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Fewer women than men in educational leadership

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Academic Leadership Journal

Introduction

In public education, women form the bulk of the work force and men serve as bosses. In school administration, men are most likely to be found in positions with the greatest power, pay, and prestige (Smith-Doerr, 2004; Blackman, 2000; Maskell, 1997; Fauth, 1984; Foxley, 1982; Astin & Snyder 1982; Allain, 1981; Adkinson, 1980-1981). Researchers have attempted to find some explanation for nonparticipation of women in principal positions, usually by focusing on the obstacles women face attempting to obtain a principalship. The research literature reveals several different obstacles for women's lack of success in entering administration. These obstacles can be categorized into two groups: Internal and External obstacles. Internal obstacles include: sex-role stereotyping, lack of aspiration, role conflict, and low self-esteem. External obstacles include: lack of encouragement, family responsibilities, lack of mobility, and hiring and promoting practices (Gilligan, 1985; Marshall, 1985; Yoder, 1985; Maskell, 1997).

The purpose of this study is to explore the possible obstacles in women's pathway to a principalship; and examine if these obstacles have changed over the past two decades because of women's changing roles.

The research questions are:

1. For those women who do obtain a principalship/assistant principalship, what are the perceived obstacles they have encountered?
2. For those women who actively seek but do not obtain a principalship/assistant principalship, what are the perceived obstacles they have encountered?

This study helps us understand the barriers. This will then lead to the development of strategies to address these barriers and thus result in better representation of women in administrative positions in education. There is also the possibility that what we learn from education could be useful in other areas of employment.

Methods

Sample

The target population in this study includes all women who are certified as principal in Franklin County, Ohio between September 1996 and September 2000. The requirement for certification for the principalship are:

1. 3 years teaching experience,
2. Masters degree,

3 . Supervised field experience

4. A national teacher exam.

All of the women on the list who received the questionnaire were certified in Franklin County as eligible to be principals in the state of Ohio and were currently employed in educational positions in Franklin County. The number of men and women certified in elementary, middle, and secondary administration in Franklin County from September 1998 to March 2002, are 227 men and 299 women.

Instrument

This research began with a questionnaire mailed to women who are registered as suitably qualified to apply for an administrative position in Franklin County, Ohio. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the frequency with which women perceived specific barriers had impacted on their ability to advance into administrative positions. The questionnaire was mailed to 299 women. Ninety two women returned the questionnaire. The race and average age were obtained for these 92 women. Since the sample of 92 out of 299 is a large sample (Jones & Jones, 2002), it can be concluded that age and race of 92 women is representative of the population 299 women.

Wilkinson (1991) developed a 30- item questionnaire which measured women's barriers to principalship. The questionnaire for this present study is adopted from Wilkinson's study and contains questions concerning possible situations which are perceived as obstacles to women as they seek principalship in educational administration. The 30- item questionnaire in this study was identical to the 30- item questionnaire in Wilkinson's study (1991) except two questions as follows:

1. One question asked if the participant faced barriers other than barriers mentioned in the questionnaire.
2. One question asked what are other barriers to be most effective in helping women to succeed in educational administration.

Questions 1-7 measured the participants' demographic information. Questions 8-29 measured women's barriers to principalship.

In establishing the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Coefficient alpha is used to review the inter-correlations of each of the 22 items with all the other 21 items (Wilkinson, 1991). Test-makers strive for internal consistency (Patten, 2001), and the correlation coefficient is useful in determining the extent to which a test item measures much of the same thing as other items on a particular test (Patten, 2001). Test reliability also concerns the extent to which test results are repeatable (Patten, 2001). Internal consistency estimates are employed whenever a researcher wishes to assess the degree to which the items in a measure are homogeneous indices of a common construct (Patten, 2001). This was appropriate for usage with the test given in that the multiple-item questionnaire included items which were purportedly measures of a single dimension (Wilkinson, 1991). It is absolutely necessary to have relatively high reliability, and validity reflects the degree to which a measure actually measures the specific trait it is supposed to measure (Patten, 2001).

The statistical results of the test indicated that the coefficient alpha on the twenty-two items ranged from a low of .9191 to a high of .9321 alpha if that particular item were deleted from the test (Wilkinson,

1991). The overall alpha was .9270 (Wilkinson, 1991). This is both a high and a stable reliability for the piloted test and shows good internal consistency (Wilkinson, 1991).

The results of the pilot test confirmed its reliability and its ease of administration (Wilkinson, 1991). Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to review the inter-correlations of each of the 22 items with all the other 21 items (Wilkinson, 1991). The internal consistency of the pilot test was good, and had both a high and a stable reliability (Wilkinson, 1991). The pilot population differed from the study population in that the women who completed the pilot were in the process of studying for certification, while the women who completed the research questionnaire had already obtained their certification (Wilkinson, 1991). However, both groups shared a common aspiration to become principals. After validating the questionnaire, Wilkinson used this questionnaire in her research (Wilkinson, 1991).

Data Analysis

The statistical package "Minitab" was used to undertake the analyses outlined below. A One-Way analysis of variance was used to compare the 3 categories of women responding to the research questionnaire: those who have sought and achieved an assistant principalship, those who have sought and achieved a principalship, those who have sought and have not achieved a principalship. A One-Way analysis of variance, a statistical procedure used to compare groups in terms of mean scores, can be used to compare three or more groups (Black, 2004, p. 411). This analytic procedure is used to compare responses among the several sub-groups. A Principal Component Analysis was done on the twenty-two questions of the questionnaire in order to determine the major themes of the questionnaire. This procedure is employed to reduce the data in order to determine whether there were significant differences among the sub-groups.

A 2-way analysis of variance is completed in order to check the overall effects of the levels of each factor, and to ascertain whether the factors combined in such a way as to have a unique effect on the variable.

Results

Comparison between the groups of perceived barriers Means of Responses of Total Group for Questions 8-29

The means of the responses to the twenty-two items on the questionnaire by the entire 92 respondents serve as a foundation for this study. The questions were answered using a Likert scale with the scale of responses reading from left to right. There was a possibility of five choices, beginning with Always, going to Often, to Sometimes, to Seldom, to Never. For the purposes of calculation, Always was given the number value of 5, Often was valued at 4, Sometimes was valued at 3, Seldom was valued at 2, and Never was valued at 1. Thus, if a mean score was 2.5, it registered as perceived obstacle between Seldom and Sometimes, if a score was 1.5, it registered as perceived obstacle between Never and Seldom. The means of the answers for the questions ranged from 1.55 (Never to Seldom) to 2.32 (Seldom to Sometimes). The Standard Deviations ranged from 0.84 to 1.29. Question 26, lack of family support, registered the lowest 1.55 (Never to Seldom), thus indicating it to be the item detailing the least frequency perceived obstacles. Question 8, males are better suited to be principal than females, registered 2.32 (Seldom to Sometimes), indicating this item was perceived as being the most frequently encountered obstacle. Table 1 includes full items from the questionnaire; all subsequent

tables will use an abbreviated form for the items

Seven questions, male suited, male hire, family responsibilities, graduate courses, evaluation on more stringent criteria, lack of involvement in networks, and no teacher support, had means from 2.32 to 2.04 (seldom to half way toward sometimes) respectively. These seven questions registered the areas in which the respondents perceived the most frequently encountered obstacles. Ten questions registered means ranging from 1.95 to 1.70 (toward seldom). Thus, for 45% of the questions, the means of these responses were edging toward 2, seldom. These ten questions registered the areas in which the respondents perceived moderately encountered barriers.

Five questions had their means range from 1.68 to 1.55 (between never and seldom); these questions dealt with the belief that female principals are assumed to hold “token” positions, that females are not rational, the lack of role models, that people believe females are less motivated on the job because they are providing a second income, and that lack of family support has been an obstacle. These five questions registered the areas in which the respondents perceived the least frequently encountered obstacles.

Results from Questions 30 and 31

Question 30 (other perceived barriers), the open-ended question which was optional, was answered

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Responses of Total Group (92) for Questions 8-29

Question	<u>Respondents</u> No	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
8. The belief that males are better suited to be principal than females has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	2.32	1.03
9. Family responsibilities have impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	2.26	1.57
10. I believe that male administrators tend to hire other males and this practice has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	2.31	1.11
11. The belief that many assume females are too emotional to be effective principals has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.81	0.93
12. The belief that females cannot take the pressure of being a principal has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.76	0.96
13. The belief that females are not rational or objective enough to be effective principals has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.66	0.89
14. The belief that females are not effective disciplinarians has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.81	1.00
15. The belief that females are not considered for principalships because they are believed to be less suited for the unique demands of the job has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.82	1.03
16. The belief that many teachers prefer male principals has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	2.043	0.960
17. The belief that females are perceived to be less interested in the principalship has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.7065	0.9439
18. The belief that many female principals lack support from their subordinates has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.804	0.964
19. The belief that many female principals lack support from other administrators has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.902	1.017
20. The belief that many communities would not have as much confidence in a female principal as they would have in a male principal has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.8587	0.9444
21. My graduate courses did not address the special needs of female administrators and this has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	2.207	1.288
22. The belief that female principals are assumed to hold “token” positions in a district has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.685	0.960
23. Not having a mentor in educational administration has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	92	1.957	1.248
24. Not having more female role models in educational administration has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.			

on 58 or 63% of the returned questionnaires. But 54 out of 58 repeated the same barriers mentioned in the questionnaire (such as gender, and family) as perceived barriers for principalship. Four respondents perceived other barriers for principalship such as: not being married, having no children, physical look, the need to know someone, central policies, and less availability of positions for principalship. Question 31 (other barriers to be most effective in helping women to succeed in educational administration) was answered on 22 or 24% of the

returned questionnaires. For this question, 8 respondents repeated the same barriers that were mentioned in the questionnaire. Fourteen respondents, however, explained some factors to be effective in helping them to achieve principalship. These factors are: strong mind and strong will, demonstrating a true interest in a position, be the best and let people know you are qualified, willingness to take responsibility and understand the importance of the job, strong ethics and commitment, being more pro-active and less reactive than male administrators, work very closely with staff, strong religious faith, positive outlook on life, work hard, being an overachiever, close relationship with other principals-mainly women, communication skills, and ability to stay calm during stressful times.

Responses of Group 1 Obtained an Assistant Principalship

Twenty-three women reported themselves as having obtained an assistant principalship. The means of 22 responses for this group (questions 8-29) ranged from 1.3 (never) to 2.1(seldom). One response scored 1.3 (closer to never) and deals with the belief that females are not rational, while three responses scored 2.1 (seldom) and deals with males better suited, family responsibilities, and graduate courses. The other nineteen responses ranged from 1.4 (never to seldom) to 2.00 (seldom). Two responses scored 1.4 (never to seldom) and address female principals' lack support from their subordinates, and belief that females are less motivated on the job because they are providing a second income for the family. Two responses scored 2.00 (seldom) on the topic of male administrators tend to hire other males, and female candidates for the principalship are evaluated on more stringent criteria than male candidates. One response (family responsibilities) registered closer to seldom (1.9), while four responses: females are too emotional, females cannot take the pressure, females are less interested in the principalship, and female principals are assumed to hold "token" positions, registered at 1.5 between never and seldom. This group of assistant principals scored lower than the means of the total group on all 21 questions (questions 8-28), and scored higher on one question, which addresses lack of involvement in networks. In other words, the women who had succeeded in obtaining an assistant principalship recognized a range of obstacles but did not perceive they had faced significant barriers to their appointment. However, they did indicate that lack of involvement in a

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error
25. Many people believe females are less motivated on the job because they are providing a second income for the family. This belief has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	1.620	0.982	0.160
26. Lack of family understanding and support has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	1.5761	0.9286	0.1544
27. I believe that female candidates for the principalship are evaluated on more stringent criteria than male candidates and this has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	1.5543	0.8434	0.1511
28. The inability to relocate to another geographic region in the United States if a principalship were offered to me has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	2.196	1.294	0.2588
29. My lack of involvement in formal or informal networks which might enhance my career opportunities has impacted negatively on my career in educational administration.	1.783	1.239	0.2508

network was an important factor in limiting the success of women.

Responses of Group 2 (Obtained a Principalship)

Forty-six women reported themselves as having obtained a principalship. The means of two responses from this group ranged from 1.34 (seldom to never) to 2.23 (sometimes to seldom). One response, females being less motivated because they are providing second income registered 1.34 (seldom to never), and another response, dealing with family responsibilities registered 2.19 (sometimes to seldom). Four responses scored from 2.02 to 2.19 (closer to seldom), while ten responses scored from 1.36 (between seldom and never but closer to never) to 1.60 (between seldom and never but closer to seldom). Six responses scored from

1.71 to 1.95 (between never to seldom but closer to seldom). Group 2, the principals, scored the lowest (of the 3 groups) on 7 of the responses. This group, having obtained the position, recognized the obstacles but felt them less frequently than those who were still seeking a position in administration. This group of principals scored lower on 20 questions than the means of the total group. These principals scored higher on two questions, which address family responsibilities, and lack of family understanding, than the means of the total group. Group 2 scored higher than Group 1 on eleven responses: males suited, family responsibilities, males hire, emotional, not pressure, not rational, not discipline, prefer males, teacher support, administrative support, and family support. This suggests that these women principals felt stronger on barriers of gender stereotyping and family responsibilities. Also Group 2 scored lower than Group 1 on eight questions: not secondary, less interested, graduate courses, token, no roles, less motivated, evaluations, and network, suggesting that these women principals felt these barriers were less important when they were seeking principalship. Both groups 1 and 2 scored the same on three questions: community, no mentors, and relocation.

Group 2, the principals did not score the highest (of the 3 groups) on any of the 22 responses. This group, having obtained a principal's position, recognizes the barriers but feels them less frequently than those still seeking a position in administration. Among the three groups, the principals did

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Responses of Group 1: Assistant Principalship

Question	No	Group 1		Total Group		
		Mean	S.D.	No	Mean	S.D.
8. Males suited	23	2.174	1.193	92	2.32	1.03
9. Family	23	1.957	1.107	92	2.26	1.57
10. Males hire	23	2.043	1.186	92	2.31	1.11
11. Emotional	23	1.5217	0.6653	92	1.81	0.93
12. Not pressure	23	1.5217	0.7903	92	1.76	0.96
13. Not rational	23	1.3478	0.6473	92	1.66	0.89
14. Not discipline	23	1.6087	0.9409	92	1.81	1.00
15. Not secondary	23	1.7826	1.0426	92	1.82	1.03
16. Prefer males	23	1.8696	0.9679	92	2.043	0.960
17. Less interested	23	1.5652	0.7878	92	1.7065	0.9439
18. Teacher support	23	1.4348	0.7278	92	1.804	0.964
19. Admin. Support	23	1.6522	0.8847	92	1.902	1.017
20. Community	23	1.7391	1.0098	92	1.8587	0.9444
21. Grad. Courses	23	1.870	1.058	92	2.207	1.288
22. Token	23	1.5652	0.8958	92	1.685	0.960
23. No mentors	23	1.783	0.951	92	1.957	1.248
24. No roles	23	1.4348	0.6624	92	1.620	0.982
25. Less motivated	23	1.4348	0.7278	92	1.5761	0.9286
26. Family support	23	1.4348	0.7878	92	1.5543	0.8434
27. Evaluations	23	2.087	1.311	92	2.196	1.294
28. Relocation	23	1.609	1.033	92	1.783	1.239
29. Network	23	2.174	0.984	92	2.076	1.888

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Responses of Group 2 Principals

Questions	Group 2			Total Group		
	No	Mean	S.D.	No	Mean	S.D.
8. Males suited	46	2.196	0.910	92	2.32	1.03
9. Family	46	2.239	1.058	92	2.26	1.57
10. Males hire	46	2.152	0.988	92	2.31	1.11
11. Emotional	46	1.6304	0.7989	92	1.81	0.93
12. Not take pressure	46	1.5652	0.8341	92	1.76	0.96

score the lowest on six questions (less frequently encountered barriers): not secondary, less interested, tokens, no role models, less motivated, and relocations, suggesting that for this group of women these barriers were not strong barriers.

13. Not rational	46	1.4783	0.7814	92	1.66	0.89
14. Not discipline	46	1.6304	0.8783	92	1.81	1.00
15. Not secondary	46	1.4783	0.7814	92	1.82	1.03
16. Prefer males	46	1.9565	0.9418	92	2.043	0.960
17. Less interested	46	1.4348	0.8070	92	1.706	0.9439
18. Teacher support	46	1.7174	0.9348	92	1.804	0.964
19. Admin. support	46	1.7391	0.8282	92	1.902	1.017
20. Community	46	1.7391	0.8282	92	1.858	0.9444
21. Grad.courses	46	2.065	1.218	92	2.207	1.288
22. Tokens	46	1.4130	0.7173	92	1.685	0.960
23. No mentors	46	1.783	1.153	92	1.957	1.248
24. No role models	46	1.3696	0.6785	92	1.620	0.982
25. Less motivated	46	1.3478	0.7369	92	1.576	0.9286
26. Family support	46	1.5870	0.8320	92	1.554	0.8434
27. Evaluations	46	2.022	1.145	92	2.196	1.294
28. Relocations	46	1.609	1.164	92	1.783	1.239
29. Network	46	1.783	1.094	92	2.076	1.888

Responses of Group 3 (Those Who Have Sought But Have Not Obtained A Principalship or an Assistant Principalship)

Twenty-three women reported themselves as having sought but never having obtained a principalship or assistant principalship. The means of the 22 responses ranged from 1.60 (closer to seldom) to 2.91 (closer to sometimes). One response, lack of family understanding and support, registered 1.60. Another response, dealing with males hire registered 2.91. The following responses registered between 2.50 and 2.90 (closer to sometimes): males hire, family, not secondary, graduate courses, evaluations, and network. These results suggest that these barriers are the strongest barriers for this group of women. Fourteen responses registered between 2.00 to 2.5 (closer to sometimes): emotional, not take pressure, not rational, not discipline, prefer males, less interested, teacher support, administrative support, community, tokens, no mentors, no role models, less motivated, and relocations. This suggests that these barriers are moderately encountered barriers for women who did not obtained a principalship. The total group scored between 2.04 to 2.32 on 7 responses and Group 3 scored between 2.17 to 2.30 on 4 responses. The total group scored between 1.62 to 1.68 on 3 responses, and Group 3 scored 1.60 only on one response.

Mean scores and Standard Deviation for individual groups and combined groups

Principal Component Analysis

Principal Component Analysis was done on the twenty-two responses (Questions #8-29) on the questionnaire in order to ascertain the major themes of this questionnaire. The remaining questions were either asking demographic data or participant's opinions about other barriers, therefore Principal Component Analysis was not done on these questions.

Table 4

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for Individual Groups and Combined Groups by Question

Question	Group 1 N=23		Group 2 N=46		Group 3 N=23		All groups N=92	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
8. Male suited	2.17	1.19	2.19	0.91	2.73	1.05	2.32	1.03
9. Family	1.95	1.10	2.23	1.05	2.60	1.34	2.26	1.15
10. Male hire	2.04	1.18	2.15	0.98	2.91	1.12	2.31	1.11
11. Emotional	1.52	0.66	1.63	0.79	2.47	1.22	1.81	0.93
12. Not pressure	1.52	0.79	1.56	0.83	2.39	1.11	1.76	0.96
13. Not rational	1.34	0.64	1.47	0.78	2.34	0.98	1.66	0.89
14. Not discipline	1.60	0.94	1.63	0.87	2.39	1.17	1.81	1.00
15. Not secondary	1.78	1.04	1.47	0.78	2.56	1.12	1.82	1.03

16. Not secondary	1.78	1.04	1.47	0.78	2.30	1.12	1.82	1.03
17. Prefer male	1.86	0.96	1.95	0.94	2.39	0.94	2.04	0.96
18. Less motivated	1.56	0.78	1.43	0.80	2.39	1.03	1.70	0.94
19. Less interested	1.43	0.72	1.71	0.93	2.34	1.02	1.80	0.96
20. Teacher support	1.65	0.88	1.73	0.90	2.47	1.16	1.90	1.01
21. Administration	1.73	1.00	1.73	0.82	2.21	1.04	1.85	0.94
22. Community	1.87	1.05	2.06	1.21	2.82	1.46	2.20	1.28
23. Grad. Courses	1.56	0.89	1.41	0.71	2.34	1.15	1.68	0.96
24. Tokens	1.78	0.95	1.78	1.15	2.47	1.56	1.95	1.24
25. No mentor	1.43	0.66	1.36	0.67	2.30	1.39	1.62	0.98
26. No roles	1.43	0.72	1.34	0.73	2.17	1.19	1.57	0.92
27. Family support	1.43	0.78	1.58	0.83	1.60	0.94	1.55	0.84
28. Evaluations	2.08	1.31	2.02	1.14	2.65	1.49	2.19	1.29
29. Relocation	1.60	1.03	1.60	1.16	2.30	1.46	1.78	1.23
Network	2.17	0.98	1.78	1.09	2.56	1.40	2.07	1.88

Table 6

Principal Component: Two Factors Will be Retained

Questions	Factors	PC1	PC2
8. Males are better suited to be principals		-0.228	0.051
9. Family responsibilities interfere with job responsibility		-0.080	-0.572
10. Male administrators tend to hire other males		-0.218	0.077
11. Females are too emotional to be effective principals		-0.244	0.063
12. Females cannot take the pressure of being a principal		-0.256	0.096
13. Females not rational, objective enough to be principals		-0.256	0.038
14. Females are not effective disciplinarians		-0.234	0.189
15. Females are less suited to be principals		-0.258	0.046
16. Teachers prefer to have male principals		-0.190	0.074
17. Females less motivated, they provide a second income		-0.221	-0.087
18. Females are less interested in the principalship		-0.244	0.033
19. Female principals lack support from their subordinates		-0.23	-0.034
20. Female principals lack support from other administrators		-0.223	0.059
21. Many communities lack confidence in a female principal		-0.202	0.081
22. Grad. courses did not address special needs of females		-0.238	0.087
23. Female principals to hold "token" positions		-0.180	0.027
24. A barrier not to have had more mentor in administration		-0.238	0.053
25. A barrier not to have had more female role models		-0.237	-0.084
26. A barrier not to have family understanding and support		-0.056	-0.610
27. Female principal candidates evaluated more stringently		-0.218	-0.093
28. A barrier to relocate in another region		-0.075	-0.429
29. A barrier not to have a formal or an informal network		-0.178	-0.064

	PC1	PC2
Eigen value	12.056	1.674
Proportion	0.548	0.076

Principal Component categorizes the data into different groups by finding the dominant Eigen value. Eigen value corresponds to principal component scores and indicates the relative importance of the scores (Hair & et al,1998).

Eigen value of 12.056 put equal weight on all questions except questions #9, 26, and 28. Therefore one major factor which is gender stereotyping (factor one) accounted for 55% of variation in data. The nineteen questions which relate to factor one focus on how the respondent answered how she felt other people thought and reacted concerning women administrators. A second less important factor (factor 2) accounts for an additional 7.6% of the variation and includes questions # 9, 26, and 28 which consider family support and responsibilities, and relocation factor. The nineteen questions which relate to factor one focus on how the respondent answered concerning how she felt other people thought, felt, and reacted concerning women administrators. Questions 9, 26, and 28 load heaviest on factor two and include family responsibilities, lack of family understanding and support, and the inability to relocate to another geographic region. Question 29, the inability to relocate to another geographic region, also relates to family bonding.

The two major themes were Obstacles (gender role expectations and gender ideology), which included all of the 19 questions (related to issue in the community over which the individual has less control), and Family, questions 9, 26, and 28 (family responsibilities interfere with job responsibility, not to have had family understanding and support, and relocation to another geographic region in the United States if a principalship were offered).

Discussion

The literature over the past two decades is replete with claims of sex-role stereotyping as the major barrier to women seeking entry to or advancement in educational administration (Riehl & Byrd, 1997; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Moss & Qetler, 1995; Bell, 1988; Oritz, 1982). Sex-role stereotyping was found to be a major barrier in the current study. Wilkinson's study (1991) also reported female stereotyping as one of the major barriers in women's pathway to principalship. Therefore, it can be concluded that sex-role stereotyping still hinders women who seek principalship.

The findings from the current study are consistent with one study that asked 118 female superintendents a number of questions regarding women's administrative positions (Sharp & et al, 2000). One question was "Do you agree with statements regarding the superintendency as a male field? Is power the same for men and women?" (p. 12). Fifty-seven percent did agree that society, in general, feels that superintendency is a male's field. Larger school districts tend to be headed by males for reasons that include age-old prejudices: a woman cannot be as good of a manager as a man, a woman is more emotional than a man, or that a woman is more prone to cry.

The male stereotype focuses on attributes such as independence, competitiveness, focus, control, ambition, activity, and attention to specifics (Coltrane & Adams, 1997). The female stereotype comprises attributes such as interdependence, co-operation, acceptance, receptivity, ethics, and perception of wholes (Coltrane & Adams, 1997). Whereas in an ideal world any set of polarities would be seen as complementary, in the world of management as stated by women in this study, male stereotypes have predominated and have influenced the structures, processes, and policies within organizations. Structures and policies within organizations are greatly influenced by cultural expectation in a society.

Considerable difficulties are faced by employed mothers of young children in the management of job and family responsibilities. Women in the current study reported family responsibilities as the second external barrier to administrative roles. The barrier of family responsibilities existed many years ago, and today still continues to block women's pathways into administration. For example Wilkinson's study (1991) indicated family responsibility was the second barrier after sex stereotyping which affected women in Ohio in pursuing principalship. The barrier of family responsibilities is well documented in the literature of the past two decades (Coffey & Delmont, 2000, Eller, 2000; Laslett & Thorne, 1997). One factor that is often cited concerning female administrators is that they may not be as mobile as males because of family situations and because of their spouses' jobs (Sharp & et al, 2000). Since women first entered the U.S. workplace, employers have treated women with children differently from other employees (Gregory, 2003). Not only do employers hold false assumptions regarding the role of the female worker, but they also perceive conflicts between the child-rearing responsibilities of working mothers and their job responsibilities (Smith-Doerr, 2004). Because women traditionally have assumed primary familial responsibility for the rearing of their children, men, relieved of such responsibilities, have performed well in jobs requiring a near total commitment to the workplace. Marriage and family augment a male's credentials, yet these very attributes tend to hinder a woman's career (Home, 1998). An employer may structure a job description that demands an uncompromising work commitment, while ignoring the impact of such a commitment upon the (presumed male) worker's family, as the employer may safely assume that the worker's wife will accept all child-rearing responsibilities.

Issues such as parenting are commonly addressed with female candidates during job interviewing, while men are rarely, if ever, questioned about such matters (Sharp, & et al, 2000). The failure of employers to afford workplace equality for working mothers appears under many guises, one of which condemns women who leave the workplace for relatively long periods of time to raise their children. Men who have made their jobs the central priority in their lives often find it difficult to accept, on equal terms, co-workers who have not (Gonyea & Googins, 1996). These men- and occasionally even some women- are unwilling to accommodate working mothers who, because of their responsibilities to their children, cannot and will not be guided by such priorities (Gonyea & Googins, 1996). The refusal to accommodate working mothers is an attitude that too often culminates in job-related decisions adverse to them.

Conclusions and Suggestions

In this study, the women who obtained and did not obtain assistant principalship or principalship registered obstacles that deal primarily with gender stereotyping followed by family responsibilities. There is a need to challenge gendered behavior in society and bring harmony between men and women's roles in a family. One approach could be projects for boys and girls at school level pretending as if they were in a family situation, and learn how their roles could be modified and acted differently. Therefore, schools need to incorporate "pretending family situation" projects in their curriculum. The most important is for teachers themselves to ensure that they model appropriate gendered behavior (i.e., that they do not allow gendered scripts to be part of their classroom environment). Reconstructing or redefining masculinity requires social change. It must occur in early childhood, in schools, in the media (especially television), in universities, in organizations, and through government policies and initiatives.

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