three of the key themes revolve around the data that is external to the PK-12 organization. Key patterns emerged that were associated with role models, support systems, and personality characteristics. A majority of the participants exhibited a connection to these

themes. The emergence of the three external themes helped the researcher to understand the phenomenon of educational leadership that was the main focus of the study. Yin (2008) described the importance of analyzing case study data from the 'ground up' in order to understand the analytic path of the data set.

External Theme 1: Role Models. Clear patterns emerged when participants were questioned about their role models with eleven of fourteen participants mentioning their mother or maternal grandmother as their most important role model. Every minority participant referenced a mother or grandmother as her most important role model. Various emotions were displayed when recalling these memories about mothers and grandmothers; tears, laughter, and fondness were common. Jennifer, a high school teacher, discussed her grandmother's ongoing role in her adult life, "She encourages me to do my best. I always feel like she is interested in what I am doing and prays for me daily." Gayle, a middle school teacher who was named for her grandmother, recalled her grandmother who was multi-talented. For example, her grandmother tore down a wall in the house to make more bookshelves for her grandfather's books. Paula, a superintendent, remembered her mother's influence:

> She made a difference in a lot of people's lives and she made a lot of difference in my life. That's why, you know, when I, and I hope I don't cry, but when I got my master's…it was graduation Saturday and mama was in the hospital. And I knew she was, you know, not doing well. So I, instead of going to graduation, I put on my cap and gown and went to her room. We had a celebration for graduation. If she couldn't be there, I wanted to be with her. And she died three days later.

Paula was very emotional about an event that occurred almost forty years ago. Tara, a high school principal, fondly remembered her grandmother who raised her.

She described her daily guidance and support with her schoolwork even though her grandmother only had a third grade education. In more recent years, Tara had taken on the role of matriarch after her grandmother's death. She spent time, money, and energy trying to keep the family together as her grandmother had done for so many years. Cierra, a central office director, still valued her mother's emotional support.

Two of the participants told humorous stories. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, described her mother, " My mother was mixed-race and everyone said, 'you know, she's just trying to be white. She just thinks she's white.' So, my mother said, there is no being white or being black, it's about being correct and being orderly in everything you do." Minnie's mother focused on etiquette, Minnie recalled "Emily Post and I were best friends because mother would drill me on this. I had to walk with a book on my head to hold my head up and my shoulders back." Yet, her mother drove a dump truck around town hauling coal. Minnie said, "My mom would go toe to toe with any man." Later in the interview, Minnie told a comical story about retiring from a PK-12 institution in order to take care of her mother who was in failing health:

> The doctors had said she would have to go into a nursing home and that I wasn't able to take care of her. So I let them convince me to do it. She stayed in there from 10:00 that morning to 4:00 that afternoon. My son in law said I kidnapped her…I went and got her. And they said, you can't take her out of here. I said, watch me.

Minnie lived with her mother for over a year until her death. She remembered this time period fondly. Linda, a former elementary school principal, recalled her grandmother fondly, "My grandmother was my ace because my mom was an

educator. My grandmother was heavily involved in raising my brother and I. She was kind of like my mom slash grandma." Linda's grandmother, a black female, was fluent in French, was very religious, and held various positions within the community. Linda recalled, "She would always tell us, opportunity is like a bald man with a slick head. You have to catch him when he's coming to you because when he's going it's hard to catch onto." Linda smiled widely as she reflected back on the impact of her grandmother.

Two of the six teachers had issues with their mothers, with one having a strained relationship since childhood and the other grieving the recent suicide of the mother. Jennifer, a high school teacher, recollected about her strained relationship with her mother over the years. Jennifer said, "My mom was actually sixteen when she got pregnant with me, seventeen when she had me. And then she had all four kids by the time she was 23." She went further to say that she never felt encouragement from her mother because she was juggling four young children and pursuing higher education at the same time. Jennifer described graduating from college and trying to decide what to do, "I did not want to move back home because at the time, you know, my mom was going through med school and it just wasn't a happy place for me, as far as we didn't get along." Jennifer mentioned later in the interview that her husband will criticize her when she is acting like her mother. Jennifer relied on her grandmother's guidance more so than her mother's guidance. Karen began the interview describing a traditional family with a supportive mom and dad. Her mother was a stay at home mother for a good part of her childhood. Later in the interview, Karen said, "I've had tragedy in my life. You know, when I talked

about my mom passing away. She put my kids to bed and then committed suicide." Karen also added that her mother wanted her to be a principal and thought she was selling herself short by remaining in the classroom. None of the leaders mentioned a strained relationship with their mother.

Leaders mentioned a wider range of role models from childhood through adulthood. Leaders listed role models such as: American film directors, celebrities, family members, professors, high school teachers, elementary school teachers, colleagues, and superiors. Linda, for example, had the most extensive list of celebrity role models from Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey, Will and Jada Smith, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, to Bill and Camille Cosby. Most other leaders mentioned current or former colleagues, but the trend among all leaders was an important unrelated childhood role model.

Most of the important role models made an impact in the participant's life before high school graduation. Six out of fourteen female participants in this study valued unrelated male or female role models who inspired them as young girls and young women. Teachers just mentioned former high school teachers who had made an impact in their lives, whereas four leaders went into detail about the impact these unrelated role models had on their lives. For example, Marcia, a former central office director, became emotional when she remembered a male elementary school teacher, "I was blessed to have him, almost brings tears to my eyes to think of him." This was memory from fifty years ago that elicited such an emotional response. She continued to talk about the male elementary teacher later in the interview and

recalled how he gave her a greater sense of self-confidence after realizing her abilities:

> My family didn't fit any of that (the typical American mold) and I can remember it, we were Catholic, and my family didn't fit the Protestant predominant place that I lived or went to school. As a child, I couldn't give that to you in words. I just felt less than, you know.

Marcia added, "His kind approach and uplifting of the person gave me more confidence and I think it was at a really important age, fourth and fifth grade." Six out of fourteen participants discussed the importance of a former teacher from their childhood. Tori, an assistant principal, listed five high school teachers who made a lasting impact on her life. Tori went into the greatest detail about a male physical education teacher who had one class of girls during her sophomore year in high school. She described the influence of the male P.E. teacher in greater detail:

> Instead of us having PE like many people did where you throw the balls out and you do PE, he decided to teach us all these different sports and to let us try all the things the guys were trying. He taught us several things, including tennis and things like that. And the most specific thing he did for me, I wasn't athletic, never good in PE if that means anything, but he decided before we did what used to be the physical fitness test that he was going to train us to do it. No one had ever trained us to do it. We just went out there and ran 600 yard run walk. And he said, 'No no no, before we ever do it, we're going to train to do it.' That was a really new concept to me and he trained us to run it and it was the first time I realized that though I'm not athletic, if I train to do something, I can make my body do it. I mean, I played sports, but I was not athletic, but he trained me to do it and, and that is why I went out for sports really I guess afterwards because I realized oh it's about practicing and doing it. You don't have to be great in doing it . You don't have to be great but you can do it. Of course, then I ran 7 half marathons. Much later in life, but I completely credit him with that for me because I know that I could train my body to do something.

Tara, a high school principal, discussed the impact of her high school English teacher exposing her, a poor young black girl, to Shakespeare. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, described how her high school principal

encouraged her to apply for a full scholarship to college to teach. She did not think she would get the scholarship, but her principal had confidence in her academic record throughout school. Minnie credited him with pushing her to pursue education in college.

In conclusion, eleven participants shared a similar experience of having an influential mother or maternal grandmother in their lives. A strong female presence in childhood was very important to all participants. Teachers did not share stories of other unrelated childhood role models in the same way that leaders in the study did. Four leaders vividly recalled the impact of a non-family member on their educational experiences and self-confidence prior to college.

External Theme 2 Personality Characteristics. A few key patterns emerged about personalities in the study. Participants were asked to describe their most profound personality traits as well as how others would describe them. The leaders in this study were far more verbose with interviews lasting longer and transcripts being much more in depth. The teachers were much more concise in their interviews and talked less about their personality characteristics than the leaders.

Table 4-1

Self-Reported Teacher Personality Characteristics

Teacher Name	**Personality Characteristics** (as described by the participant)
Karen	• Enthusiastic • Empathetic • Anxious/stressed • Hardworking • Dependable • Friendly

	• Kind • Supportive
Kathy	• Innovative • Bossy • Social • Introvert • Funny • Straight forward • Verbose • Loves to learn
Brooke	• Hardworking • People pleaser • Avoids conflict • Anxious • Funny • Nervous • Unsure
Gayle	• Bubbly • Energetic • Straight forward • Direct • Confidant to others • Goal-oriented • Take charge • Hardworking
Susan	• Funny • Loves to learn • Stressed • Passionate
Jennifer	• Direct • Empathetic • Helpful • Efficient • Goal-oriented • Intrinsically motivated • Anxious • Doubtful • Organized

Two patterns emerged from the list of personality characteristics given by each female teacher in the study. Four of the six teachers described the stress and anxiety that related to their professional lives as classroom teachers. Four of the six

teachers also described their hardworking nature as classroom teachers. Stress and anxiety manifested because of their hardworking nature. As a high school teacher, Jennifer's anxiety and stress came from her drive to do well, "I have such anxiety because I want to make sure that everything works out well and I do the best I can do. So, sometimes I do get anxious." As an elementary school teacher, Karen's anxiety manifested from an incident with a former boss at a former school. She described the lingering anxiety from the incident saying, "I came here broken. I was a broken teacher. I didn't even think I was going to show up the first day." Brooke, a middle school teacher, felt the most anxiety about conflict and public speaking. She described her fear of conflict:

> I don't know if you call me soft-hearted or what it is, but I can't, I don't like confrontation. I get intimidated very easily. If somebody walked in this door and came at me cussing, I would be a nervous wreck…I don't know if I have anxiety or panic attacks or what. You know, if I could take a couple of Xanaxs everyday, seriously. I think I could probably deal with it, but you kind of hate to do that.

Brooke found herself becoming increasingly anxious about routine tasks that were associated with being a classroom teacher. For example, she hated to give any speeches in front of her peers or larger groups of students:

> I did it yesterday. I was going to give, I had a little speech typed up. We were doing a little thing for the kids. I mean nothing, ten sentences. Just, um, praising certain kids for doing what they're supposed to. All of a sudden, at the end, I said, oh read it for me. I don't want to. I can't. I'm nervous. Now, what is that?

Brooke recognized the increasing anxiety that was associated with her job. Her speech patterns even exuded an air of anxiety. Brooke anticipated even greater anxiety if she became a principal:

> Yeah, anxiety, like, if, um, being worried about angry parents which you know you're going to have often and either, you know, taking that home with me and worrying about it. Or, not being able to get out what I'd want to say to defend myself. Not defend myself, but explain a situation because I'd be a blubbering idiot like I am now.

She was laughing about this, but the anxiety was definitely a hurdle for Brooke. Susan, a high school teacher, described the anxiety she felt about the increasing pressures of being a classroom teacher:

> I just had to get medicine and the right perspective. I mean, my blood pressure was so high. Like, I had, I have so much more energy now. It was dangerous. I was so close to stroking out. You know, um, and it can be a combination of a lot of things. I don't want to say it's just the job, but I have to put it there, too. I really do because my own children don't stress me. My husband doesn't stress me…You've got to look at it and go what is it?

Anxiety and stress were common themes amongst the teachers in the study with four of the six teachers going into detail about the challenges of the profession. In contrast, leaders in this study did not identify themselves as anxious or stressed.

Leaders appeared to be more in touch with both the positive and negative characteristics of their personalities. Leaders included personality characteristics that were not as flattering that came from reputations within the PK-12 organization or the greater community. They described their personality characteristics in more detail than teachers did.

Table 4-2

Self-Reported Leader Personality Characteristics

Leader Name	**Personality Characteristics** (as described by the participant)
Tori	• Funny • Not a quitter • Assertive • Bitch • Blunt

	• Likes challenges
Tara	• Visionary • Makes things happen • Goal-oriented • Motivated • Dedicated • Shy • Introvert • Calm • Not afraid of conflict
Cierra	• Passionate • Intense • Walks fast and talks fast • Relationship based • Emotional • Direct • Speaks out • Leader • Follower • Long-winded • Doubtful • Unbalanced • Funny • Introvert • “Raging river” • Organized • Naïve
Sunny	• Honest • Professional • Good character • Stressed • Not satisfied • Guilt • Determined • Goal-oriented • Hardworking
Linda	• Gifted and talented • Bored • Goal-oriented
Minnie	• Hardworking • Funny • Bossy • Risk-taker • Angel or bitch

	• Motivated • Mentor • Protective • Willing to stick her neck out • Not afraid of conflict • Leader • Not ready to retire • No sympathy for laziness
Marcia	• Hardworking • Passionate • Naïve • High expectations • Bitch
Paula	• Hardworking • Assertive • Risk-taker • People person • Honest • Fun • Happy • Methodical • Funny • Bitch • Likes a challenge

The leaders seemed to be more metacognitive during the process of describing their most profound personality traits. Leaders took greater time to describe their personality characteristics. They were able to describe what their reputations were as well as how they perceived their personalities.

Although not a major theme, two leaders in the study discussed being naïve. Cierra, a central office director, was 28 years old when she first became a principal. She discussed how both her age and her naïve nature had been a hurdle for her as a woman in leadership. Cierra was naïve towards some of the catty behavior that took place in the leadership ranks of PK-12 organizations. She was honest about her current position in central office. Cierra did not get as much satisfaction out of

the position as she did as a principal, “One of the hard things about being in central office is that I'm not with kids enough. I get joy out of being in the building.” Marcia, a former principal turned central office staff member, echoed similar sentiments, to Cierra. She recalled:

> Being naïve early on and not understanding that everybody might not be in this for the same reason. And there’s some backbiting and things that you had no idea was going on. That goes on, you know. And that was not modeled for me as a child, either. We were all too busy for that. And so, I don’t have time for it today. I don’t gossip, I don’t play the game, or any games. It is what it is.

Teachers did not mention naivety at all throughout their interviews. Two leaders discussed the difficulty of making the transition of leadership and realizing the true nature of PK-12 organizational leadership. Leaders seemed to have a hardened outer shell as a result of their leadership roles.

Similarly, two leaders in the study also discussed their introverted personalities. Cierra, a central office director, admitted she was an introvert and her leadership role in central office was draining because of that, “The funny thing is, and you’ll laugh at this, because people don’t think this is the truth. I’m an introvert. So, I do not get my energy out of people. When I sleep, I sleep hard!” Tara, a high school principal, went into greater detail as she described the issues caused by her introverted personality:

> I am very much an introvert and so a faculty meeting with 100 people used to make me nervous. Oh yeah, I’m shy and I’m an introvert. And I am very calm, but I’m the type of person where in high school and even now, I have like four really really close friends. I don’t need to be out in the big group doing things and socializing and that type of thing.

Tara later described how her introverted personality impacted her reputation within the greater community saying, “I think, and this is just me, that’s it’s hard to be shy

when you have some sort of measure of success because it really does turn into something else." Tara's perceived that her introverted personality made her seem stuck-up to parents and community members who did not know her well. Both naivety and introversion caused challenges for the participants when they crossed over into positions of leadership. Although only two participants described both naivety and introversion it showed how leadership made them become more reflective about their personality traits after being in the spotlight.

Leaders in the study had more experience with resolving conflict with colleagues and subordinates. The leaders often discussed risk-taking in conjunction with conflict. Only one teacher discussed conflict during the interview. Brooke, a middle school teacher, described her avoidance of conflict within the PK-12 organization with both colleagues and parents. Brooke explained her fear saying, "I don't like confrontation. I get intimidated very easily." Leaders, on the other hand, did not seem to avoid conflict and viewed it as a normal part of their leadership role within PK-12. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, recalled her willingness to take risks to make a difference in the lives of students:

> I had a superintendent tell me, 'you've got to have issues you're willing to die for. Some of them you kind of suck up and you just got to go because you're on the team, but there are other issues that you've got to put your neck out there.' And, whenever there were issues involving children, I would step right out. You know, I had a friend that says 'it's a good thing you weren't born in slave times. You would have been killed right off the bat.' But, you have to do what you've got to do to help children.

Minnie continued to describe incidents with ineffective teachers throughout the years. She did not avoid conflict and made difficult decisions that benefited the instruction of students.

The main difference between the personalities of classroom teachers and educational leaders seemed to be whether or not they were goal oriented. Only one teacher mentioned an ultimate career goal within the PK-12 organization in this study, whereas five leaders described being goal-oriented or liking a challenge. Jennifer, a high school teacher, was the only teacher who wanted to be an assistant principal and then a principal. Jennifer was also the last teacher in the study to obtain her masters degree and obtain the necessary licensure to be an administrator. A few teachers described maybe wanting to leave PK-12 for the private sector, but no specific goals were mentioned. Brooke, a middle school teacher, talked about her lack of clear goals when she defined success:

> I think it's meeting your goals. My problem is, I don't really know what they are. I spend a lot of time, where, what do I want to do? Where do I want to be? And I haven't figured it out yet. I really haven't. Or, am I fine with just average?

Kathy, an elementary school teacher, mentioned that she had thought about going out into the private sector or possibly starting a charter school. The teachers in the study did not have clearly defined goals within the PK-12 organizational structure.

On the other hand, leaders had goals that spanned PK-12 and the world. Paula, a superintendent, had reached her ultimate goal of becoming a superintendent. Marcia, a former central office director, had also reached her ultimate goal after serving in a leadership capacity for 40 years in PK-12 education and leaving PK-12 to become a college professor. Sunny, an elementary school principal, hoped to become a high school principal one day. Cierra, a central office director, hoped to always be involved in education, but wanted to start a nonprofit to impact global education. Tori, an assistant principal, was unclear if her ultimate goal

would be to remain a building leader or to go into a central office position, but she had goals beyond the assistant principalship. Tara, a high school principal, had goals of going beyond the principalship, but did not mention anything specific. Linda, a former elementary principal who had just switched careers, had goals that ranged from being an author to being a motivational speaker in the fitness world.

Linda described how her goal-setting had been a point of contention for her ex-husband and she hoped to find a mate who was also goal oriented:

> I'm still going to set goals. I am a goal setter. And I'm going to always do that. And I'm not saying you have to, but I'm going to have to find somebody who's also a goal setter. Somebody who sets their goals who's going to repeat it daily and put it up and post it conspicuously. He didn't like that about me.

Linda valued goal-setting and it was a non-negotiable part of her daily life. She hoped to find a partner who had similar habits.

Three leaders discussed the fact that they would not retire at an early age because they were still goal-oriented. Tara, a high school principal in her forties, said:

> I'm the type of person that once I reach one goal and I set another one and kind of have it in the back of my mind always. I will probably be in my late sixties before I go into a job and say this is the one where I'm staying and I'll retire.

Paula, a superintendent who was sixty at the time of the interview, said, "I see some people say, 'when are you going to retire?' I say as long as I'm doing great things for kids and I'm having fun, I'm going to stick with what I'm doing." Minnie, who retired from PK-12 and subsequently took a job in higher education, echoed these same sentiments at the age of sixty-five:

> My daughter says I'll be 95 going into my next career. I said, 'you're probably right.' But, right now I still enjoy what I'm doing. I love the kids. I love planning and doing that and it allows me to still stay in the classroom and see what's going on and come back and tell the students and this is what's going on now. So, as long as I'm still enjoying it and as long as they want me I'll stay.

Leaders in this study heavily relied on goal-setting to climb the ranks of leadership within the PK-12 organization. This was not a prevalent theme in the teachers' interviews with only one teacher mentioning a goal of being an assistant principal.

There were similarities within this topic as well. Fifty percent of the participants mentioned they were hardworking. Three out of six teachers, Karen, Gayle, and Brooke, mentioned their hard work when they described the paperwork involved in teaching and some of the procedural duties of the job, but did not explicitly describe this topic the way the leaders did. Four out of eight leaders described themselves as hardworking. Leaders went into greater detail by giving examples of their hard work. For example, Paula, a superintendent, mentioned that she was getting ready to clean out the basement of central office and called for help from her employees, "I said 'okay I'm coming in muck boots, blue jeans, and rubber gloves' and I said I'm going to get in there with you. Who are my volunteers?" Her subordinates seemed surprised that she was willing to do the dirty work involved with the superintendency. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, described her childhood on the farm and her history of working hard to achieve success, "We killed cattle for beef and pigs and all of that. And you were taught that you worked hard for a living and if you're going to survive and you're going to be successful, you had to work hard." She carried this same philosophy of hard work into her career as an educational leader. Minnie described instances while she was

principal when she shoveled snow, mopped floors, and substituted when teachers had to leave unexpectedly. Minnie recalled a time when she was in college and a supervisor warned her about holding such high expectations for others:

> 'You're going to be someone who is never going to understand why some people don't work as hard as you work and said, you'll have problems with that. You're going to be very frustrated with those who aren't hard workers.' And she was right! I didn't know she could tell that at that early stage, but she was right. If you aren't a hard worker I have no sympathy for you.

Sunny, an elementary school principal, described her hard work as the instructional leader of a building. Teachers initially questioned Sunny's ability to lead because she was not very familiar with the content in elementary school because she had a secondary background, but she reassured them, "I need you to know that I will be on your level. It's not going to be that I'm not going to make an attempt to learn what I need to know to be successful here." She pledged to work as hard as she needed to in order to be the most effective leader of the building.

A common theme amongst all participants was the fact that they were direct or straightforward, as well. Three out of the six teachers in the study described themselves as direct or straightforward. Jennifer, a high school teacher, described her relationship with her long-time co-teacher and colleague saying, "My best friend that has worked with me in the classroom for eleven years would say I'm sarge." Her best friend referred to her as sergeant because she was always directly giving orders. Gayle, a middle school teacher, said, "I'm bubbly, energetic, but straight forward." Seven of the eight leaders described themselves as honest, assertive, straightforward, blunt, or direct. The leaders recognized the positive and negative implications of these personality traits. Paula, a superintendent, described her

honesty with her colleagues, “They know I will speak my mind. If they don’t want to know the truth, they better not ask me because I will, in a nice way, tell them.” Sunny, an elementary school principal, said, “I’m honest and sometimes that’s a flaw.” Tori, an assistant principal, had recently been told she was blunt:

> People describe me as blunt. Most recently [a former colleague] told a teacher here, ‘I bet you’ll love working with her because Tori tells it like it is. She’s going to be blunt and to the point, but she’ll keep you laughing the whole time she’s telling you the truth.’ So, I think people think of me as blunt, to the point. I’m a rip it off like a Band-Aid kind of girl!

The leaders in the study were more aware of how their straightforward personality traits were perceived within the PK-12 organization and greater community.

In conclusion, the perceived personality characteristics of the participants created a unique layer to the results of the study. The teachers did not provide a great deal of detail about their personality characteristics while the leaders seemed to be aware of both the positive and negative aspects of their personalities. Fifty percent of all the participants described themselves as hardworking. Sixty-seven percent of teachers presented information that reflected a great deal of stress and anxiety related to their professional careers. Sixty-three percent of leaders described the impact of being goal-oriented. Leaders in this study appeared to be more intrinsically motivated. This piece on personality presented a self-efficacy issue.

Conclusion. Role models, support systems, and personality characteristics were important external factors outside of the PK-12 environment that shaped the lives and worldviews of the participants in this study. Role models from early childhood were extremely important in shaping the lives of the female participants.

Immediate family members, especially mothers and grandmothers, played important roles throughout the lives of all of the participants. Leaders perceived that they had many more role models and a larger current support system than the teachers in the study. Leaders mentioned non-familial role models and members of support systems whereas teachers in the study did not. Leaders were more reflective and verbose when it came to their personality characteristics and their reputations in the community at large. Teachers expressed more anxiety associated with their professional lives. Leaders described the importance of setting goals whereas teachers did not mention the practice of goal setting. These were three integral themes external to the PK-12 organizational structure.

Themes Internal to the PK-12 Organization

Throughout the interviews, participants talked about factors that were internal to the PK-12 organizational structure. While external factors shaped the participants, most importantly the personality characteristics, integral reasons women pursued leadership positions in PK-12 were internal to the organization. The first internal theme that emerged was unique to the six teachers. The teachers discussed the financial ramifications of remaining in the classroom, but the leaders did not talk about the financial aspect of their jobs. All participants commonly discussed the next three themes: encouragement and recognition, the job search process, and the topic of gender within the PK-12 organization. The four internal themes within the PK-12 organization were pivotal in shaping the career paths of the participants.

Internal Theme 1: Financial Ramifications of Remaining in the Classroom. As cited in the literature, finances did not motivate female educators in this study, but teachers often viewed finances as a challenge or barrier. Five out of the six teachers fell in the $45,000 to $60,000 range with anywhere from ten to twenty-four years of classroom experience; one teacher fell in the $30,000 to $45,000 range. Every teacher in this study mentioned the financial implications of staying in the classroom whereas leaders did not discuss the financial aspects of their jobs. Karen, an elementary school teacher, described the time period when both she and her husband were teachers. She recalled the financial strain of living on two teachers' salaries while paying off graduate school loans and raising two young children. Karen went further to describe the monetary sacrifices that teachers often make, "I think that's one huge personal sacrifice. To never have enough money to do things that you kind of want to do." She described having enough money for necessities, but not for lavish vacations and other expenses.

Brooke, a middle school teacher, echoed these same sentiments about fun money when she talked about wanting, "to be able to take care of myself financially and do fun things financially and go shopping. And, you know, have a good time." Brooke also seemed ashamed of the money she made as a teacher and associated salary with accomplishment. She said, "And it's not all about money, but I would like to make some money. You know, I would like to make money. I would like to be a little prouder of my accomplishments." Susan, a high school teacher with the lowest salary of all the participants, discussed being in the middle of the salary scale with 18 years of experience. The higher starting salaries of new teachers annoyed her

as well as the higher salaries for those teachers who were closer to thirty years of experience. Susan described what it was like to be in the middle of the salary scale, "It's a salary trap. They kind of know we are going to finish." Kathy, an elementary school teacher, discussed the financial implications of retiring after 25 years of teaching, "If I thought, I could technically retire after 25 years because I'd be over 50, but I can't afford it. My goal is to get to 55 and 30 and be done." Teachers did not appear to be motivated by finances, but there was underlying contention revolving around their lower salaries. All of the teachers in the study casually and wistfully mentioned leaving education to find a career where they would make more money.

Two of the teachers mentioned the fact that a sibling made substantially more money than they did and seemed to measure their success against the financial success of the sibling. Jennifer, a high school teacher, described her younger sister who had an MBA, worked for the government, and made a lot more money. She mentioned that having a career in teaching was a personal sacrifice, "You don't make as much as what my sister makes. She makes well over four times what I make." Kathy, an elementary teacher who was the youngest of five siblings, said, "For a long time I measured my success against my siblings because their success was greater than mine monetarily. And, over time, I've relinquished that as being a need for showing success." The fact that siblings made more money was a sore spot for these two participants.

Conclusion. None of the teachers mentioned the financial implications of taking a leadership position in PK-12. The teachers in the study did not seem to be motivated by the potentially higher salaries of a leadership position. Greater

financial rewards were not mentioned as a reason for becoming a leader within a PK-12 organization. Teachers were motivated by making a difference, but unmotivated and disappointed by low compensation.

Internal Theme 2: Encouragement and Recognition from Superiors. As discussed previously, every participant had similar levels of encouragement from their parents or guardians throughout childhood. Ten of the participants, Jennifer, Gayle, Tara, Karen, Brooke, Linda, Susan, Marcia, Kathy, and Tori, reflected about the encouragement they received from their parents and guardians during their childhood and all of them could not recall a specific conversation. The participants felt constantly encouraged throughout childhood, but they were not specifically encouraged or pressured to pursue a certain career. Three teachers mentioned that they felt encouragement from colleagues on the same level, but only one teacher described support from a colleague in detail. Karen, an elementary school teacher, described a former colleague, who later became a principal in another area, encouraging her to pursue leadership positions outside of the classroom when she was a novice teacher. She credited that colleague with pushing her to pursue a masters degree in educational leadership.

While the teachers appeared to value the encouragement from colleagues, Kathy, an elementary school teacher, realized those co-workers had no authority while encouraging her to obtain a leadership position. She had been asked to lead a workshop the morning of our interview, after the workshop a central office staff member mentioned that she wished there was funding for a position for Kathy:

> She said to me, I know because of funding we can't do this. I wish we had a K through five math person who all they did was go from school to school to

> make sure there's consistency across who's promoting these things that happen and then finding the funding for it. And, she said, 'I would tell them it needs to be you.' You see what I'm saying? I got a promotion from someone! And I'm constantly hearing that. 'Oh, I wish we had a job for you to do this, I wish we could do that with you'. So, everybody recognizes that leadership, there's nothing in place to put somebody there because you've got to earn your status.

Three teachers, Jennifer, Brooke, and Susan never mentioned receiving encouragement or support from anyone within the PK-12 organization.

Leaders in the study described constant encouragement from superiors within the PK-12 organizational structure, or 'taps on the shoulder.' Paula, a superintendent, recalled an incident during her first year of teaching where she was reprimanded by the principal of the school for scolding a veteran teacher. She described the impact of that former principal, "That lady ended up being the person who said to me, you need to be a principal and what can I do to help you? Because she saw the leadership in me." Paula described constant encouragement from within the PK-12 organization throughout her 40 year career:

> People who would encourage me by saying, 'I've never had a boss like you.' The last one was, you know, I'm so fortunate, people calling saying can I move to your school? Just encouragement that said well, keep doing what you're doing.

Tara, a high school principal, described how encouragement often came from subordinates, from teachers at a former school who contacted her to apply for a job. Cierra, a central office director, recalled the encouragement from people within her former and current school division, "Actually, this position was advertised in the newspaper and I never saw the advertisement. But, I had ten to fifteen people contact me…have you seen? This is so for you!" A former superintendent called to encourage her to pursue the position. Cierra reflected about leaving the classroom

for a position of leadership and recognized the importance of people within PK-12 offering her constant support and encouragement:

> It took someone saying to me, you need to pursue something whether it's curriculum or whether it's administration. So, someone saying that and pushing me on. And honestly, you know, I remember [a different former superintendent] coming up to me even my year as assistant principal and saying 'I really want to see you. I've seen good things from you this year.' Like it took, it has taken people in my life that I can see and think back on those people to say, hey will you step up next?

Cierra was still getting tapped on the shoulder to pursue higher levels of leadership, "[former superintendent] came to me and said, 'you need to get your doctorate and you need to become an assistant superintendent.' Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, recalled her former principal encouraging her to go into administration instead of early childhood education:

> When I became an administrator the principal of the school who was also a male said, because at that time I was working on a master's in early childhood, he said, 'you need to go back and get your master's in administration.' I said, I could never do that, no I couldn't do it. I always accuse him and my husband of conspiring together because my husband would say, 'yeah, you could do that.'

After Minnie finished her degree in administration the same principal encouraged her to apply for his position because he was moving to another position of leadership.

Minnie described an incident where she was principal and set up a classroom at the local shopping mall to bring attention to public education during teacher appreciation week. They bussed the students into the mall and held classes there for a week and it drew lots of media attention. Minnie recalled within two days she had a job application from a local school division:

> No name, just an application. I found out later that the superintendent at that time said 'I'm sick of that woman getting all of this credit in [school division], I

> want her!' When this board member called him, he said, 'yeah, I'm on it right now.' So, I get it. I didn't even worry about the interview…"

Minnie described the last tap on the shoulder she received when she got her most recent position at a local college. She did not solicit that job either. Minnie experienced constant encouragement from superiors while in the PK-12 organization.

Tori, an assistant principal, described the tap on the shoulder phenomenon as well:

> My bosses told me to. So, my bosses started saying things about, 'I don't understand why you haven't started doing this' and so I started hearing things like that. 'Why haven't you started your master's? Why are you not pursing this? You would be really good at this.' So, I don't know that I necessarily would have done it if I hadn't heard people who did the same job that I ended up in now saying, 'yeah, you would be good at this job.'

Leaders valued the encouragement they received from colleagues and especially superiors. While all participants had a similar experience with childhood encouragement, continuous encouragement internal and external to the PK-12 organization was key the acquisition of leadership positions in this study.

Two teachers described incidents where they had been tapped on the shoulder by former leaders, but the leaders took jobs outside of the school division. This encouragement was flattering to them, but the lack of follow-through appeared to mean rejection by the PK-12 organization. Gayle, a middle school teacher, described a situation where a former superintendent contacted her for a meeting. He questioned why she did not take on more of a leadership role within the division. The superintendent then went further to encourage her to apply for assistant principal positions. Gayle explained the outcome:

> So, he says well, you need more leadership and I said well, there are some people that are in positions that haven't done the amount of work that I have already done. I don't feel like I need anything extra, but you know, it, if that's the case. So, he says well, so let's, let's have a meeting. We meet, okay, he says um, you know, if something comes up at [current school] you know, you, um, you fit nicely into that peg. As he's getting ready to leave, okay. And then I felt like it was a slap in the face because he tells me this and then he slides someone into a position who, there was no, um, there was no, um, interview for my initial assistant principal job, it was he slid this person in after he left. So, I was like well that's a slap in the face. Now, did this person have the sped experience (special ed) yes, but there are people that come into the positions all of the time that don't know exactly what to do, but they figure it out. So, that's, so that happened, um, and then there have been other, um, positions at [current school], but at this point I'm ready to leave.

Gayle was not interested in pursuing a leadership position after this incident with her former superintendent.

Kathy, an elementary school teacher, described a similar situation when her former superintendent encouraged her to pursue her master's degree in administration, but when she completed the program he did not seem to support her plans to obtain a leadership position in the school division. Kathy said, "I finished in 2007 and I'm still in a regular classroom." She described another situation where her former principal tried to get funding for her to be the assistant principal at the school, but his superiors at central office and the school board turned him down. Her former principal moved on to another division. Kathy's school currently has an assistant principal, but she was not chosen for the job. These incidents seemed to really tarnish the idea of potential leadership for both participants.

Even though many leaders mentioned not needing awards or recognition, they seemed to be important to teachers. Four out of six teachers mentioned the importance of recognition from colleagues, but especially superiors. Jennifer, a high school teacher, said:

> I don't think success should be labeled by awards. Some careers are, I mean if we all want to be teacher of the year we are going to be sad, I mean that's not a, that's not a goal for me.

Later in the interview, Jennifer went on to describe her disappointment that her principals did not recognize the hard work she put in on a daily basis:

> I think what's ridiculous is they don't notice what's going in school, going on in school, and the morale is low. And so they came up within leadership with their fine wisdom to have us as individuals to tell department chairs, because I'm not a department chair, when we do something good so that they can make sure they recognize it.

Jennifer wanted recognition from her superiors, but did not want to have to recognize herself.

Brooke, a middle school teacher, described winning an award, "I was honored by the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District for being a environmental, outstanding environmental educator. You know, that made me feel good." Karen went into the greatest detail about awards and recognition, "Last year I was teacher of the year and it was just a really great year." She was teacher of the year for her school, but not teacher of the year for the whole division:

> I was really disappointed last year when I wasn't teacher of the year. I thought I had it in the bag. I really did, I nailed it. Every year something comes together. That was last year. Every piece that could come together, did. Great class. Knew what I was doing. Supportive parents. All of those pieces came together. And then I went to the interview. Like the one for the city, and um, and I nailed the interview. Like, I walked out of there and I was like I got this! And it went to a reading specialist. Which, I understand, reading specialists are very very important. But I give five tests a year. And I was successful at it. Like those pieces. I have a homeroom. I can't ever just say I need to go to the bathroom. You can't go to the bathroom.

Karen went further and described her interesting ten-year history with the teacher of the year award:

> And then last year to be teacher of the year, which, you're going to find this hilarious, but when we had to do, do our thing for our master's. Where you had to do our paper and you had to do the theory thing, mine was why teacher of the year is worthless." She went on to describe the curse associated with the award, "we called it the teacher of the year curse because several times because I'd be nominated and, and never had gotten it. So, we broke the 15, you know, on the 14th year we managed to break the curse. Ten years later.

Teachers valued the recognition from awards such as teacher of the year or awards given to them by community organizations.

Two leaders mentioned winning awards, but did not seem to put the same sort of emphasis on the recognition. Paula, a superintendent, was proud of her former elementary school winning the National Blue Ribbon Award. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, went through a list of awards and recognitions such as having lunch with governors, but she was not motivated by this sort of recognition:

> Not for accolades, I can't stand it, don't, don't come giving me praise and all like that. We're all here for a purpose and my purpose is to teach others, to work with others, to motivate others, to challenge others.

Although she did not seem to be motivated by public recognition, Minnie told stories of being honored by the state association of principals for mentoring other principals and being publically recognized at a division-wide meeting by a former male assistant principal. The participants were all motivated by making a difference in the lives of children, but the teachers really valued special recognition for their hard work and dedication to helping children each year.

Conclusion. Explicit and continuous encouragement from superiors was key to female leadership in education. The leaders in this study experienced a great deal of encouragement from their bosses, mentors, and other role models.

Teachers did not seem to have the same type of encouragement from superiors and yearned for recognition of their hard work in the classroom. Encouragement and recognition seemed to be a missing piece for the classroom teachers in this study. Teachers had the leadership qualifications, but lacked the confidence or inside networking to obtain a position.

Internal Theme 3: Job Search Process. A very significant pattern emerged when the data on the job search process was analyzed. Sixty-seven percent of the teachers in this study applied for leadership jobs right out of the gate from administrator preparation programs, but did not get the first one or two positions. As a result, they felt defeated and stopped applying for leadership positions. Four out of six teachers applied for a leadership position, such as an assistant principal job, as soon as they completed their master's degree in administration and supervision, but they did not get a position of leadership. This section was interconnected with personality characteristics and encouragement from within the PK-12 organization. Two of the teachers, Karen and Gayle, did not initially apply for a position. Brooke, a middle school teacher, recalled applying for an assistant principal job:

> It's probably been 15 years. Right when I first got my master's because I thought that's what I'm supposed to do. So I did and you know, it was fine. I really did not expect to get it, just straight out of being, and you, that young and all. And I didn't, fine, and moved on.

Susan, a high school teacher, described interviewing with a few of her former principals when she first got her master's degree. Kathy, an elementary school teacher, discussed the personal turmoil she went through right after getting her master's degree with a divorce after 24 years of marriage and her daughter becoming pregnant at a very young age. She did not feel like it was the right time to

pursue a leadership role. Kathy interviewed for an assistant principal position at her current school a few years later and was passed over. She described the situation, “I interviewed for the position here, for the assistant position and she didn’t choose me.”

Two teachers never applied for leadership positions. Gayle, a middle school teacher, said, “Initially, after I got my administrative degree, I didn’t feel like I was ready. So, there were positions out there and I just didn’t go for them.” Karen, an elementary school teacher, echoed similar sentiments when she described that she was not seeking other job opportunities and never had. Karen later described a traumatic series of events surrounding a former superior that made her shy away from leadership positions within the school division, “Things fell apart [former principal] got caught cheating. I mean, all of these things happened and I was such a part of that. It was like, I don’t want to do this anymore.” Karen went on to describe that she was not involved directly in the scandalous behavior, but she was in the inner circle and her personal and professional reputations were dragged through the mud as a result. Karen carried deep anxiety and resentment towards that incident with her former principal and mentioned that she would never work for a principal she could not trust again.

Only one teacher, the most recent graduate, out of the participant pool had continued to apply for jobs in leadership. Jennifer, a high school teacher, remarked, “I am going for anything that I feel I qualify for or that I feel like, again, I have a purpose.” She was the only teacher in the study who mentioned her ultimate goal of becoming an assistant principal and then a principal.

Three of the six teachers in the study admitted being nervous during the interview process. Jennifer, a high school teacher who was applying for leadership jobs at the time of the research study, described her struggles with the interviewing at length:

> I haven't had to interview for jobs. I got my first job at [former high school] and I didn't even have to interview. I mean, my second job, I really, hardly had an interview. So, now I'm going through the interview process, having people, having that 30 minutes to portray that person that I am is a hard thing.

She later mentioned how she was not good with first impressions because people often thought she was mean or sad or mad, "it's actually quite entertaining because that is not at all what I'm thinking or meaning to portray." Jennifer realized the importance of the interview, "whether you can wow somebody in that 30 minute interview" was very important. Jennifer kept coming back to her anxiety surrounding the interview process:

> Yeah, well and that's what I'm dealing with because I know I have til next May to get another job before there's a next batch of just as qualified people that I came out with. Like, out of all of these jobs I've interviewed for there's 38, 39 applicants. At least I'm getting an interview, that's what people say. I'm getting an interview, but, um, I'm not achieving my goal.

Jennifer ended with, "I think the hardest thing for me is just that 30 minute interview." She did not feel comfortable with her ability to obtain a leadership position.

Brooke, a middle school teacher, expressed similar anxiety about the interview process. She did not even feel comfortable being interviewed for this research study. Brooke recalled her last interview for an assistant principal position a few years ago:

> I applied a few years ago and I came up with all the, you know, you kind of prepare for questions like this. And when they, you know, when they said, what are your strengths, I just, I'm not down on myself, but it is, it's really hard

> for me to. I don't know. I feel like I'm tooting my own horn, or you know, it's hard for me to come up with that sort of thing. Motivate me, or I don't know. Well, if people say what is the most embarrassing time in your life. I just don't have anything in my brain.

Brooke was laughing and joking the entire time she recalled the interview process. She explained further, "It's not even nervousness. Things don't hit me. Some people can go 'I've got three that come to my mind.' I'm just like, I don't know!" Brooke admitted that she'd only gone on two interviews and could probably obtain a leadership job if she really put her mind to it.

Kathy, an elementary school teacher, also admitted feeling uneasy during the interview process, "As verbose as I am, my interviews are sometimes uncomfortable because I do get a little, I get nervous in them because I'm afraid I'm not going to say what they want to hear." She thought a few interviews had gone well over the years, but she had not gotten the leadership positions. The leaders in the study did not discuss any problems with the interview process in the past.

One of the teachers in the study had stopped applying for leadership positions, but was considering applying for teaching positions in other school divisions who were not currently under school improvement. Kathy, an elementary school teacher, described her reasoning behind her decision not to apply for leadership positions, but teaching positions in another division:

> I don't want to because I don't agree with where we are in education and I'm not going to be the person who tells these teachers this is what you have to do. I couldn't look myself in the face and say you've got to do this and this and this because I don't agree with it. And, I don't think the principals have options. I think the options are gone and nobody is hearing them as a voice anymore. So, if I'm not going to have a voice in education as a leader then I serve better where I am.

Although Kathy was pursuing other teaching opportunities, she was hesitant about leaving her long time school division:

> I've looked at some different divisions and what they have to offer. It's kind of one of those things like, I already know what my devil is here and am I better living with the devil that I already have or going to someone else's and regretting it?

Kathy was obviously struggling about her place in PK-12 leadership.

She said, "There's still a slight sting for me that I do have this administrative degree and I haven't been either, number one sought out or chosen when I have put myself out there." Every teacher in this study mentioned the fact that they had the qualifications for leadership, but had not obtained a leadership position.

Three of the teachers felt disappointed about others getting jobs within their divisions, but they were not applying for the leadership positions at the time. Gayle, a middle school teacher, described an incident with a former superintendent where he encouraged her to pursue leadership opportunities and then put another person in the assistant principal position at her school. She described this as a slap in the face, however, she had not even applied for the position. Gayle continued to discuss her feelings about applying for leadership positions, "Last summer, we had the assistant principal job and I didn't even put my name in." Karen, who admitted early on in the interview that she was not seeking leadership positions, reflected on the job search process:

> I believe that professionally there are times that I thought if the superintendent knew what I was doing here, it wouldn't be so hard to get further…well, and I haven't applied for things so it's not that I can say it's because they looked me over, but sometimes I feel like they should be proactive and seek other people out. And, it means for me, being in room [number] until I leave.

Just as Gayle before her, Karen was obviously hurt by being looked over for jobs she had not pursued.

Kathy, an elementary school teacher, described a few scenarios over her 24-year career in which she felt like she had been passed over by her superiors. Her former superintendent, who encouraged her to get her master's in administration, later encouraged her to seek leadership positions outside of the school division. This hurt her because he encouraged her to pursue leadership, but did not endorse her within the school division. Kathy also recalled when a former colleague got a job as a principal of a school without ever having been an assistant principal, "I was a little bit jealous, but I didn't interview for it. I couldn't be jealous for it, but jealous in the fact that she got to skip that step and go." Fifty percent of the teachers perceived they were being looked over by superiors, but were not actively seeking leadership positions.

Four out of the eight leaders, on the other hand, did not apply for their current position of leadership until someone contacted them and encouraged them to apply. These taps on the shoulder came from former superiors, current superiors, colleagues, and former subordinates. Former colleagues, current school board members, and community members encouraged Paula to seek the superintendency. Tara, a high school principal, described how she had just finished her doctoral program when her current job was advertised, "I didn't apply for this job when it was first posted and it wasn't because of anything related to the school. I had just defended two months earlier and I thought, I've gotten my life back." She was later encouraged to apply by former subordinates, former administrative colleagues, and

her family members. Cierra, a central office director, did not even know about her current position until former superiors, colleagues, and community members encouraged her to apply:

> Actually, this position was advertised in the newspaper and I never saw the advertisement, but I had like ten to fifteen people contact me in [current school division] and outside of [current school division] that said, 'have you seen, this is so for you!'

Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, described three scenarios throughout the interview in which she did not initially apply for positions throughout her career. She was encouraged to apply for jobs by her superiors, community members, and her family.

Conclusion. The leaders were experiencing constant taps on the shoulder that proved to be instrumental in the decision-making process. The teachers in this study seemed to be lacking a tenacious personality to tackle the interview process. In conjunction with personality characteristics, teachers also recognized the power of relationships with and encouragement from superiors and leaders within the PK-12 organization, but they were lacking the necessary support to obtain leadership positions. Five out of six teachers in this study were not applying for leadership positions for various reasons. Four out of six teachers had originally applied for leadership jobs within their own school division. Three of the six teachers later applied for a position of leadership outside of their school division. All leaders in the study had taken positions of leadership outside of their original school division during their careers.

Internal Theme 4: Gender. Participants were generally reticent to discuss barriers and challenges to their career advancement, but gender issues were

pervasive throughout the data. This section on gender was broken down into three subsections revolving around the following issues: balancing personal and professional lives, gender in the PK-12 organization, and gender norms in Central Virginia. The participants in this study discussed the constant struggle to balance their personal and professional lives. Gender issues such as the lack of female role models, negative reputations, the glass ceiling, double standards, and the 'good ole boy' network within the PK-12 organization really impacted females in this study. Finally, participants recognized impact of the traditional gender norms in place in Central Virginia. Gender themes emerged on individual, organizational, and regional levels.

Balancing personal and professional lives. Although the PK-12 organizational structure appears to be family friendly, every participant in this study described the constant balancing act between their personal and professional lives. Five out of fourteen participants mentioned the dichotomy between stay at home mothers and working mothers. Jennifer, a high school teacher, described how her grandmother, who had always been a stay at home mom, did not understand the challenges of working and keeping up the household chores. Susan, a high school teacher, described how it was difficult to return to the classroom after having her children, "I questioned myself when they were going to the babysitter and then to daycare." Paula, a superintendent, described the importance of crockpots while she was working full-time and raising three kids. She relied on a crockpot in order to have good family dinners on a regular basis.

Sunny, an elementary school principal, went into depth more when she discussed the balancing act involved with being a working mother:

> I'm not sure I would be a good stay at home mom. I think I'm a better mom to [young son] working, but sometimes I feel like, okay, but you work all the time. Um, so that, you know, puts a burden on your heart and you feel guilty. Um, but then I think, you know, if I were a stay at home mom, I wouldn't have the financial means to be able to do things with him. And it's not that I want to buy his love, but when I have the opportunities that hey we can take a long weekend, we can go see a Disney show or we can go do that. I like to do those things with him just to give him those experiences because I hope that in my mind, um, I hope he will remember those big things. You're going to make me start crying. You know, instead of, you know you think back over the time that you spend with your parents, I don't want it to just be, I spent a boring weekend with my mom and we watched TV all day. I want it to be, okay, wow, you know, this was a great weekend with mom we went here, we went there. I want it to be about his experiences that he associates with the time that he spends with me.

Sunny was almost crying and laughing at the same time as she reflected on the constant struggle for balance between her personal and professional lives. She grappled with her status as a working mother.

Two of the leaders described the guilt associated with being a female leader in a PK-12 organization and sacrificing time with their children. Linda, a former elementary school principal, immediately listed time away from her child as the biggest personal sacrifice she made while being a leader of a school. Early in her son's childhood, Linda had chosen to stay at home and really felt guilty about her time away from him over the past few years. Linda had recently switched from a leadership position within a PK-12 organization to two jobs in the private sector. She felt she was able to see her son more with two jobs outside of educational leadership than she was during her tenure as an elementary school principal.

Sunny, an elementary school principal, was the most troubled by the time she spent away from her young child. She mentioned early in the interview that her mother was her most important role mode. Sunny realized that her mother sacrificed her own life and career for her children. She recalled, “hurting for her knowing what she gave up for us even though she wanted to do that. When she could have done so much more.” Sunny had just switched from a leadership position in a secondary school to a leadership position in an elementary school because of the abundance of extracurricular commitments in a secondary school. She did not feel as if she could juggle the extensive afterschool commitments while raising a young child. Sunny’s ultimate goal was to become the first female high school principal in her current school division. She admitted that she would not pursue that goal until her son was much older. Sunny realized she was making some professional sacrifices for the sake of her son.

Three of the participants in the study described how they had to make sacrifices while pregnant or breastfeeding. The participants acknowledged that the PK-12 organization was not the most conducive environment in which to have young children as outsiders tend to assume. Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, described being a young married female teacher who became pregnant during her first year of employment in PK-12 education. She was allowed to work up until her fourth month of the pregnancy and had to quit classroom teaching once she started showing. Minnie never questioned the policy and quit without telling anyone that she was having a baby:

> It was the law and the funny thing about when I applied for, excuse me, for retirement someone told me, said, you know, because you had to quit

> during that year, you can get credit for that year now. You can get credit for that year now. The law has changed. And so, I called and I had to submit, um, birth certificate and that sort of thing so they could document that I was pregnant during that time that I was off. But yeah, once you started showing, you were out of there. So, it was funny in my case because I knew the law, knew it was automatic, I didn't tell anybody that I'm leaving because I was pregnant. I just put on the form that we're just relocating and so they questioned that and that's why I had to submit all of the documentation. And I said, well it was just a law then, it wouldn't have done me any good to say anything else.

Minnie's experience was prior to legislative changes that prevented such treatment of classroom teachers.

Three teachers discussed coming back to work after maternity leave. Susan, Karen, and Jennifer all discussed the hardship of balancing a teaching career with a newborn baby. Susan described how she did not know if she would be able to work and take care of a new baby. Jennifer recalled coming back during teacher workweek so that she could set up her own classroom. She then continued with maternity leave for a few more weeks. Karen recalled a former principal asking her to come back to school and work the first week of school instead of staying home on maternity leave with a three-week-old baby. She said, "I did it because I felt like I had to." Two teachers discussed the struggle of teaching while trying to continue breastfeeding a newborn baby. Susan, a high school teacher, discussed the hardship of coming back to work while trying to breastfeed and pump while at school. Karen, an elementary school teacher, also recalled the difficulty of trying to pump while at school. She had a male principal with whom she did not feel comfortable discussing her breastfeeding challenges. Karen described why she was not successful with breastfeeding and pumping while working as a classroom teacher,

> For the first one, I had the pump, I had everything. I was going to school. I was ready! And there was no support. No encouragement. No support. And if I had somebody who said, you can use this room, you just need 20 minutes, I think I would have followed through.

Karen really thought that if she had more support from her principal or colleagues she could have continued nursing her baby. She said, “But he was male, he didn’t get it.” She recalled a specific example of going on a field trip with a class and supervising a group of male students all day. Karen said,

> When I carried that pump through North Carolina Zoo with a group of 5 boys and came home with mastitis because I wouldn't go do it because I didn't know how to go somewhere and I had this group of boys and I had, you know, and I was, I was embarrassed to ask somebody else. Can you watch them so I can go do, like it was just this thing, and, and so I would definitely say that's a personal sacrifice.

These two teachers acknowledged that teaching, to those outside of PK-12 organizations, appeared to be a flexible type of employment where mothers easily balance the day-to-day demands of motherhood with a professional career. They did not experience such an easy transition to motherhood within the PK-12 organization.

Eleven of the participants were married and one participant had a significant other of seventeen years. Marriage, or a long-term relationship, was a topic that emerged in every interview. Eight out of the fourteen participants had a husband or significant other who supported them through their personal and professional endeavors. Susan, a high school teacher, described her husband as her biggest supporter:

> He is the reason I am successful because we were married before I went back to get my teaching certification, before I got my master's, before I went to [local university], and the mentoring and everything. And he supported me every time, without question. ‘Of course, dear if that's what you need to do.’ When I’m not happy he says, ‘if you need to do something else we’ll do okay.’

Susan felt supported through any personal and professional situation. Tara, a high school principal, shared similar sentiments about her husband. She described how he always got up and got their two daughters ready for school in the mornings. Tara added that he even fixed their hair. She went further to describe how he supported her through her doctoral program:

> My husband during the time I was in school, was phenomenal. During the week, I didn't have to worry about dinner and sometimes I would leave my job and he would meet me somewhere with food or have food when I got home from class and that type of thing. He was phenomenal. I could not have made it without his help, I, It definitely wouldn't have been a three and a half year process. But, he was phenomenal.

Tara also added how her position of leadership impacted her husband's reputation in the community, "He's my husband and he's okay with that." He started a new job and they already knew who he was because of her prominent position in the community.

Minnie, a former elementary and middle school teacher, described the constant support from her husband of over forty years. Minnie's husband used to be a teacher, as well, but left the profession after a decade. Her husband encouraged her to become a principal and took on many household responsibilities while she went back to school to get her educational leadership degree. Minnie described his encouragement:

> My husband has always encouraged me to do and I said, 'so, what if I ever hit the stage where I make more money than you.' And he said, 'more power to you it's going in the same pot.' So, I've been very blessed to have a husband that had that sort of attitude and so I think that's helpful.

Paula, a superintendent, echoed similar sentiments about her husband of almost forty years. She said:

> When I was thinking about the doctorate I said, 'Alright let's talk. It will not be my job it will be our job. And you're working 10 months.' I already was working twelve months with a principalship, but every time he would say yes. And of course, [husband] is so funny. I ended up telling [best friend] I had the superintendent job first because couldn't get [husband] on the phone to tell him. I said, '[best friend] I got the job' and I'm crying and I have tears in my eyes. I told her, 'I'm going to give him [husband] an hour before he says 'do I get a new boat.' And so [husband] walks in and I'm crying and he says 'oh you didn't get the job,' I said 'no, I got the job, I got the job, I'm so excited!' And so tick, tick, tick (mimicking clock), ten minutes later he goes, 'can I have a new boat?'

Paula laughed hysterically when she recalled the conversation with her husband. He supported her, but was also excited to reap the benefits of her higher compensation as a superintendent.

Two teachers in the study, Karen and Jennifer, described how their husbands were supportive, but criticized the amount of time and effort they invested in their careers. Karen, an elementary school teacher, described how she left her former school division where she had lots of responsibilities as a teacher leader to go to the division where her husband was teaching. Her husband said, "Walk away, just stay in the classroom. Enjoy that. Nobody here needs you to be a leader." Jennifer, a high school teacher, discussed how her husband resented the after hours commitments of classroom teaching. He would say, "I don't understand why you care so much' or 'why are you picking up that phone call, it's after school hours." Both of their husbands felt that they worked too hard for the limited compensation and recognition they got from the teaching profession.

Five of the participants had been divorced, two teachers and three leaders, and two of the participants later remarried. Three leaders in the study discussed how their husband or ex-husband was one of their biggest critics. Tori, an assistant principal, described her husband's resentment of her long hours of extracurricular responsibilities. She was aware of his quiet disapproval:

> My husband has always sort of complained about, 'oh where are you going tonight? Which ball game do you have tonight?' You know, a lot of that. I'm not a go home cook dinner kind of woman, but that's okay with me. I don't know if that's okay with him, but I think, complains about the amount of time, but more in a passive aggressive let me just leave food all over the house kind of thing. You know? I think it's not even necessarily a conscious thing with him (laughs) but he has these passive aggressive ways of showing me that I haven't been home enough. Maybe I'm wrong in my interpretation of that, but I think that I am not.

Tori realized her commitment to her job as an assistant principal put a strain on her marriage.

Sunny, an elementary principal, was the only participant in the study who admitted that she had a strained relationship with her husband. Sunny described her husband as one of her biggest critics:

> Sometimes I feel like my husband is a critic because I feel like he sees my role as an administrative leader, it's almost like a competition. And sometimes I feel like, he, um, is self-conscious or feels like he takes the back seat. Or, you know, if I can't be just as effective or the center of the spotlight like she is, um, you know, I'm less of a man. You know, we have some issues there with my role as a principal.

Sunny seemed to have the most conflict between her personal and professional lives. Linda recalled a similar situation with her ex-husband resenting her constant goal-setting. Linda described how her ex-husband was annoyed by her 'upwardly mobileness.'

One leader discussed how her role probably inhibited her from having a traditional family life. Cierra, a central office director, described how she was often the last person to leave the office and frequently sent e-mails about work in the middle of the night. She thought she had gotten better about these things over the past few years, though. Cierra reflected about the lack of balance between her personal and professional life, “I probably would be married with kids, but my job has been a hurdle and that makes me sad.” Cierra mentioned throughout the interview how she desperately wanted a husband and children and would be willing to walk away from her high-profile leadership job to make that happen.

Conclusion. Females in the study obviously faced challenges when trying to balance their personal and professional lives. Each participant dealt with the challenge of balancing both aspects in a unique fashion. This topic was a pervasive theme throughout the study with participants who discussed the difference between stay at home mothers and working mothers, balancing extracurricular activities and time with their husbands and children, and facing the challenges of motherhood within the PK-12 organization.

Support for females in PK-12 organizations. As previously discussed, all participants mentioned the importance of a strong female role model from childhood such as a mother or grandmother, but fewer women mentioned having a female role model in a leadership position within the PK-12 organization. None of the teachers discussed having a female role model who was in a leadership position within their division. Three of the teachers mentioned a colleague as a member of their support system. Karen, an elementary teacher, and Brooke, a middle school teacher, both

recalled the support of a former colleague from their early years of teaching; whereas Kathy, an elementary teacher, felt supported by colleagues throughout her teaching career. Kathy described how each grade level team she has worked with over the years has been the main source of professional support:

> In the building there are a lot of my colleagues that we've become very personal friends and we do activities together outside of school. So I would say my colleagues in general. The unit I'm working with at the time that I'm working with them.

The teachers in the study described minimal support from within the PK-12 organization, but instead garnered support from friends and family.

Leaders differed in that they perceived they had more layers of support both within the PK-12 organization and their personal lives. Paula, a superintendent, felt supported by her school board in her new position. Tara, a high school principal, felt supported by her administrative team and her secretary at work. Sunny, an elementary school principal, mentioned her central office staff and the community at large when questioned about her main support system, whereas Linda, a former elementary school principal, did not feel support from central office or the community and subsequently left her position of leadership.

The teachers' main support was garnered from outside of the PK-12 organization whereas many leaders perceived they were being supported from within all areas of their lives. Paula, a superintendent, talked about how many parents today get in a bind when schools are closed for inclement weather and how she always had a support system in place just in case that happened to her as a working mother, "I was very fortunate that I had a backup plan for the backup plan."

Although she did not have a husband and children, Cierra, a central office director, described the importance of her support system in her everyday life:

> I have a great church family. I have great neighbors who mow my grass. John mows my grass every single week, probably twice a week sometimes. My neighbor lets my dog out everyday. I have amazing neighbors, and amazing church family.

Linda, a former elementary school principal, described a close group of friends who she referred to as her 'tribal council' early on in the interview:

> Sometimes they are all dead on, but most of the time they tell me, they won't tell me what I want to them to tell me. They won't give me the answer. They just say, you know, give me random stories to think about. I'm like, that's not what I called you for. I need you to *tell* me what to do with this and they won't do it. And that's why they are my tribal council!

When Linda described her decision to leave a leadership position in the PK-12 organization and get a job in the private sector, she came back to the tribal council:

> I just don't think I had the right support system in place to push me. I think that women in leadership positions, and it's kind of funny to me, women in leadership positions, and it's going, still, looking beyond, you really need to have either a supportive family structure in place or a solid group of friends who are going to catch you and push you on when you do fall. I don't think I had that in place firmly enough to catch me. And maybe I did and I just didn't realize it.

Linda felt like her support system was not strong enough to support her through the trials of female leadership within a PK-12 organization.

The perception of an elaborate and varied support system seemed to be key to females in educational leadership positions. The teachers appeared to lack an extensive support system when compared to the leaders in this study. The teachers mentioned the importance of friends and family, but did not perceive a strong support network within the PK-12 organization.

One leader, Cierra, discussed the importance of having a strong female mentor in her former school division. Cierra described the impact of this female mentor on her perception of the glass ceiling. She did not think the glass ceiling existed in Central Virginia because she watched the success of her female mentor. Cierra was the only participant in the study who mentioned a constant female mentor within the PK-12 organizational structure.

Two teachers acknowledged the fact that women are in competition with other women in PK-12 leadership because of perceived quotas on leadership positions. Jennifer, who had been searching for jobs and getting a few interviews, but had not been offered a leadership position, described her dismay with the job search process in PK-12 organizations because of these quotas. Jennifer described the process:

> Being an educator, there's so many other women that are educators. So, when you start to go up the ladder, I've run into this this week, I was basically told that I didn't get the job because they needed a male. So, I've come into that barrier.

Jennifer also added, "I get frustrated when I see that, you know, you're not the right sex or color of skin. Susan described the opposite outcome after two women got jobs over her:

> I think it bothers me when the glass ceiling is there when a woman should get the job and I think it bothers me when they break it and they stick somebody above it that shouldn't be there because they need a woman.

Susan went further to say that if the goal was to hire a woman then the decision makers needed to always make sure they hired the right woman.

Conclusion. The participants in this study had varying levels of support within the PK-12 organizational structure. Teachers seemed to garner support from

colleagues past and present, whereas leaders had more support from all levels, subordinates, colleagues, and superiors. There was a lack of support from female leaders and role models with only one participant out of fourteen mentioning a female mentor within the PK-12 environment. Teachers did not perceive support from above

Negative reputations. Participants reflected about their personality characteristics. Six of the participants discussed negative personality characteristics with which they were associated. Two teachers in the study acknowledged having the reputation for being bossy, whereas four out of eight of the female leaders acknowledged being known as bossy and or bitchy. Participants recognized that men within the PK-12 organization would never be described as either bossy or bitchy. As mentioned previously, Jennifer's co-teacher called her 'sergeant' when referring to her bossy behavior. Kathy was offended by her bossy reputation:

> I've always been told I was bossy and it's always been very offensive to me because, just because I'm leading you doesn't make me bossy. Just because I'm the person that you ask how should we do this and I tell you, doesn't make me bossy. And, I don't' like that…Although, I think they would have used that term much more so in my younger years. I think now they would just say I was a leader.

Both teachers mentioned that other people thought they were bossy and this aspect of their reputation seemed to be contentious.

Leaders had been subjected to more scrutiny from the greater PK-12 community. Leaders in the study mentioned listed their critics as: subordinates, superiors, school board members, and the larger community. Minnie found out she was going to be the principal of the school where she taught for over a decade and she polled the staff to see how they felt:

> I asked one woman, and I said, so how is it going to feel for you, for me to be your principal now? And she said, you've been bossing us around all these years. What's the difference going to be other than you have the title.

Minnie just laughed when she told this story. She described how she was okay with the reputation of being bossy:

> The teachers were saying I was bossy because I didn't let anything happen to any child. I don't care if it was black, white, whatever, if you were mistreating a child, I was going to tell you. I would call a teacher out when I was a teacher just as quickly as I would anybody else. I would go to the principal and say you've got to, you've got to do something with this situation. I had a friend that says it's a good thing you weren't born in slave times. You would have been killed right off the bat. But you have to do what you've got to do to help children.

Minnie also acknowledged her polarized reputation with former teachers:

> I always tell people there is an A and B description of me from the teachers. I'm either an angel and that description comes from those that are hard working, as hardworking as I am. That have the best interest of children in mind and then there are those that are try, that are just there to beat the system. What can I get away with? How little can I do and still keep this job? That's why I go from angel to the bitch. And, um, and that's, that's pretty much how it divides. And if you go into any school where I was, they will say, Oh I just love her dearly, oh she was just wonderful, and then you go down the hall, oh yeah she was alright. She thought she was tough. And she thought people liked her. You know? This kind of thing. But that doesn't bother me because knowing the kind of teachers that they were, that means I was doing something right. Yes!

Minnie laughed again as she described her reputation using very dramatic voices to imitate the teachers who did not like her over the years. Paula described what one of her newer critics said about her as superintendent:

> This woman that's not a very nice person, she calls me the head bitch. And you know what my reaction was? You know, there are some people in this world, you know, it's okay that she calls me that because I don't want her respect, she doesn't respect herself. She doesn't respect the position or anything else. I don't care what she calls me.

Conclusion. The leaders in the study seemed to be more aware of their reputations throughout the community and did not seem to mind the negative comments about their leadership performance. Leaders seemed to be more comfortable with criticism and conflict over time. They had developed thicker skin because of the constant scrutiny.

Glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations. Four out of six teachers acknowledged the presence of the glass ceiling within PK-12 organizations, but did not describe the barriers in detail. Kathy, an elementary school teacher, described how she thought PK-12 organizations were the perfect example of the glass ceiling, but as she talked it became less about gender and more about bureaucracy:

> Oh I think education is the purest form of what the glass ceiling is, because we are all equals here. The teacher who teaches next to me who has been teaching two years and myself, we have no more rights, privileges, or recognition than each other. And teachers across the board at the high school level, middle school level, elementary school level, we are seen as one conglomerate group who are all at the same level and now, does that mean that we should go to, um, you know, if I've been working 25 years, then, then I should get paid more, well only because of the salary scale I think that's fair. But in terms of, that if my scores are better than hers, I don't agree with that, you can't compare apples to oranges, if she has a screwy group and I have a great group, which happens all the time. So I don't believe in that. The glass ceiling is we have levels of administration that are completely removed from us. Regardless of their effort to participate and I don't blame them so much as I blame the system that America's put itself in with their education. They're afraid to go outside of what, the system we have and change anything so I think that glass ceiling. We're always looking up going, if I could just break through so you could hear me. I know you're looking down on me, I know you don't really hear me, I know you don't really see me and you don't give me, anymore again, you don't give me anymore voice…And I think our system is set up like that. And that glass ceiling and you know what, it's not even glass anymore. It's just stone and concrete. It's not, there's no breaking through it I don't think. The whole system has to change for it to become something different than it is.

Although she was talking about the glass ceiling in this instance, Kathy seemed more disillusioned by the separation between teachers and leaders in the PK-12 organization than she was by the topic of gender.

Brooke, a middle school teacher, admitted that she had never pushed herself hard enough to challenge the glass ceiling. She was hesitant to seek a position of leadership. Susan, a high school teacher, described how she felt when she did not get two leadership positions:

> I didn't feel like it was a gender thing. I didn't feel like I had hit the glass ceiling. Do I think men still around here have better chances at things? Sure. I mean, I do. And it's foolish to act like they don't.

Teachers did not give specific examples of their experiences with the glass ceiling, but four teachers were quick to acknowledge its existence.

Four out of eight leaders addressed the topic of the glass ceiling within PK-12 organizations, but they, too, were hesitant to describe barriers within PK-12 organizations. For example, Paula, a superintendent, needed to be reassured of her anonymity before discussing the glass ceiling in her former school division. After reassurance, Paula went on to describe how the glass-ceiling phenomenon had plagued her for a large part of her career. She said:

> In my case it made me say to heck with this I'm going to look elsewhere. So, I found a match of predominantly female board members wanting, and that board wanting something different and knowing that I had that hurdle, I didn't have to worry about being a woman. That was not a part of the, but the glass ceiling haunted me for, I won't say 38 years, but I would say a good, um, let's take my teaching, let's take 15 away from it. So, for at least what's that 20, over 20 years. Twenty to 25 years because there would be positions I would go for…

Tori went into detail about the glass ceiling in her former school division, "I think I've kind of said that and not all places is it even glass." Tori had recently gotten a job in a new school division and reflected back on her prior place of employment with a great deal of animosity:

> I think that there's a huge difference even from [current school division] to [former school division]. I think that in [former school division] women are, um, it's really great when they bring ham biscuits to the, you know, the uh, lounge for the basketball game. And that's a fabulous contribution. And I think when women drive around the county with textbooks in their car distributing them though their title is director of secondary curriculum. People think that's great because if you can get someone to do the minutia for ya then that's a great little woman role. I think in [current school division] that's not true. So far, I don't think that's true. I think women are more empowered in [current school division] and maybe it's an urban thing versus a rural thing, but I think, and certainly you know, I have friends all over, Charlotte and other parts of the country. I don't feel the same sense of, let's give women all the little leg work, dirty work, while we sit around thinking great thoughts. I don't feel the same sense of that in other places. Um, certainly one of my best friends is an ethics and compliance lawyer and I think people fairly trust what she has to say and do what she says. So, I think that here is way more limited.

Tori acknowledged that the level or even existence of the glass ceiling differed from school district to school district around the Central Virginia region. PK-12 organizations varied greatly even in this relatively small geographic area.

One of the leaders thanked the glass ceiling for motivating her to keep applying for leadership positions throughout her career. She was now a superintendent. Paula said:

> I kind of thank the glass ceiling in my case because I was going to be perfectly happy ending my career as assistant superintendent. I applied for assistant superintendent in [former school division] and didn't get it. And that's, you know, I said, okay I've had it. You know, I'd applied for several. One of the things I learned in WELV (Women in Educational Leadership in Virginia) is that the average woman will apply for a position 14 to 16 times before they get what they wanted. The average man is like three or four

> times. And I mean, that's just wrong! And in my case, yes, over those, over that time, every single time I applied for a job, a man got the job. A man got the job! So, I did get under the 14 times, it didn't quite take me 14 times, but I was kind of close. But, in a way I thank [former school division] for my previous job, for having a glass ceiling because 100 percent of the time a man got the jobs.

She was not defeated by the existence of the glass ceiling. Paula used the gender barrier as a motivation for furthering her leadership career. This connected back to the personality characteristics of leaders who liked a challenge.

Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, did not thank the glass ceiling, but seemed to always be prepared for the barriers that would present themselves to a minority female:

> If you work hard enough you can break through it. But as a woman you've got to be better in some ways, you've got to show that you're better. And I guess as an African American growing up, I had to be better and so not only being a woman, but also as an African American, I had to prove more than some people would that I can break this glass ceiling. Um, carrying myself professionally no matter what I was teaching. Always dressed for success. Always carried myself like I could be somebody. I am somebody. I am important. And standing up for what I believed was right.

Minnie was constantly aware of the glass ceiling and prepared herself to be better than male counterparts with whom she can into contact.

Two leaders denied the existence of a glass ceiling. Tara explicitly mentioned there was no glass ceiling, "There is no ceiling. The sky is the limit!" She continued to say, "I think that's empowering, when you know where you have come from and there are no limits right now. I truly believe that. I believe that there are no limits. There might be obstacles, but there are not limits." Marcia echoed similar sentiments about the glass ceiling, "I don't really think of a glass ceiling, to me it's as

high as you want to raise it. As much as you want to move or whatever you want to do. I had offers to go do this and go do that."

Conclusion. Teachers did not perceive an oppressive glass ceiling within PK-12 organizations. There was more of a disconnect between teachers and leaders, but this did not seem to be based on gender. Leaders' perceptions of the glass ceiling were dependent on their individual treatment within the PK-12 organization. Some leaders perceived great inequity while others denied the existence of a glass ceiling altogether.

Double standard for female leaders in PK-12 organizations. Leaders in this study were somewhat reluctant to acknowledge the glass-ceiling phenomenon in PK-12 organizations, but every leader mentioned the double standards for female leaders in public education. Cierra, a central office director, mentioned that women had to prove themselves five times as much as men in the same position. Sunny, an elementary school principal, described how she was disappointed that a former male superior would not form a close professional relationship with her:

> I felt like he always tried to separate himself from me and it was nothing that he did or that I did, it was based on what others had done in the past…I think sometimes that comes into play, things that have occurred in the past affect the relationships that you have with other people.

Sunny was frustrated by the double standard that males and females could not have a close professional relationship without the assumption that there was a sexual relationship as well.

Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, had many stories to share about the double standards for female leaders. Minnie helped to pave the

way for later female leaders in the Central Virginia area. She discussed being the first female administrator at a secondary school in her division:

> There was a challenge for me when I went into secondary as a principal because they didn't have, during that time they didn't have many female administrators. [school division] had none. None. [school division] had none. So, I had a woman say to me, all womankind is looking at you. You better be successful at this.

Minnie went on to describe the type of scrutiny women faced when applying for jobs in her former school division:

> It was funny. We were doing an interview and I guess it was about the first year I was an administrator, they were interviewing a human resources person. There was a woman there and she talked about going on, having, getting a divorce and she went on a cruise and so she didn't work for a year. So, it was all males on this group except me, so they started talking, oh she started falling apart, she had to go, I don't know if we need her. And I said, hold up, I said, what if she was just celebrating that she got rid of the creep? Why's it got to be that she fell apart? I said, if we were talking about a male, if she were a male would we be asking those questions? Well the superintendent, he just laughed his head off and said, she told you and I guess you'll shut up now! Well they all got all red and like that. So those are the kind of challenges that I met.

Minnie described a few humorous incidents where gender was at the forefront:

> It's harder for women. I had a male parent say to me once, you're an assertive woman. I said, well thank you. He didn't intend for it to be a compliment. I said, well thank you. He said, I didn't mean it in a nice way. I said, well I took it in a nice way. I said, I'm assertive and if you can't deal with it I'm real sorry, but I'm not going to change for you.

Minnie had been criticized by subordinates, superiors, and community members during her tenure as a leader within the PK-12 organizational structure.

> Minnie described interviewing a potential teacher:
>
> I had a woman come in for an interview once when I was principal at [former school] and she walked in. And I went over and unlocked the door, because we were downstairs in the summer so we always kept the outside door locked because it was just me and the secretary in the summer. And she looked at me, and I said 'oh hi can I help you?' I figured she was a candidate. She

> kind of looked at me, no and walked away and I'm going, so she walked over to the secretary and I walked behind her. She said, 'I'm here to see the principal' and the secretary was looking at me. 'Well, she's right behind you.' Well, if you could have seen her face drop. She was expecting a male. Yeah, and so I said, 'I'm the principal.' You know, that was a very short interview.

Minnie laughed about these incidents where her gender, not her leadership, was at the forefront, but she had remembered them in great detail for decades.

Minnie embraced her leadership role and became very comfortable with male colleagues and grew to prefer males over females in her professional career:

> I think that has convinced males who were the power that be that I could do the job because I wasn't afraid of them and I could stand up to them. So if she could stand up to me and uh I think intelligent men respect that and I think that's how I've made it um in positions that I've gotten and things that I've done. You know and I can talk to men just as easily as I can talk to women. And in fact, I think I'm more comfortable with men because they're not as emotional as women tend to be, so I do have a lot of male friends that I talk to. I went into the boys locker room after they had just threw away a football game; well I know diddly squat about football but I looked at, I had no interest in it, but I went into the locker room and I let them have it. I said, as little as I know about football, I know that you didn't give it your best that you could have done better than that. I mean I just let them have it. And so, one of my assistants said, you know all you need to do is chew tobacco and spit something and you'd be a man.

Minnie laughed and laughed as she recalled this incident. Paula, a superintendent, described challenges as she took the helm of a school division when people questioned what she knew about football or career and technical education. Both of these seasoned veteran female leaders seemed to relish the opportunity to prove their critics wrong at this point in their career path.

Conclusion. Leaders in this study discussed the pervasive double standards for female leaders in PK-12 organizations. While the leaders were somewhat

reluctant to acknowledge an oppressive glass ceiling within the PK-12 environment, they all referenced different treatment on an individual level.

The 'good ole boy' network in PK-12 organizations. Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) defined the 'good ole boy' network as "an invisible network of sponsorship whereby older professionals groom younger versions of themselves for leadership positions" (pp. 188). The 'good ole boy' network was a topic of much discussion throughout the interviews. Three teachers discussed the impact of the 'good ole boy' network on females who were seeking leadership opportunities. Jennifer, a high school teacher, discussed her frustrations with the job search process in PK-12 organizations, "There's definitely a 'good ole boy' network, I believe…I wish people would take people on your straight qualifications." Gayle, a middle school teacher, was also frustrated by the 'good ole boy' network in her division:

> Alright, I have a scenario for you and I know that is about to occur. We have people in my building that are in the leadership program right now. And I know that we still have an ole boys network and everything else because everything that I have done will not matter because even if I say I feel like there are at least three or four people that would get a job before I would.

The perceived presence of the 'good ole boy' network deterred Gayle from applying for a leadership position within her school division.

Karen, an elementary school teacher, also expressed dismay at the 'good ole boy' network in her school division:

> There's a little bit of a big ole boy's network here. There is. Some of the same people that you're like, you got that job? How did they get that job? They know I have this and I've been overlooked. I sit back and think the hard work that I've done, the really great things I've done in the classroom.

Karen was disappointed in the existence of the 'good ole boy' network, but had not applied for leadership positions. She perceived that other people were receiving recognition for their accomplishments and she was not because she was not a member of the 'in crowd.' Three teachers in this study thought the 'good ole boy' network was a barrier to their leadership in a PK-12 organization.

Similarly, five out of eight leaders mentioned the presence of the 'good ole boy' network and acknowledged the impact on female leadership in PK-12 organizations. Only two leaders went into detail about this topic, though. Cierra, a central office director, described how she trusted her male superintendent, but she had reservations about a 'good ole boy' network in her division and the greater Central Virginia area. She said, "But I do think there is a old boy mentality that you can sometimes see throughout."

Minnie told a story about becoming the first female secondary principal in her former school division and how she had to overcome some of the issues associated with the 'good ole boy' network:

> There was a 'good ole boy' mentality still there. And so, there were some challenges trying to convince people, you know, I've got some sense too. Well let me give you another example. The first year I was principal, the first month I was principal at [former school], secretary had been there, one assistant had been there for years and years, the other assistant was, had been there maybe a couple of years. So, the principal before me had not been very effective, stayed gone most of the time, you know, his assistant had run the building. So, I had been downtown, they gave us instructions for the handbook and there was supposed to be a disclaimer put in the front of the handbook, so I told [the secretary], this disclaimer needs to be in the front of the handbook. Well, the handbooks came back, where's the disclaimer? And the secretary told me 'Well, [male assistant principal] told me.' I said, 'let me tell you something.' I said, 'I've got sense too. I'm the principal here. He's not! You might not accept that I'm a woman and I'm a principal, but you've got to suck it up.' And I said, 'when I tell you to do something. You do what I tell you to do. Not what [male assistant principal] said. Do you understand

> who's your boss here? I am!' 'Yes, ma'am.' So she would tell that story for years. 'She told me that she was the principal.'

Minnie's story began by addressing the 'good ole boy' network, but illustrated how she had to prove herself on many levels in the PK-12 organizational structure.

Sunny, an elementary school principal, described a 'good ole boy' network as well, but hoped this was evolving:

> This is still that good ole boy, you know, if you've got the right last name or your family member worked here twenty years ago then you, you know it's just the perception in the area. But, again, I think it's evolving and I think we're getting to where we need to be. I don't think we're there yet.

Sunny expressed hope that the impact of the 'good ole boy' network was lessening.

Conclusion. The 'good ole boy' network seemed to be more of an issue in the job search process for teachers. Teachers in this study viewed the network as a barrier. Leaders in the study discussed the presence of a 'good ole boy' network, but viewed it as more of a challenge that females had to overcome. Female leaders almost saw the 'good ole boy' network as a rite of passage into educational leadership.

Gender norms in Central Virginia. A theme associated with gender norms emerged from the data since most of the participants were born and raised, educated, and later employed in the geographic regions. The teachers in the study had limited things to say about women in Central Virginia versus other areas of the state or nation. Karen, an elementary teacher, discussed how churches played a major role in the community, but did not talk about the impact of conservative Christianity on gender roles. Brooke, a middle school teacher, did not think anything was different in Central Virginia. Susan, a high school teacher, acknowledged the

changing norms in the area with regards to more females seeking higher education opportunities. Kathy, an elementary school teacher, went into the greatest detail about social norms in the area when she compared Virginia to California where her daughter lives. She said:

> I think that Virginia as a whole is still stuck and I think that until we can, um, move out of this mindset of women, race, other races being lesser. Recognizing that, um, all people honestly should have the same opportunity. I don't think the women in this area, they're never going to outnumber the men who own businesses and succeed.

The issue of gender in Central Virginia was not a prominent theme in the teachers' data.

Seven out of eight leaders mentioned that social norms in Central Virginia differed when compared to other areas of the state and nation. Linda, a former elementary principal, was quick to respond that the women in Central Virginia are not different from women in other places, but the culture is different, "They don't differ. It is the context, the atmosphere in which you're in." Cierra, a central office director, described how the social norms in Central Virginia could both help and hurt females in educational leadership positions:

> I would say the great things that women have going for them in this, is, it is kind of a traditional place to live. That is for the good and bad. Those traditional values hopefully sometimes can play out for the betterment and sometimes for the worst.

In a more controversial fashion, Tori said women in Central Virginia were comforted by the glass ceiling:

> I think there's a ceiling and I think, in a lot of places in this area, people don't mind that there's a ceiling and women hurt themselves. They're so comfortable with the ceiling and they don't seem to mind it. I don't know if that's a southern thing or what, but women don't seem to mind the ceiling and

> they sort of like being protected. I think that's how women see it. They are protected by that ceiling.

Four leaders went into greater detail about some of the social norms in Central Virginia. Linda reflected about why there were more female leaders at the elementary school level in Central Virginia and said:

> I think society thinks a woman can't handle if a male, um, bucks them or decides to get in a fight. I totally disagree. Women typically are the homemakers, the nurturers so they typically tend to the needs of the children and the family.

Linda thought females in Central Virginia gravitated towards positions in elementary school leadership because of the pervasive social norms associated with women as nurturers. Paula described the hurdles she had to overcome after becoming a superintendent. People in the community were accustomed to male superintendents in Central Virginia, only:

> Pushy, pushy, she's a woman. What does she know? What does she know about football? What does she know about, um, mechanics? What does she know about, she was an elementary teacher. What does she know about high school? I'm sure they say those things.

Paula was aware that her role as a female superintendent was helping to redefine social norms in Central Virginia.

Minnie acknowledged the traditional social norms in Central Virginia and described how she thought many women in the area liked to be dependent on males. She said:

> I'm finding that a lot of people in this area that just have to have somebody tell them what to do. And, I guess from growing up, I didn't see women that needed anybody telling them what to do. And, I confer with my husband. We talk and discuss. We don't make major decisions without talking with one

> another, but it's not like I make the sole decision or he makes the sole decision. We make decisions together.

Two participants mentioned that they were not feminists. Susan, a high school teacher, said, "While I'm not a, you know, gung ho feminist because I'm not sure that necessarily gets you anywhere except pissing people off." Minnie, a former elementary and middle school principal, talked about how women in Central Virginia needed more of a backbone:

> I'm not a feminist. I do believe that there should be a, a positive role model, male role model in the family. I think children need that. But I, they should not see a dominating figure. It, it should be somebody who respects me and cares for me and encourages me to go on to other goals, that's, that's secure in their own right. They don't have to fear that the wife might make more. The wife might have a different job, an administrative position. But I've heard them say, I couldn't do that, my husband wouldn't want me to do that. Get a life!

Minnie seemed to advocate for strong female leadership in her personal and professional life, but not to the detriment of men.

Tori, an assistant principal, specifically turned to the topic of gender in educational leadership in the Central Virginia area. She outlined the traditional career path of women in the area:

> Women are almost always teachers and they're almost always teachers way longer than the men are before they go, become leaders. Men often do the, their requisite three years and then they are the voice of education and or perhaps they do three years along with some coaching duties then they are the voice of curriculum and instruction. And women actually do curriculum and instruction for 10, 15 years and then develop a sense of autonomy and they just need a change, they need something else, doesn't mean they don't love their classroom, but they've outgrown it and they need, they need something else. And so women tend to, um, I think women, this is going to sound bad, I think women who get into administration are almost without exception better teachers than men who get into administration. I think that often hurts them because I think the higher up administration often believes that while someone is a good teacher, that might not be a good fit for administration because they need sort of that coach perception, they need

> that staunch man, good, put your fist out kind of person and they think that what is a good fit in a second grade classroom might not really make you a good administrator. And that's because they still see school as managing buildings and managing people and but you know what? These guys better step aside because the truth is, school now is all about curriculum and instruction and the guys are going to have to realize that we're, we're moving in a different direction…Well, though I love the men, warmth is not often their forte and so it's good that we have women scattered everywhere because I don't mind loving on my little babies while I give them a 10 day suspension. I'm going to be kind to you while I'm doing it and I'm also going to get you a binder while I'm doing it, and I'm going to make sure you have lunch money and I'm going to try to pay attention to all of those things and I think the, the definition of competence has expanded to include warmth.

Tori obviously found fault with the traditional gender norms in PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia.

Tori concluded her interview with the advantages of female leadership. She was the only participant who mentioned the advantages that females had over males in educational leadership. Tori discussed the changing image of the school principal:

> We have to be more things to more people and I think women are good. If anybody can be more things to more people it's a woman. Because men really are fairly more linear. So, we are gifted at being more things to more people.

Tori provided a unique perspective on the topic of gender in Central Virginia because of her diverse and recent experiences in neighboring school divisions. She perceived that gender norms varied greatly from school division to school division across the region.

Two of the participants in the study acknowledged antiquated social norms, but mentioned that Central Virginia was evolving. Marcia, a former central office director, recalled getting her doctorate at a local university 25 years ago:

> I think that when you look at being a female in leadership roles, probably, and 25 years ago was different than it is today. And, I hope it continues to be different. I felt at times that you had to do a little bit more.

Susan, a high school teacher, described how social norms regarding education of females seemed to be evolving, but she acknowledged that there was still a long way to go for some women.

Conclusion. Teachers in this study did not seem to be as aware of gender norms in the Central Virginia area. Leaders, however, appeared to have more exposure to educators in other parts of the state or nation. Leaders were more aware of the gender norms that shaped PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia.

Conclusion. There were aspects of each interview that centered on the topic of gender within the PK-12 organizational structure. Although education appears, at least to outsiders, as the perfect career for women, especially mothers, women in this study struggled with three things: finding a balance between personal and professional lives, facing the challenges from within the PK-12 organization, and navigating the antiquated gender norms in Central Virginia.

Conclusion

After the researcher analyzed the data, three types of themes emerged: universal, external, and internal. There were two universal themes that emerged from the data. All participants had similar levels of support and encouragement in childhood and making a difference in the lives of children in the PK-12 organizational structure motivated all participants.

Table 4-3

Universal Themes

Universal Theme	**Finding**
Encouragement and Support	• 100 percent of participants (14/14) received similar levels of encouragement and support from parents and guardians during their childhood years.
Making a Difference	• 100 percent of participants (14/14) were motivated by making a difference in the lives of children in the PK-12 organization.

Two themes were external from the PK-12 organizational structure. They were role models, support systems, and personality characteristics. These three themes shaped the participants outside of the PK-12 organization from childhood to the present.

Table 4-4

Themes External to the PK-12 Organization

External Theme	**Finding**
Role Models	• 79 percent of participants (11/14) perceived their mother or maternal grandmother as the most influential role model • Leaders listed a wider range of role models from family members to celebrities, colleagues, superiors, etc. • 43 percent of participants (6/14) had unrelated childhood role models such as elementary and high school teachers. Leaders went into greater detail about these unrelated role models.
Personality Characteristics	• Teachers were more concise when describing their personality characteristics. Leaders were far more verbose and detailed. • Leaders listed more negative aspects of their personalities.

	• 67 percent of teachers (4/6) described themselves as anxious or stressed. • 50 percent of all participants (7/14) perceived they were hardworking. • 50 percent of all participants (7/14) perceived they were direct or straightforward. • 100 percent of leaders (8/8) mentioned ultimate career goals within PK-12 organizations and beyond. • 17 percent of teachers (1/6) described an ultimate career goal.

Personality characteristics seemed to be the most important of these external themes because the personality characteristics were interconnected with later themes.

There were also four important internal themes to the PK-12 organizational structure. They were the financial ramifications of remaining in the classroom, encouragement and recognition from superiors, the job search process, and the topic of gender. The topic of gender was broken down into seven subsections: balancing personal and professional lives, support for females in the PK-12 organization, negative reputations, the glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations, double standards for female leaders in PK-12 organizations, the 'good ole boy' network in PK-12 organizations, and gender norms in Central Virginia. A large portion of the data was comprised of information internal to PK-12 organizations.

Table 4-5

Themes Internal to the PK-12 Organization

Internal Theme	**Finding**

Financial Ramifications of Staying in the Classroom	• 83 percent of teachers (5/6) were in the $45,000 to $60,000 range. One teacher was in the $30,000 to $45,000 range. • 100 percent of teachers (6/6) discussed the financial ramifications of remaining in the classroom, but 0 percent of teachers (0/6) mentioned going into an educational leadership position for financial reasons. • 0 percent of leaders (0/8) mentioned financial aspects of their positions.
Encouragement and Recognition from Superiors	• 50 percent of teachers (3/6) felt supported by current or former colleagues. • 0 percent of teachers (0/6) had experienced an effective 'tap on the shoulder' or endorsement from superiors. • 33 percent of teachers (2/6) described a time in which they were 'tapped on the shoulder' by a superior or superiors and the superior left the division • 50 percent of teachers (3/6) never mentioned getting any support from a superior. • 67 percent of teachers (4/6) valued recognition from superiors. • 88 percent of leaders (7/8) mentioned encouragement from current and former superiors. • One leader did not mention support from superiors. She left PK-12 for a job in the private sector.
Job Search Process	• 67 percent of teachers (4/6) applied for leadership jobs immediately after getting their educational leadership qualifications. • 67 percent of teachers (4/6) applied for leadership positions within their own school division. • One teacher was applying for leadership positions at the time of the research study. • 50 percent of teachers (3/6) expressed discomfort with the interview process. • 50 percent of leaders (4/8) did not initially apply for their current leadership position until they were encouraged by current and/or former colleagues, subordinates, and superiors.

	• 100 percent of leaders (8/8) switched school divisions during their careers. • 50 percent of teachers (3/6) switched school divisions during their careers.
Gender	Balancing Personal and Professional Lives • 100 percent of participants (14/14) described balancing their personal and professional lives. • 50 percent of teachers (3/6) mentioned that they liked having their summers off. • 86 percent of participants (12/14) were married or in a serious relationship. • 35 percent of participants (5/14) had been divorced. Two participants later remarried. • 57 percent of participants (8/14) described their significant other as a supporter. • 38 percent of leaders (3/8) described their husband or ex-husband as a critic. Support for Females in PK-12 Organizations • 7 percent of participants (1/14) mentioned a female mentor or role model within the PK-12 organization. • 33 percent of teachers (2/6) perceived women to be in competition with other women in PK-12 organizations. Negative Reputations • 33 percent of teachers (2/6) perceived that others saw them as bossy. • 50 percent of leaders (4/8) perceived that others saw them as bossy or bitchy. Glass Ceiling in PK-12 Organizations • 67 percent teachers (4/6) perceived the existence of a glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations. • 50 percent leaders (4/8) perceived the existence of a glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations. Double Standard for Female Leaders in PK-12 Organizations

	• 100 percent of leaders (8/8) perceived different treatment and expectations of female leaders in PK-12 organizations. The 'Good Ole Boy' Network in PK-12 Organizations • 50 percent of teachers (3/6) perceived a 'good ole boy' network was in place in their current or former PK-12 organization. • 63 percent of leaders (5/8) perceived a 'good ole boy' network was in place in their current or former PK-12 organization. Gender Norms in Central Virginia • 17 percent of teachers (1/6) discussed gender norms in Central Virginia. • 88 percent of leaders (7/8) discussed gender norms in Central Virginia.

The co-occurrence of these eight themes helped to explain the unique dynamic of female leadership in PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia.

Chapter V: Interpretations, Findings, and Recommendations

Purpose of the Study

There has been an overall shortage of educational leaders in America since the 1990s (Adams & Hambright, 2004). More recently, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) noted that female teachers were at the helm of 70 percent of the classrooms across America, but female leaders comprised only 40 percent of administrative ranks. Women were receiving higher education degrees in educational leadership at much higher rates than their male counterparts, but smaller numbers of females were entering careers in educational leadership (Tallerico & Blount, 2004). Recent literature on women in educational leadership suggested women were making the conscious choice not to enter careers in educational leadership (Harris et al., 2000; Noel-Batiste, 2009).

This qualitative phenomenological study sampled fourteen experienced educators in the Central Virginia region with similar educational qualifications, including licensure to be a PK-12 school administrator in VA, in order to explore the differences between women who remain in the classroom and women who have taken various positions of leadership in PK-12 organizations. The research focused

on the participants' background, career path, and the decision to remain in the classroom or to take a position of leadership. The qualitative interview protocol focused on topics of career development, decision-making, and perceptions of leadership in PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia.

The study was centered around one main research question: In what ways do the experiences and attitudes of females who remained in the classroom differ from females who held various positions of leadership in PK-12 educational organizations? There were three subsequent research questions that drove the research study as well:

R_1: How do the participants' backgrounds differ?

R_2: How did they describe their entrance into and paths through careers in PK-12 education?

R_3: How and why do the participants' career development paths differ?

The researcher designed a unique interview protocol for this study based around the above research questions. The protocol began with demographic questions for each participant and followed with open-ended questions to generate more data on the phenomenon in question.

Findings and Interpretations

After data analysis, the researcher recognized eight significant themes that emerged from the data set. The themes were organized into three categories: universal themes, which were common for all participants, themes which were external to the PK-12 organization, and themes that were internal to the PK-12 organization. The most in-depth theme of gender within the PK-12 organization was broken down into seven sub-themes.

Universal Themes

Encouragement and Support. Every participant in the study received similar levels of support about their preferred career path during childhood from parents and guardians. There was no difference between the support teachers and leaders received. Most females in the study recalled generic support from their parents and guardians to pursue whatever career they wished. The participants were all encouraged to get a college education. There was much more of an emphasis on education than specific career paths. There was nothing in the literature base to support any findings about different levels of support of female educators during childhood. Encouragement and support during childhood seemed to help all participants obtain higher education degrees and later the qualifications necessary to pursue a career in educational leadership.

Making a Difference. Making a difference in the lives of children motivated all participants in the study. Every participant brought up the topic of making a difference with most participants including a story involving a specific child or children they had impacted during their careers. Harris et al. (2000) claimed that educators were intrinsically motivated to make a difference impacting the lives of children. Similarly, Noel-Batiste (2009) found educators to be motivated by career challenge and satisfaction. The fourteen participants in this study liked the challenge of attempting to make an impact in the lives of students and satisfaction when they realized their past successes. The participants in the study were the most passionate when discussing the theme of making a difference.

Conclusion. Every participant in this study shared two commonalities: support

and encouragement during childhood to obtain education and a career of their choice and the desire to make a difference in the lives of children. These commonalities helped to steer the participants into careers in education, but did not seem to influence their decision to remain in the classroom versus pursue leadership positions in PK-12 organizations.

Themes External to the PK-12 Organization

Two themes emerged that were external to the PK-12 organization: the impact of role models, especially during childhood, and the personality characteristics of the participants. The researcher found no literature covering the topics associated with the background of female educational leaders. Instead, the literature on female leaders in education has concentrated mainly on topics associated with the PK-12 organization.

Role Models. A large majority of the participants, 79 percent or eleven of fourteen participants, described their mother or maternal grandmother as their most influential role model. Every woman of color, four participants, listed her mother or maternal grandmother as the most important role model. A few prior research studies discussed the importance of a female educator's family, especially a mother (Gross & Trask, 1976; Paddock, 1978; Young & McLeod, 2001). Leaders had a wider variety of role models, especially unrelated role models during childhood such as elementary and high school teachers. There was nothing in the literature to support the notion of leaders having more role models.

Personality Characteristics. The teacher interviews were far more concise,

whereas leaders gave more verbose answers. The leaders seemed to be more aware of their reputations within the community than the teachers in the study. A majority of the teachers, 67 percent, described themselves as stressed or anxious. They seemed to be stressed by the bureaucracy of PK-12 organizations as well as increasing levels of accountability from the state government. Sharp et al. (2004) called for less bureaucracy and a greater effort to find a balance among all the new standards for accountability. The teachers often viewed their responsibilities as classroom instructors as overwhelming. Fifty percent of the participants described themselves as hardworking. Noel-Batiste (2009) noted that educators liked the challenges associated with the job, but teachers seemed to be overwhelmed by the daily challenges of being a classroom teacher.

The most distinct difference between the personality characteristics of teachers and leaders were the goal-setting tendencies of the participants. All of the leaders in the study had an inner drive pushing them towards an ultimate career goal and described how these goals evolved over time. Leaders discussed meeting one goal and setting the next goal. Only one of six teachers in the study had an ultimate career goal in PK-12 education. The teachers were not especially content with their roles as classroom teachers, but they had no explicit goals for going beyond the classroom or even leaving the PK-12 setting. Only one leader out of eight mentioned the stress associated with her job. Leaders were all driven to be more career oriented. Leaders may associate job-related stress as a means to the end goal. There were no connections in the literature about the female educator's drive to reach career goals. Similarly, there was really nothing in the literature about

factors external to the PK-12 organizational structure.

Themes Internal to the PK-12 Organization

Four themes emerged that were internal to the PK-12 organizational structure. The themes were: the financial ramifications of remaining in the classroom, encouragement and recognition from superiors, the job search process, and gender. The researcher divided the theme of gender into seven sub-themes because of the breadth of the data. The sub-themes related to gender were: balancing personal and professional lives, support for females in PK-12 organizations, negative reputations, glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations, double standards for female leaders in PK-12 organizations, the 'good ole boy' network in PK-12 organizations, and gender norms in Central Virginia. The data associated with internal themes in PK-12 organizations was much more robust than the other themes. There was a greater connection to previous literature as well.

Financial ramifications of remaining in the classroom. Teachers in the study were not motivated to obtain leadership positions because of the higher salaries, but teachers appeared to be demotivated by their substantially lower salaries. Leaders in the study did not discuss the financial implications of their positions. Cusick (2003) suggested that younger teachers should be recruited into educational leadership positions because the pay difference would be more substantial to a younger teacher. Sharp et al. (2004) called for higher salaries for administrators with the implication that higher salaries would help recruit qualified leaders into educational leadership positions. There were not many connections to finances in the literature as it is an assumption that educators are not extrinsically

motivated as seen in this research study. The participants in this study were motivated by making a difference, but teachers were demotivated by lower salaries.

Encouragement and recognition from superiors. Fifty percent of teachers felt support from current or former colleagues, but none of the teachers had effectively been tapped on the shoulder by a superior. Fifty percent of teachers never mentioned having any support from within the PK-12 organization. A majority of the teachers, 67 percent, valued recognition from superiors in the form of teacher of the year awards or other less public forms of recognition. On the other hand, 88 percent of leaders mentioned constant encouragement or taps on the shoulder from superiors within the PK-12 organizational structure. The one leader who did not mention encouragement from superiors subsequently left PK-12 for a job in the private sector and her reasoning for the career switch was the perceived lack of support. The perceived lack of support for the teachers in this study was a significant theme and consistent with the existing literature.

Boulton and Coldron (1998) said women needed more explicit support to obtain a position of leadership in PK-12 organizations. They claimed that women had the right qualifications for leadership, but needed more assurance about their ability and necessary skills to perform the job successfully. Boulton and Coldron (1998) continued to say, “Sponsorship, shown to be important for women when exercised by those of ‘gate-keeper’ status, can also be even more influential in internal context” (p. 14). Potential female leaders need sponsorship and endorsement from superiors within their school division who have the authority to encourage them. Two teachers in this study described situations in which they were endorsed by

leaders who then left the school division and had no authority to encourage them after the fact. These failed attempts at sponsorship or appointment to leadership positions were damaging to the participants.

Similarly, Young and McLeod (2001) suggested that school divisions and administrator preparation programs actively recruit potential female leaders because they are focused on instruction and not administration. Young and McLeod (2001) also claimed that endorsement from superiors would impact more than just the female's desire to pursue leadership, "The encouragement appeared to boost their confidence in their leadership ability" (p. 485). McGee (2010) echoed similar sentiments by claiming that networking is not just about job advancement for females; it impacted their perceived ability to lead. Not only did the tap on the shoulder increase the likelihood of a female pursuing a leadership opportunity in a PK-12 organization, but also the female would be more likely to mentor other potential female leaders later down the road (Young & McLeod, 2001). The same authors described the disconnect between teaching and leading that must be closed before female teachers were likely to easily cross over into leadership roles (Young & McLeod, 2001).

Job search process. The job search process of applying, interviewing, and trying to obtain a leadership job in PK-12 education was a significant theme in the study. A majority of teachers, 67 percent, applied for leadership positions immediately after obtaining the necessary qualifications for jobs in educational leadership. Only one teacher in the study was still applying for leadership positions at the time of the study. She was also the youngest and most recent graduate in the

participant group. Candidates were discouraged, or in some cases even relieved, not to get initial jobs in educational leadership. A majority of teachers who applied for jobs, 67 percent, had applied for leadership positions within their own school division. Half of the teachers in the study had been employed in more than one school division. Half of the teachers in the study expressed that they were uncomfortable with the interview process for obtaining an educational leadership position. In contrast, half of the leaders in the study had not applied for their current position until current or former colleagues and superiors encouraged them to apply for a new job. All of the leaders in the study had switched school divisions at some point during their careers.

There was a great deal of prior research that connected to this theme. A number of studies claimed that women needed more encouragement to apply for leadership positions even after obtaining the qualifications (Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Huff & Mitchell, 2008; Spencer & Kochan, 2000). McGee (2010) said, “Women delay entry into administration to be ‘super prepared’ before applying” (p. 14). This did not seem to be the case in this study because 67 percent of teachers immediately applied for positions, but did not get the jobs. Boulton and Coldron (1998) and McGee (2010) described how women were more limited because they were reluctant to move to another geographic location. Teachers in this study, however, seemed reluctant to even move to another school division to pursue a leadership opportunity inhibiting their chances even further. There was nothing in previous studies about females being unprepared or anxious about interviewing or the job search process in general. McGee (2010) said women lacked confidence in

their ability to perform the job, but did not mention a lack of confidence to interview.

Gender. Only three of the thirty-three questions on the interview protocol explicitly mentioned women in educational leadership, but the topic of gender was pervasive throughout many of the interview responses. The researcher broke the theme of gender into seven sub-themes because the information was too complex to present in one theme.

Balancing personal and professional lives. Every participant in the study discussed the struggle to balance her personal and professional lives while working in a PK-12 organization. Half of the teachers in the study mentioned the fact that they liked their flexible schedule with summers off, a break during the winter and spring, and snow days. McGee (2010) found the greatest perceived obstacle of females in educational leadership was the fear of balancing a career and personal life. McGee (2010) referred to this as a self-imposed barrier because the females let this challenge become a barrier to leadership. Young and McLeod (2001) acknowledged the assumption that female administrators will also be able to balance family responsibilities. Grogan (1999) also discussed this issue, "rhetoric about administrators being family-oriented is plentiful, there is still a tension for those who try to meet the demands of a family and administration equally well" (p. 526). McGee (2010) found that having children did not delay entry into administration, but mothers worried about balancing the demands of children and careers in educational leadership. Gupton (2009) suggested that stakeholders stop presenting work and family as competing factors for women in educational leadership positions.

The topic of husbands, ex-husbands, and significant others emerged from

every interview. Twelve of the participants, or 86 percent, were married or had a significant other at the time of the research study. Thirty-five percent of the participants, two teachers and three leaders, had been divorced with two participants later remarrying. Eight of the participants, or 57 percent, described their husband or significant other as supportive. Three of the leaders, 38 percent, described their husband or ex-husband as a critic. Archer (2003) mentioned that female superintendents often had supportive husbands. There was not a great deal in the literature about spousal support.

Support for females in PK-12 organizations. The lack of support for females in PK-12 organizations was a missing link in this study. One participant in the study, 7 percent, mentioned a female mentor or role model in a PK-12 organization who continued to mentor her up through the time of the study. A few teachers mentioned former colleagues who had moved on to leadership roles, but they were no longer connected to these women. Two teachers in the study, 33 percent, perceived women to be in competition with other women in PK-12 organizations. Not only was there a lack of support from current leaders, male or female, but teachers perceived that women were in competition with one another for leadership positions.

There was a great deal of prior literature to support the findings associated with the lack of support in PK-12 organizations. Boulton and Coldron (1998) and Adams and Hambright (2004) claimed that women needed more explicit support and sponsorship than their male counterparts in educational leadership. Noel-Batiste (2009) cautioned educators not to underestimate the power of role models and mentors, “That single factor is the most effective way to increase the number of

women in educational administration and to overcome other obstacles to their success" (p. 2). Gupton (2009) suggested older female educational leaders should be mentoring younger female leaders in the same organization. McGee (2010) also agreed women needed mentors, but this study went further to claim women need to be mentors, as well. Mentoring encouraged others while simultaneously boosting the confidence of the female mentor. Young and McLeod (2001) suggested that administration preparation programs should expose potential leaders to current leaders in the field who use traditional and nontraditional methods of leadership. The authors claimed women needed to:

> …interact with female leaders and administrators who employ nontraditional leadership styles in field-based projects and in the classroom through guest presentations, panel discussions and courses that are co-taught by educational administration faculty and practitioners (Young & McLeod, 2001, p. 491).

Authors of previous research studies agreed that potential and current female leaders in PK-12 organizations needed constant and explicit mentoring. Most authors suggested that females mentor other females to dispel the notion of females being in competition with one another.

Negative reputations within PK-12 organizations. When asked to describe their most prominent personality characteristics, two teachers in the study, or 33 percent, described themselves as bossy. In a similar fashion, four of the leaders in the study, or 50 percent, described themselves as bossy or bitchy when asked to list their most prominent personality characteristics. There was not a great deal of prior literature on the personality characteristics, especially the negative reputations, of female leaders in PK-12 organizations. Boulton and Coldron (1998) discussed the power of perception with female educational leaders because perception was their reality.

Skrla and Scheurich (2000) suggested pervasive sex-role stereotypes with regards to females in educational leadership such as the 'double bind' where female leaders were constantly trying to balance being assertive yet feminine. Skrla and Scheurich (2000) also discussed community members who were intimidated by strong female leaders in PK-12 organizations. There was a strong literature base showing the lack of support for female leaders in PK-12 organizations.

Glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations. A majority of the participants in the study, eight out of fourteen, perceived the presence of the glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations. The participants in the study were more reluctant to talk about this aspect of gender with relation to PK-12 organizations. A number of previous studies called on current educational leaders to stop the silence about gender in PK-12 organizations, especially with regards to leadership. McGee (2010) focused on choice and self-imposed barriers for women in educational leadership and urged women to be aware of the barriers and challenges they will likely face. McGee (2010) said:

> If women recognize and are aware of the external barriers, they will soon realize that they have some control over those barriers. If women remain unaware or choose not to share the responsibility of those barriers, those barriers can become self-imposed (p. 19).

McGee (2010) claimed that women could choose to make something a barrier or instead view it as a challenge. As stated before, females in education are motivated by challenges. Gupton (2009), too, put the onus on the females in educational leadership. Gupton (2009) claimed that women in educational leadership would have to be the ones to make changes in perceptions and practices with regards to the glass ceiling.

Double standards for female leaders in PK-12 organizations. Every participant in this study perceived there were different treatments and were different expectations for female leaders in male-dominated PK-12 organizations. Adams and Hambright (2004) shared similar findings when they studied females in educational leadership with women perceiving they had to work harder than male counterparts. Skrla and Scheurich (2000) came to similar conclusions when studying female superintendents. They found:

- stakeholders questioned the competence of female superintendents
- female superintendents were not viewed as superintendents, but as women
- female superintendents were viewed as bossy instead of leaders
- female superintendents were viewed as bitchy instead of assertive
- there was a double bind where females were constantly trying to be feminine and assertive
- there were distinct sex-role stereotypes in the study

Skrla and Scheurich (2000) only studied female superintendents, but there were similar findings in this study with regards to the double standards female educators faced in PK-12 organizations.

The 'good ole boy' network in PK-12 organizations. A majority of the participants perceived the existence of a 'good ole boy' network in their PK-12 organization. Three out of six teachers and five out of eight leaders discussed the impact of the 'good ole boy' network on their career paths. Hoff and Mitchell (2008) claimed, "If the network exists, which may be largely hidden, but have no visible effects, it may serve as a disincentive to keep those on the outside (p. 14). McGee

(2010) discussed how women often lack time to network because of family responsibilities unlike male counterparts who network after hours. Archer (2003) described how male superintendents often network on the golf course where females are not usually present. Gupton (2009) discussed how networking was not just about job advancement for women, but it created a sense of camaraderie that was often missing for female leaders in educational settings. Although the 'good ole boy' network was often viewed in PK-12 organizations as a harmless issue, the absence of informal networking was perceived as detrimental by the female participants of this study.

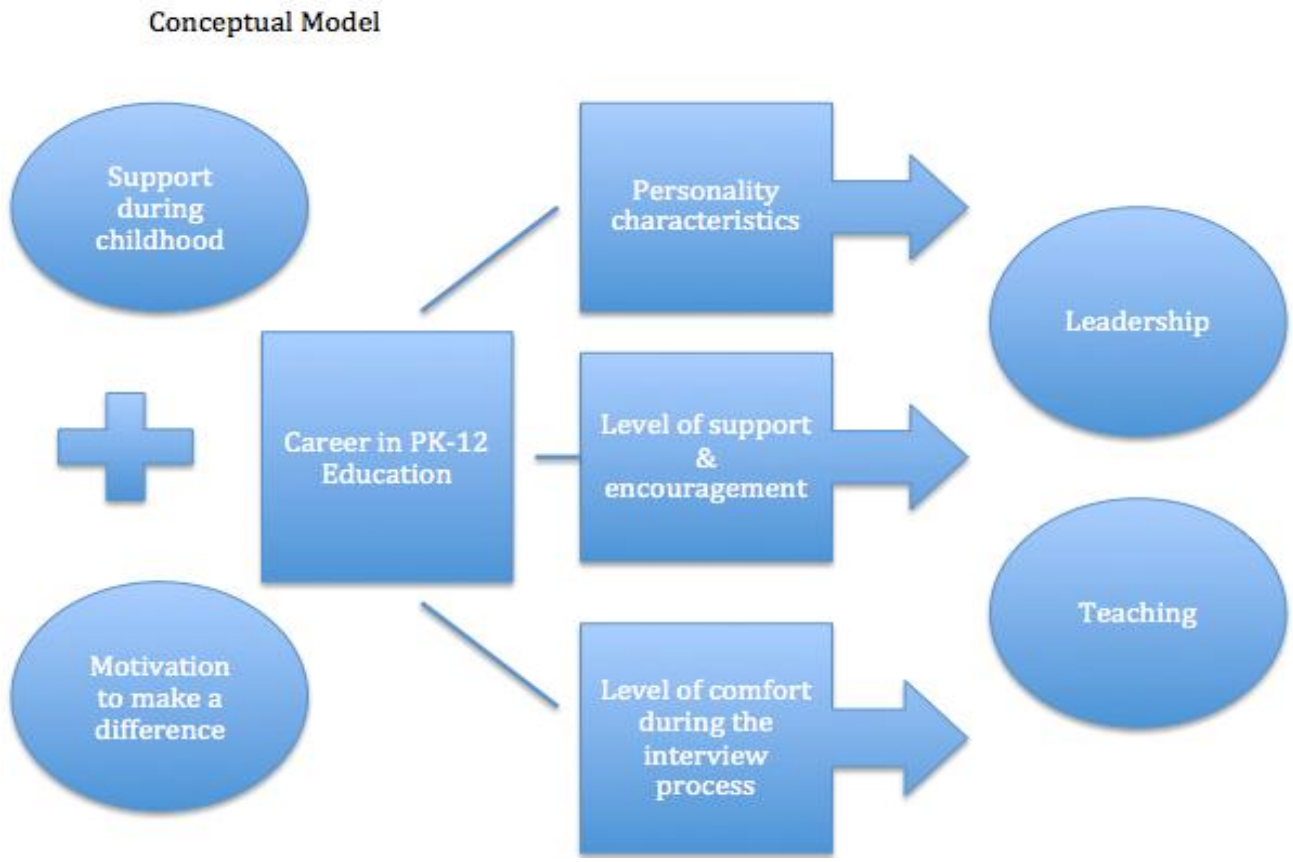
Gender norms in Central Virginia. A majority of the participants discussed gender norms in Central Virginia, with one teacher and seven leaders highlighting the differences in the geographic area. Leaders seemed to be more aware of the sex-role stereotypes in the area. Moreau (2007) discussed the danger of traditional sex-role stereotypes, "This imbalance may convey to pupils a vision of society where it is legitimate that men occupy the most valued positions" (p. 49). Young and McLeod (2001) made a number of suggestions:

- make females in leadership an acceptable norm in society and in PK-12 organizations
- educate the public about the advantages of female leadership
- include alternate forms of leadership training in administrator preparation programs

Young and McLeod (2001) claimed, "Nothing less than a conscious effort will effectively increase the number of women in school administration given deeply held

conceptions and understanding of gender and its implications for leadership (p. 495). Skrla and Schurich (2000) focused on increasing awareness of the gender issues in PK-12 organizations. They claimed ending the silence would help to remedy a number of gender-related problems.

Figure 5-1



Three of the themes in the study, personality characteristics, level of support and encouragement, and level of comfort during the interview process, shown in the conceptual model above, heavily impacted whether the female participants obtained positions of leadership. There were a number of rival theories in the literature base that did not emerge in this particular research study. Females were not motivated by the financial rewards of educational leadership positions. The issue of race did not

present itself during this study. Three of the four African American participants talked about a situation revolving around race during their childhoods, but race was not a prominent theme when discussing their careers in PK-12 education. Similarly, social class was not an important theme either. Finally, women pursued positions of leadership whether or not they had children. There were a number of rival theories from the literature base that were not supported by this research.

Recommendations

The recommendations have been categorized for the following groups: individuals, administrator preparation programs, PK-12 organizations, Central Virginia, and academia. The nature of this small qualitative study should cause the reader to be reflective about the proposed recommendations in this study. The qualitative data from 14 area female educators was used to drive these recommendations. While the data from such a small study should not necessarily cause major organizational change in Central Virginia, it should start further reflection and discourse about practices in the area. Various groups will have to make a concerted effort to elucidate and evoke change in order for perceptions of gender roles and barriers to change in Central Virginia. Some of the recommendations are similar to those in the literature, but others are specific to the data that emerged in this study.

Individuals. Individual females in Central Virginia should heed the following recommendations because a great deal of change will have to take place on the individual level in order to increase the number of female leaders in PK-12 organizations. This section is relevant to various groups of females who aspire to

careers in education, currently teach, aspire to leadership, have leadership qualifications, and hold positions of leadership in PK-12 organizations. Based on this research study, the recommendations for individual females are:

- Be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of your personality. Leaders in this study seemed to have a better perception of both the positive and negative aspects of their personalities.
- Acknowledge the gender issues in PK-12 organizations and decide if they are barriers or challenges.
- Take action. Apply for jobs, prepare for interviews, keep applying for jobs after rejection.
- Seek mentors in the division, especially older females who have leadership positions in the division.
- Mentor other females. Women need to support women.
- Consistently set goals. If you reach a goal, set another.

Administrator Preparation Programs. Administrator preparation programs in the Central Virginia area should make the following changes to policies impacting aspiring female educational leaders:

- Recruit females who are reputable classroom teachers. Work with building level and district level administrators in the area to identify teachers who are instructional leaders. Good teachers are often reluctant to enter into leadership roles in PK-12 organizations. There is a disconnect between teachers and leaders.
- Make the preparation program more relevant to actual school leadership.

Expose females to practicums and internships with experienced female leaders in PK-12 organizations.

- Expose aspiring female leaders to non-traditional leadership theories and practices. Include the literature about the advantages to female leadership in course readings instead of only focusing on the barriers females face in educational leadership.
- Offer extensive mentoring for aspiring female leaders at the university level. Mentor the potential leaders through the application process, interview process, and for the first few years of leadership at the building or division level.
- Acknowledge the gender norms and stereotypes in PK-12 organizations. Stop the silence about sex-stereotypes in PK-12 education.
- Have potential leaders research the typical job responsibilities and salary ranges of educational leaders in the area by going out into the field and interviewing current female and male leaders in PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia. Higher salaries and a more realistic idea of job responsibilities might motivate qualified females to seek leadership opportunities.
- Model career goal-setting practices in the administrator preparation programs to teach potential female leaders the importance of being goal-oriented.

PK-12 Organizations. As a result of the internal themes to PK-12 organizations, there are a number of recommendations for PK-12 organizations regarding women in educational leadership. The recommendations for PK-12

organizations are:

- Division leaders should determine current statistics of women at various levels of educational leadership within the organization. Issues regarding women in educational leadership cannot be fixed until the current reality is exposed.
- Encourage and 'tap' potential female leaders early and often to pursue administrator preparation programs. Continue to encourage exceptional classroom teachers to pursue leadership opportunities within the school division.
- Actively recruit qualified female leaders from within the school division. Teachers in this study valued support and recognition from their superiors.
- Recognize exceptional classroom teachers for all of their successes and hard work on a regular basis. Recognition was very important to classroom teacher morale in the study. Recognition made the teachers in this study feel more like leaders.
- Establish clear and extensive mentoring programs for female leaders. Pair potential leaders or new leaders with experienced female leaders when available.
- Discuss the gender norms and sex-role stereotypes in the division. Dispel the myths and combat the realities of gender in the PK-12 organization such as the 'good ole boy' network.

Central Virginia. The norms and sex-role stereotypes in the Central Virginia region at large have a significant impact on women in educational leadership. The following recommendations are necessary to see change in both gender norms and

sex-role stereotypes:

- Establish regular dialogue about gender issues in the Central Virginia region. Weedon (1987) claimed, “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but it also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile, and makes it possible to thwart it” (p. 108). Skrla and Scheurich (2000) also suggested that silence was pervasive with regards to issues educational leaders face within their organization and greater community. There is a greater chance of progress if there is discourse on gender issues in Central Virginia.
- Encourage potential, current, and former female educational leaders to join organizations promoting females in educational leadership. Membership in regional, statewide, and national organizations will also help to increase mentoring and networking opportunities.

Academia. There is progress to be made in academia as well. The literature base was fairly scant in specific areas when conducting this research study. The following recommendations would allow for more progress at the scholarly level:

- Continue to research the topic of gender in educational leadership exposing the most current statistics and trends.
- Present the reality of a disproportionate amount of female leaders in PK-12 organizations instead of the overrepresentation of female classroom teachers.
- Generate more scholarly research on the advantages of female leadership in PK-12 organizations.

A large number of recommendations were generated after the data set was

interpreted in this study. There were recommendations at the following levels: individual, administrator preparation program, PK-12 organization, Central Virginia, and academia. Change at all levels will be necessary to greatly impact gender issues PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia.

Limitations

The nature of qualitative data is unique in that the participants offer different perceptions of reality. This study is based upon the perceptions of fourteen females who were qualified to be educational leaders in PK-12 organizations in the Central Virginia area. The information presented may not be completely accurate, but the participants presented their truths. This study had fourteen participants which is an appropriate sample for a qualitative study. The sample contained six teachers and eight leaders who met the criteria for the study, but their opinions were not representative of the entire Central Virginia area. This study is not generalizable because of the relatively small sample size and specific geographic specifications. Although the study itself does not generalize, the interview protocol could be used in any geographic region. This study did not control for race, class, or age.

Further Research

This study lends itself to be expanded and continued in various forms. The following is a list of suggested research:

- Conduct the same research study in Central Virginia with a larger sample size. Analyze data to determine differences between local school districts.
- Conduct a similar mixed-method study with a larger sample size. Begin the

study with a simple quantitative survey to all females within the school districts in Central Virginia. Following the quantitative survey, select a portion of the sample with which to conduct qualitative interviews or even focus group interviews.

- Conduct a similar study with potential leaders who are in an administrator preparation program in Central Virginia to determine the differences among aspiring leaders, classroom teachers, and current leaders in PK-12 organizations.
- Conduct a similar study on teachers who have leadership qualifications to further study the phenomenon of leadership or the lack there of.
- Evaluate policies in local school divisions to see how policies impact female leadership in the division.
- Conduct follow-up research on the impact of goal-setting on female leaders in PK-12 organization.

The suggestions for future research are varied, but most importantly there must be more research on gender issues within PK-12 organizations. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) urge researchers to continuously collect and analyze data on females in educational leadership.

Summary

The researcher conducted this qualitative study in order to better understand female educators in Central Virginia, specifically why some qualified female educators went into positions of leadership and why others stayed in the classroom. Eight themes emerged and fell into three types of thematic categories: universal,

external to the PK-12 organization, and internal to the PK-12 organization. The two universal themes were the participants experienced similar levels of educational and career related support and all participants were motivated by making a difference in the lives of children. There were also two external themes in the study. The first external theme was the impact of role models during childhood. The majority of the participants felt their mothers and grandmothers offered the most support during childhood. The leaders in the study seemed to have additional childhood role models such as teachers who made an impact on their lives. The second external theme was based on personality characteristics. Teachers seemed more stressed and anxious about their professional careers. Leaders had more ultimate career goals within the PK-12 organization. The teachers in this study did not have ultimate career goals. There were four significant internal themes in the study. The first internal theme was the financial ramifications of remaining in the classroom. Teachers were demotivated by their salaries, but did not seem motivated by the higher salaries offered in leadership positions. The second theme revolved around encouragement and recognition from superiors within the PK-12 organization. The teachers in this study valued recognition and endorsement from superiors, but rarely felt supported by current leaders in the PK-12 organization. The large majority of leaders, however, felt almost constant support from various levels of the PK-12 organization. The third theme centered on the job search process. The teachers in the study initially applied for leadership jobs and felt discouraged or relieved they did not get the positions. Half of the teachers expressed discomfort with the interview process as well. As a result, teachers stopped applying for leadership positions.

Leaders expressed more support from within the PK-12 organizational structure during the job search process. Leaders were encouraged to apply for positions more often than teachers in the study. The final theme revolved around the topic of gender within the PK-12 organization. Gender was divided into seven sub-sections because of the breadth of the data that emerged. Gender was divided into smaller categories of:

- Balancing personal and professional lives
- Support for females in PK-12 organizations
- Negative reputations
- Glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations
- Double standards for female leaders in PK-12 organizations
- The 'good ole boy' network in PK-12 organizations
- Gender norms in Central Virginia

Issues related to gender within the PK-12 organizational structure dominated this research study. The participants in this study were all conscious of the constant balancing act between their personal and professional lives. Overall, the participants did not perceive a great deal of support from within the PK-12 organizational structure with regards to balancing their personal and professional lives. Leaders were more aware of their negative reputations and seemed more comfortable with conflict from within the PK-12 organization. While participants were reluctant and somewhat vague with their descriptions of the glass ceiling in PK-12 organizations, every leader in the study perceived double standards for female leaders in the male-dominated field of educational leadership. Teachers were most

inhibited by the perception of the 'good ole boy' network because of the importance of networking while engaged in the job search process, but many leaders acknowledged the presence of the informal networking that favored male administrators. Leaders in this study were more conscious of the unique challenges that female leaders in PK-12 organizations faced in the Central Virginia region.

Conclusion

The most significant findings related to personality characteristics and the four internal themes within the PK-12 organization. Teachers and leaders had unique personality characteristics and, as a result, dealt with internal issues in a different manner. Leaders seemed to be less stressed about internal issues and viewed obstacles as challenges instead of barriers. Teachers described greater levels of stress and anxiety with regards to their professional lives and also seemed to view internal obstacles as barriers. Teachers viewed many internal issues beyond their realm of control. Leaders were more apt to change divisions, make necessary networking relationships, and connect to the greater Central Virginia community and beyond. Teachers in this study did not make the conscious choice to remain in the classroom like prior literature suggested, but instead reverted back to the classroom level when they were not initially hired for building-level leadership positions. Securing the first leadership position was the missing link for the teachers in the study.

References

AASA commission on the preparation of professional school administrators, *The American School Superintendent: An AASA research study,* Ed. Stephen J. Knezevich (Washington, DC: American Association of School Administrators, 1971), 25-27, 48.

Acker, S. (1995-1996). Gender and teachers' work. *Review of Research in Education*, *22*, 99-162.

Adams, K. L. & Hambright, W. G. (2004). Encouraged or discouraged? Women teacher leaders becoming principals. *The Clearing House*, *77* (5), 209-211).

Archer, J. (2003). Survey studies barriers to women leaders. (cover story). *Education Week, 22*(25), 1.

Arghode, V. (2012). Qualitative and quantitative research: Paradigmatic differences. *Global Education Journal, 2012*(4), 155-163.

Arlton, D. & Davis, V. (1993). The educational environment of women: Effects and equity. In *Women as school executives: A powerful paradigm,* (Eds.)

Genevieve Brown and Beverly Irby, 93-99, Austin, TX: Texas Council of Women School Executives.

Baretto, M., Ryan, M.K., & Schmitt, M.T. (Eds.) (2009). *The glass ceiling in the 21st century: Understand barriers to gender equality.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bastian, A., & Greer, C. (1985). *Choosing equality: The case for democratic schooling.* New York: New World Foundation.

Bjork, L. (2000). Introduction to women in the superintendency—advances in research and theory. *Education Administration Quarterly, 36*(1), 5-15.

Blount, J. M. (1995). The politics of sex as a category of analysis in the history of educational administration. In B. Irby & G. Brown (Eds.) *Women as school executives: Voices and visions* (pp. 1-5). Austin: Texas Council of Women School Executives.

Blount, J. M. (1998). *Destined to rule the schools: Women and the superintendency, 1873-1995.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Boulton, P., & Coldron, J. (1998). Why women teachers say “stuff it” to promotion: A failure of equal opportunities? *Gender and Education*, 10(2), 149-161.

Branch-Brioso, K. (2009). Keeping pace but not catching up. *Diverse Online* (March).

Brown, K. M. & Wynn, S. (2004). Why leadership-skilled women teachers are saying “no” to the principal’s role: A matter of individual choice or institutional constraint? *Journal of School Leadership,* 14, 686-712.

Brunner, C. C., & Grogan, M. (2007). *Women leading school systems: Uncommon roads to fulfillment.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Cooper, S., & Endacott, R. (2007). Generic qualitative research: A design for qualitative research in emergency care. *Emergency Medical Journal*, 24, 816-819.

Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Columbus, OH: Pearson.

Cusick, P. A. (2003, May 14). The principalship? No thanks. *Education Week*, 34-44.

Department of Health, Education, & Welfare. (1976).

Eagly, A., & Carli, L. (2007). *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders.* Boston, Massachussetts: Harvard Business School.

Frasher, J. M. & Frasher, R. S. (1979). Educational administration: A feminine profession. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 15*(1), 1-13.

Friedan, B. & West, A. G. (1971). Sex bias: The built-in mentality that maims the public schools. *American School Board Journal, 158 (October).*

Galman, S. C., & Mallozzi, C. A. (2012). She's not there: Women and gender as disappearing foci in U.S. research on the elementary school teacher, 1995-present. *Review of Educational Research*, *82* (3), 243-295.

Glaser, B.G. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glass, T., Bjork, L., & Brunner, C. (2000). *The study of the American school superintendency 2000: A look at the superintendent of education in the new*

millennium. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Glazer, J. S. (1991). Feminism and professionalism in teaching and educational administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 27,* 321-342.

Grogan, M. (1999). Equity/equality issues of gender, race, and class. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35,* 518-536.

Grogan, M. & Shakeshaft, C. (2011). *Women and educational leadership.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gupton, S. L. & Slick, G. (1995). *Highly successful women administrators: The inside stories of how they got there.* California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Gupton, S. L. (2009). *Women in educational leadership in the U.S.: Reflections of a 50 year veteran.* Forum on Public Policy.

Harris, S., Arnold, M., Lowery, S., & Crocker, C. (2000, Spring). Deciding to become a principal: What factors motivate or inhibit that decision? *ERS Spectrum,* 40-45.

Hodgkinson, H., & Montenegro, X. (1999). *The U.S. school superintendent: The invisible CEO.* Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Hymowitz, C., & Schellhardt, T. D. (1986, March 24). The glass ceiling. *The Wall Street Journal. Special Report on the Corporate Woman.*

Kaye, B., & Giulioni, J. W. (2009, September). Lose the career ladder and hit the wall. *T&D,* 44-47.

Knezevich, S. J. ed. (1971). *The American school superintendent: An AASA research study.* Washington, DC: American Association of School

Administrators.

Lather, P. (1991). *Feminist research in education: Within/against.* Geelong: Deakin University Press.

Lemasters, L. & Roach, V. (2012). 3-Dimensional portrait of the female CEO. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, *7*(1), 1-12.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. (1993). I and thou: Method, voice, and roles in research with the silenced. In D. McLaughlin & W. G. Tierney (Eds.), *Naming silenced lives: Personal narratives and processes of educational change (pp. 29-47).* New York: Routledge.

Marshall, C. (1993). Gender and race issues in administration. In C. Marshall (Ed.) *The new politics of race and gender: The 1992 yearbook of the politics of education association* (pp. 168-174). Washington, DC: Falmer.

Marshall C., & Kasten, K. (1994) *The administrative career: A casebook on entry, equity, and endurance.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McGee, J. M. (2010). To climb or not to climb: The probing of self-imposed barriers that delay or deny career aspirations to be an administrator in a public school system. *Forum on Public Policy*.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis (2nd edition).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Moreau, M. P., Osgood, J., & Halsall, A. (2007). Making sense of the glass ceiling in schools: An exploration of women teachers' discourses. *Gender and Education, 19,*(2), 237-253.

Moustakas, C. (1994) *Phenomenological Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

National Education Association (1971). Professional women in public schools, 1970-71. *NEA Research Bulletin*, *49*(3), 67-8.

National Education Administration, Department of Elementary School Principals (1969). *The Elementary school principalship in 1968*. Washington, DC: NEA

Noel-Batiste, L. (2009). The perceptions of female school leaders of the obstacles and enablers that affected their career paths to educational administration. *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal, 10*(1), 1.

Shakeshaft, C. (1987). *Women in educational administration.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Shakeshaft, C. (1999). The struggle to create a more gender inclusive profession. In J. Murphy & K. Louis (Eds.) *Handbook of rsearch on educational administration* (pp. 99-118). San Franscisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sharp, W. L., Malone, B. G., Walter, J.K., & Supley, M. L. (2004). A three-state study of female superintendents. *Education Research Quarterly*, *27*(3), 22-37.

Shriver, M. (2009). *A Woman's Nation Changes Everything.* Center for American Progress.

Skrla, L., Reyes, P., & Scheurich, J. J. (2000). Sexism, silence, and solutions: Women superintendents speak up and speak out. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 13(6), 611-628.

Stockard, J. & Kempner, K. (1981). Women's representation in school administration: Recent trends. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 17,* 81-91.

Tallerico, M. (2000). Why don't they apply? Encouraging women and minorities to seek administrative positions. *American School Board Journal, 11*, 56-58.

Tallerico, M. & Blount, J. M. (2004). Women and the superintendency: Insights from theory and history. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*, 633-662.

Tyack, D. (1976). Pilgrims progress: Toward a social history of the school superintendency, 1860-1960. *History of Education Quarterly, 16*(3), 257-300.

Tyack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). *Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America, 11820-1980*. New York: Basic Books.

U. S. Department of Labor. (1995). A solid investment: Making full use of the nation's human capital. *Recommendations of the federal glass ceiling commission.* Washington, DC.

Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. G. (2009). *Research methods in education* (9th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods (applied social research methods) 4th edition.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Young M. D., & McLeod, S. (2001). Flukes, opportunities, and planned interventions: Factors affecting women's decisions to become school administrators. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37, 462-502.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your current age?
3. What is your current place of employment?
4. What is your current job title?
5. What is your current salary range, if you feel comfortable disclosing this information?
   30,000-45,000
   45,000- 60,000
   60,000-75,000
   75,000-90,000
   90,000 +
1. What is your educational history from high school to the present?
2. What is your job history from the first job after college to the present?
3. What is your marriage history?
4. Do you have children?
   Probe: If yes, did you work from the time of their birth up to the present?
   Probe: If you stayed at home, how long did that last?

Open-ended interview questions

1. Tell me about your family while growing up.
   Probe: What was your father's occupation? Educational level?
   Probe: What was your mother's occupation? Educational level?
   Probe: Tell me about your siblings.

2. What did your parents encourage you to be? How did they encourage you?

3. Who were/are your most influential role models? Why?
   Probe: real people
   Probe: celebrities
   Probe: women

4. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? How did these goals change over the years as you've aged?

5. How would you describe your personality? What are your most profound traits?

6. How do you think others would describe you?
   Probe: your peers?
   Probe: your colleagues?

7. What motivates you?
   Probe: professionally?
   Probe: personally?

8. Do you consider yourself a leader? Why or why not?
   Probe: If yes, describe your leadership style.

9. Do others consider you a leader?
   Probe: If yes, how would they describe your leadership style?

10. How and why did you make the decision to
    A: stay in the classroom?
    or
    B: pursue a leadership position outside of the classroom?

11. How long do you think you will remain in your current position?

12. How did you get to this point in your career?

13. Describe the personal sacrifices you've made for your career.
A: How does your family factor into your decision making? (children, spouse, aging parents)

14. What have been the biggest challenges in your career?

15. What have been the biggest successes in your career?
    Probe: Do you see yourself as successful given your definition of success?

16. How do you define success?

17. What would it look like for you to 'have it all'?

18. What group(s) of people are your biggest supporters?

19. What group(s) of people are your biggest critics?
    Probe: What would they say about you?

20. How do you think women in Central Virginia differ from women in other areas of the state? Nation?

21. What does the term 'glass ceiling' mean to you? How does it apply to your career?
    Probe: If the participant is unfamiliar with the term, I will define it as: In 1991, the United States Department of Labor went on to define the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions"
    Probe: If the participant has no personal experience: Do you think the glass ceiling is a reality for women in educational leadership positions? Corporate leadership positions?

22. Based upon your experience, what is the typical career path for women in educational leadership positions?
    Probe: Principals?
    Probe: Central Office staff?
    Probe: Assistant Superintendents?
    Probe: Superintendents?

23. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about your career path?

24. We have come to the conclusion of this interview. Would you be willing to answer follow-up questions if the need arises?

Appendix B: IRB Proposal for Expedited Review

1. Briefly describe the proposed project and explain the purpose(s) of the research.
This will be a qualitative study designed to collect narrative interviews from female educators in Central Virginia. All participants will have the same credentials, but will have various career paths. The purpose of the study is to determine how females who are classroom teachers differ from females who are in positions of leadership in PK-12 education. This is an exploratory qualitative study meant to understand and/or develop career theories specific to the Central Virginia region.
This study is motivated by three distinct reasons:

A. There is a great deal of research on women who are educational leaders across the nation, but very few studies look at why women stay in the classroom after getting leadership credentials. This study will compare women who stay in the classroom to women who do make the choice to pursue a leadership role. The research is non-existent when specifically looking at the Central Virginia region.

A. There are a number of career development theories that are used to explain female career development in the corporate world, but few studies look at these theories in an educational context. The majority of the career development research takes place in the corporate world and this study serves to test the same theories within education.

A. The majority of the research that exists on female leadership and career development is quantitative in nature. Quantitative studies tell researchers what the trends are, but fail to delve deeper into why women make the choices they do and how this impacts both their professional and personal lives.

2. Please describe how participants will be obtained (e.g. local businesses, college

classroom, etc.) and how human subject information will be collected (experiment, observation, telephone survey, questionnaire, etc...). Please attach a copy of any instrument(s) that will be used and describe the procedures that will be followed. If the information will be collected verbally, provide a list of all questions that will be used.
Participants will be obtained using a purposive criterion based sampling technique: they must be female, possess at least a master's degree in administration and supervision, have at least 10 years experience in public education, and live or work within the Region 2000 area of Central Virginia. Human subject information will be obtained through face-to-face interviews. The information will be collected verbally, taped, and transcribed.

Potential participants will be identified by contacting leadership personnel within the Region 2000 school systems, informing them of the purpose of the study, and asking them to identify potential candidates that meet the study criteria. Members of the Leadership Studies doctoral cohort who work in various leadership capacities within local school systems will help to identify many of the participants. The researcher will then contact the potential participants using the email invitation included in this request for review.

3. Are there any foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subjects? ("Risk" means exposure to the possibility of physical or psychological harm; see Human Subject Research Statement, "Protection against harm"). If so, describe the nature and magnitude of these risks.
This study will involve minimal risk or discomfort. Confidentiality will be maintained. Some questions involve family/marriage and could be personally invasive. Participants will have to recall past personal experiences. Participants may decline to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. They will be encouraged to seek help from their local healthcare provider if there is discomfort caused by the interview process.

4. What potential benefits justify the risks or discomfort, and what steps have been taken to minimize the risks or discomfort?
Potential benefits of the study could be that participants have never been asked to tell their story. This could validate their personal experiences. The interview will be conducted in a casual manner and if participants do not want to talk about certain personal experiences they will not be forced to. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study so that participants feel free to share even the most personal memories.

5. What is the approximate number of subjects who will be involved in the research?
No more than 15. These participants will be chosen based on the criterion sampling method discussed in question two.

6. What is the expected duration of an individual subject's participation?
Each participant will be involved with a maximum of two face-to-face interviews (4

hours total). Most participants will only be interviewed once. Data will be collected from Spring of 2013- Fall of 2013.

7. Describe the extent to which confidentiality or anonymity of subjects will be maintained and how, both during the data collection and after the research is completed. What, if any, records may link the subject's identity to the research?
All identifying information will remain confidential. Only the researcher will transcribe the interviews. Participants will be assigned pseudonyms and place of employment will be vague, such as: "central office staff member in a small region 2000 school division" or "secondary science teacher at a local middle school."
Signed informed consent agreements, research data, and any codes linking research data with subject names must be kept for at least 3 years in a locked room located in Hall Campus Center in the office of Dr. Sally Selden after the study is completed.

8. State specifically what information will be provided to the subject about the research. (Provide copies of any and all written materials that will be provided to subjects.)
Participants will be told that the study focuses on the topic of women in educational leadership. They will be provided with preliminary information via email requesting their participation as well as a consent form prior to the face-to-face interview.

9. Will the research involve any deception of subjects? If so, describe and justify the deception.
No. There will be no deception of subjects.

10. State how the consent will be obtained from subjects. (Please attach consent and/or form(s).)
Initially, participants will be notified by email about the purpose of the research study and invited to participate. If they are intrigued, participants will sign a written consent form on the date of the first interview.

Appendix C: IRB Approval

Date: April 23, 2013
To: Allison Jordan
Re: Approval of Research Proposal

Your request for an expedited review of your research project: “Beneath the Glass Ceiling: What Influences Qualified Female Educators to Remain in the Classroom While Others Pursue Leadership Roles” has been completed. The proposal and related study comply with the standards set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 CFR Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, effective as of July 14, 2009. The study is therefore approved.

Please remember that if any modifications are necessary, these changes need to be approved by this committee. Approval for this proposal is for one year. If necessary, re-approval must occur prior to April 22, 2014. Please feel free to give me a call at X8962 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Beth McKinney

Beth McKinney, PhD, MPH, CHES
Chair, Human Subject Research Committee (IRB)

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Lynchburg College
Informed Consent for Research Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Beneath the Glass Ceiling: What influences qualified female educators to remain in the classroom while others pursue leadership roles?

Investigator(s): Allison J. Jordan

Purpose of this Research/Project:

This will be a qualitative study designed to collect narrative interviews from female educators in Central Virginia. All participants will have the same credentials, but will have various career paths. The purpose of the study is to determine how females who are classroom teachers differ from females who are in positions of leadership in PK-12 education. This is an exploratory qualitative study meant to understand and/or develop career theories specific to the Central Virginia region.

This study is motivated by three distinct reasons:

- There is a great deal of research on women who are educational leaders across the nation, but very few studies look at why women stay in the classroom after getting leadership credentials. This study will compare women who stay in the classroom to women who do make the choice to pursue a leadership role. The research is non-existent when specifically looking at the Central Virginia region.

- There are a number of career development theories that are used to explain female career development in the corporate world, but few studies look at these theories in an educational context. The majority of the career development research takes place in the corporate world and this study serves to test the same theories within education.

- The majority of the research that exists on female leadership and career development is quantitative in nature. Quantitative studies tell researchers what the trends are, but fail to delve deeper into why women make the choices they do and how this impacts both their professional and personal lives.

II. Procedures: The study has been approved by Lynchburg College's IRB. After your consent is given, the data collection process will begin with a face-to-face interview. This will be a conversational exchange between you—the participant—and me—the researcher. The interview is designed in a manner for you to share your personal story about your career path. You are encouraged to share both personal and professional reflections that relate to the questions. The interview is scheduled to last anywhere between 60 to 120 minutes and will be digitally recorded. I—the researcher—will transcribe the recording of the interview.

III. Risks: There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this study as pseudonyms will be used and no raw data will be shared with others. Psedonoyms for
both the school and the participants will be used. Although, the risks to you are considered minimal; there is a slight chance that you may experience some discomfort during or after your participation based on the potentially sensitive subject area of some questions. Should you experience such discomfort, please contact your local healthcare provider.

IV. Benefits: No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to
participate. The study is expected to benefit you by allowing you, a female educator, to tell your story about your career choices. In addition, the study is expected to benefit research in Central Virginia by expanding the research base on female educators and their leadership roles.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality: While there is no promise of complete anonymity, all steps possible will be taken to protect your identity. A pseudonym will be assigned to you and all data associated with you will be identified by code and nothing else. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research. The researcher promises confidentiality of all data collected. The researcher, Allison Jordan, will be transcribing the audio tapes. The key to the participant codes as well as interview tapes and transcriptions will be stored in a locked location at Lynchburg College for three years after the study is completed.

VI. Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this research study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw: You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Additionally, you are free to not answer any questions that are part of this study you do
not choose to answer.

VIII. Subject's Responsibilities: I voluntarily agree to this study, understanding that I have the following responsibilities:

1. Participate in a minimum of one face-to-face interview.
2. Remain available for follow-up questions for at least six months after the interview.

IX. Subject's Permission: I have read the Consent Form and conditions for this project.
I have had all my questioned answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my
voluntary consent:

_____ Date _____
Participant

_____ Date _____
Witness

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research
subject rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

Allison J. Jordan (434) 426-6823/Allison.jordan08@gmail.com
Investigator(s) Telephone/e-mail
Dr. Sally Selden selden@lynchburg.edu
Dissertation Advisor e-mail

The Lynchburg College Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research has approved this project. You may also contact the IRB Chair, Dr. Beth McKinney through the Health Promotion Department at Lynchburg College at 434.544.8962 or mckinney.b@lynchburg.edu with any questions.

Note: Participants will be given a duplicate of the original signed Informed Consent.

Appendix E: Coding Scheme

1. A greater good
2. Act like a man
3. Age
4. Aging parents
5. Anxiety
6. Applying
7. Bad teachers
8. Balance
9. Barriers/challenges
10. Best interest of kids
11. Bitch
12. Boring
13. Boss
14. Bossy
15. Breastfeeding
16. Career aspirations
17. Career path
18. Central Virginia
19. Certification
20. Change
21. Child
22. Childhood
23. Choice
24. Classroom experience
25. Coaches
26. Collaboration
27. Colleagues
28. Competition in leadership
29. Completing a task
30. Conflict
31. Critics
32. Current position

33. Death
34. Direct
35. Divide between teachers and leaders
36. Disillusioned/frustrated with PK-12
37. Divorce
38. Doing for others
39. Double standards for men and women
40. Early teaching career
41. Educational history
42. Efficient
43. Empathy
44. Encouragement
45. Failure/mistakes
46. Family
47. Family of educators
48. Fathers
49. Female role model
50. Females as obstacles
51. Feminism
52. Financial
53. Follower
54. Friends
55. Gender
56. Gender inequity
57. Gender roles
58. Glass ceiling
59. Goal-oriented
60. Good ole boy network
61. Guilt
62. Hard work
63. Have it all
64. High school teachers
65. Hiring decisions
66. Household duties
67. Humor
68. Husband
69. Impact more kids
70. Incident with boss
71. Infertility
72. Infighting in education
73. Inner drive
74. Innovative
75. Instructional position
76. Interviewing
77. Introvert
78. Issue with mother

79. Issues in personal life
80. Job history
81. Job search
82. Job title
83. Just a teacher
84. Kids individual success
85. Leadership
86. Leadership role
87. Leadership style
88. Love to learn
89. Luck
90. Make a difference
91. Males threatened by strong women
92. Marriage status
93. Mentoring others
94. Mentors
95. Moral issues between males and females
96. Mother
97. Motivation
98. Naïve
99. Name
100. Needs a challenge
101. Never satisfied
102. Never wanted to be a teacher
103. No encouragement from parents
104. Non-example
105. Norms
106. Nurse
107. Nurturing
108. Off-ramp
109. Organization
110. Original career goals
111. Parents in teaching
112. Passion
113. Personal life not fulfilling
114. Personal sacrifice
115. Personality
116. Playing school
117. Poverty
118. Practicality of teaching
119. Professional development
120. Race
121. Reason for entering teaching
122. Reason for leaving the classroom
123. Reason for staying in the classroom
124. Recognition

125. Relationship with students
126. Relationships
127. Religion
128. Reluctant to discuss barriers
129. Reluctant to discuss successes
130. Reputation
131. Risk-taker
132. Role model
133. Sacrifices
134. Salary
135. School board
136. Servant leader
137. Servant leadership
138. Sibling
139. Sibling makes more money
140. Single mom
141. Sleep
142. Standing up for a cause
143. Stay at home mom
144. Substitute teacher
145. Success
146. Support System
147. Supporters
148. Tap on the Shoulder
149. Teaching is natural
150. Test scores
151. Time
152. Time to move on
153. Transitions to leadership
154. Typical career path
155. Ultimate career goals
156. Underdeveloped leadership
157. Under qualified colleague got job
158. Vacation
159. Wants husband and children
160. Women filling quota
161. Women as critics
162. Working mom vs. stay at home mom
163. Years in the classroom

Appendix F: Code Families

1. Families
2. Barriers
3. Career Goals
4. Choice to stay or go
5. Critics
6. Employment status
7. Encouragement
8. Financial
9. Gender
10. Job search process
11. Leadership
12. Make a difference
13. Parents
14. Personal life
15. Personality
16. Recognition
17. Role model
18. Support
19. Teacher

Appendix G: Recommendations and Themes

The following list matches the appropriate theme from Chapter IV with the recommendations from Chapter V.

Individuals

- Be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of your personality. Leaders in this study seemed to have a better perception of both the positive and negative aspects of their personalities. **Personality Characteristics**
- Acknowledge the gender issues in PK-12 organizations and decide if they are barriers or challenges. **Gender**
- Take action. Apply for jobs, prepare for interviews, keep applying for jobs after rejection. **Job Search Process**
- Seek mentors in the division, especially older females who have leadership positions in the division. **Support and Encouragement within PK-12 Organizations**
- Mentor other females. Women need to support women. **Lack of Support within PK-12 organizations.**
- Consistently set goals. If you reach a goal, set another. **Personality Characteristics**

Administrator Preparation Programs

- Recruit females who are reputable classroom teachers. Work with building level and district level administrators in the area to identify teachers who are instructional leaders. Good teachers are often reluctant to enter into leadership roles in PK-12 organizations. There is a disconnect between teachers and leaders. **Support and Encouragement within PK-12 Organizations**
- Make the preparation program more relevant to actual school leadership. Expose females to practicums and internships with experienced female leaders in PK-12 organizations. **Lack of Support within PK-12 Organizations**
- Expose aspiring female leaders to non-traditional leadership theories and practices. Include the literature about the advantages to female leadership in course readings instead of only focusing on the barriers females face in educational leadership. **Gender**
- Offer extensive mentoring for aspiring female leaders at the university level. Mentor the potential leaders through the application process, interview process, and for the first few years of leadership at the building or division level. **Support and Encouragement within PK-12 Organizations**
- Acknowledge the gender norms and stereotypes in PK-12 organizations. Stop the silence about sex-stereotypes in PK-12 education. **Gender**
- Have potential leaders research the typical job responsibilities and salary ranges of educational leaders in the area by going out into the field and

interviewing current female and male leaders in PK-12 organizations in Central Virginia. Higher salaries and a more realistic idea of job responsibilities might motivate qualified females to seek leadership opportunities. **Job Search Process**

- Model career goal-setting practices in the administrator preparation programs to teach potential female leaders the importance of being goal-oriented. **Personality Characteristics**

PK-12 Organizations

- Encourage and 'tap' potential female leaders early and often to pursue administrator preparation programs. Continue to encourage exceptional classroom teachers to pursue leadership opportunities within the school division. **Support and Encouragement Within the PK-12 Organization**
- Actively recruit qualified female leaders from within the school division. Teachers in this study valued support and recognition from their superiors. **Support and Encouragement Within the PK-12 Organization**
- Recognize exceptional classroom teachers for all of their successes and hard work on a daily basis. Recognition was very important to classroom teacher morale in the study. Recognition made the teachers in this study feel more like leaders. **Support and Encouragement Within the PK-12 Organization**
- Establish clear and extensive mentoring programs for female leaders. Pair potential leaders or new leaders with experienced female leaders when available. **Gender**

- Discuss the gender norms and sex-role stereotypes in the division. Dispel the myths and combat the realities of gender in the PK-12 organization such as the 'good ole boy' network. **Gender**

Central Virginia

- Establish regular dialogue about gender issues in the Central Virginia region. Weedon (1987) claimed, "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but it also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile, and makes it possible to thwart it." Skrla and Scheurich (2000) also suggested that silence was pervasive with regards to issues educational leaders face within their organization and greater community. There is a greater chance of progress if there is discourse on gender issues in Central Virginia. **Gender**
- Encourage potential, current, and former female educational leaders to join organizations promoting females in educational leadership. Membership in regional, statewide, and national organizations will also help to increase mentoring and networking opportunities. **Support and Encouragement within PK-12 Organizations**

Academia

- Continue to research the topic of gender in educational leadership exposing the most current statistics and trends. **Gender**
- Present the reality of a disproportionate amount of female leaders in PK-12 organizations instead of the overrepresentation of female classroom teachers. **Gender**
- Generate more scholarly research on the advantages of female leadership in

PK-12 organizations. **Gender**