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Passages: A case study of an Iowa female secondary principal

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December 1996
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PASSAGES: A CASE STUDY OF AN IOWA
FEMALE SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

An Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Approved:

Faculty Advisor
Dr. Joane W. McKay

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December 1996

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to identify and describe one female Iowa secondary principal's career path to the principalship in an Iowa public high school. Several factors were considered in the selection of the participant including: demographics, administrative experience, and her willingness to spend time in the interview process. To provide semi-structure to the interviews and in turn suggest the conceptual frame for analyzing the data, the following questions were formulated:

1. What were the experiences which served as perceived barriers in the career path to the high school principalship for one Iowa female high school principal?

2. How does one Iowa female high school principal view her role, strengths, and limitations based on her experiences as a high school principal?

3. How does one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

4. How do those who work with one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

The combined experiences and leadership style from one female educational administrator's own perspective emerged as data was gathered, analyzed, and organized. On-site observations, interviews with the participant's associates, and archival documents clarified meaning to provide credibility and confirmability. The method chosen in the

case study for presentation of data was a descriptive narrative.

The study provided a rich description of one Iowa female high school principal's career path. The documented singular voice of one Iowa female high school principal adds to the understanding of the unique role of female high school principals in a basically rural state where female high school principals are in a minority. The study provides a thick description of a career passage for females in Iowa who aspire to the principalship as well as practicing female high school principals. Furthermore, the study provides a new term for describing a leadership trait earlier identified as strong and soft traits. The term, "stroft," suggests a new way of thinking of a leadership trait defined as strong and soft but conceptually understood as a blend of those characteristics that equals "stroft."

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Approved:

Dr. Joane W. McKay, Co-Chair

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Five years ago, I entered the doctoral program. My two daughters just rolled their eyes and said, "Mom is going to school again. So what else is new?" My sisters and mother shook their heads and said, "Can't you just relax and learn to enjoy life instead of always having a goal and being busy?" Friends and colleagues smiled and said, "Go for it!" Professors said, "Begin to think about your dissertation." I did think about a dissertation and concluded the process would be difficult, long, and lonely. Much to my surprise, the process was anything but lonely. I was surrounded by people who gave me encouragement, guidance, time, and valuable feedback. They have my deepest respect and sincere appreciation.

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Throughout the dissertation process, I was fortunate to be associated with two outstanding female administrators who served as my role models, mentors, and sponsors. Unlike my participant's role model who didn't think it would be right for a district to have two female school administrators, Dr. Linda Fernandez believed in me. Because of Dr. Fernandez, I

made the passage from secondary teacher to secondary principal. Together, we served as administrators in one school for 4 years. I sat at the feet of a master teacher-administrator and learned.

Dr. Joane W. McKay, my other role model, mentor, and sponsor, not only believed in me but helped me to believe in myself. She has a magical way of bringing out the best in people, accomplishing more in a day than most accomplish in a week, and leading a balanced and joyful life. I can only hope that I will give to others the gift of confidence, time, and support she always gave me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Little research has focused on personal experiences of females in the passage from a high school teacher to high school principal. This case study, an exploration of one Iowa female high school principal's experience, will contribute to a better understanding of this transition. The case study will identify the barriers overcome by one Iowa female high school principal, relate the experiences she encounters in that role, and describe the dimensions of her leadership style.

Historically, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination hamper minorities' contributions. According to Gilligan (1982), females tend to approach problems from a different perspective from males. The male approach is viewed as firm whereas the female approach is viewed as caring (Regan & Brooks, 1995). The more research, information, literature, and discussion of females' passages into the leadership role, their experiences, and their leadership styles, the greater the chances of leadership that fulfills the needs of a changing American population. Although the narrative of one Iowa female high school principal will not change America's attitudes and behaviors, it will describe a singular voice from which assertions may be made. The singular voice will contribute to a new

cumulative process that includes the female voice (Spender, 1987).

A void exists in the literature that describes the female high school principals' experiences. Lack of research directed specifically at female high school principals results in little understanding of the barriers, experiences, and leadership styles of females in that role. Most current literature focuses on the high school principalship without comment on or delineation of gender (Donaldson, 1991; Kaiser, 1995; Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Lightfoot, 1983; Murphy & Louis, 1994; Webster, 1995; Wolcott, 1973). The literature on females in administration either focuses on females in the superintendency or fails to delineate between elementary and high school female principals (Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985; Chase, 1995; Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Gross & Trask, 1976; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, 1988; Ortiz, 1982; Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Therefore, a need exists to expand the body of research and literature on females in the specific role of high school principal. An understanding of the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of one female high school principal would provide new understandings of the role of females as educational leaders. To promote new understandings of the role of females as educational leaders, it is paramount that a female high school

principal's experiences be documented to provide a rich description of the female high school principal.

Overview and Demographics

Iowa ranks 47th in representation of female secondary principals when compared to the other states in the United States (School Administrators of Iowa, personal communication, April 12, 1995; Iowa Department of Education, personal communication, September, 12, 1995). Of the total 1,321 administrators in Iowa, (i.e., elementary principals, high school principals, and superintendents) 238 or 18% are female. Furthermore, although the national percentage of female superintendents is almost 11%, Iowa's is 3%. The national percentage of female elementary principals is 41%; Iowa's is 34%. The national percentage of female high school principals is 16%; Iowa's is 6% (Saks, 1992; School Administrators of Iowa, personal communication, April 12, 1995). In actual numbers, 11 of Iowa's 359 superintendents, 205 of Iowa's 599 elementary principals, and 22 of Iowa's 363 high school principals are female (School Administrators of Iowa, personal communication, April 12, 1995). These figures reveal the small number of females in Iowa holding the position of superintendent or high school principal.

Females represent 89% of the teachers in Iowa's elementary schools and 49% of the teachers in Iowa's high schools (Iowa Department of Education, personal

communication, September 12, 1995). The significance of these percentages lies in the knowledge of career pathing and leadership theories as well as the licensure requirements of most states, including Iowa. In theory, the high school principalship pool should be about half women and half men. High school principals were once high school teachers. According to licensure requirements in the state of Iowa, high school principals must have five years of high school teaching experience prior to licensure (Iowa Department of Education, personal communication, February 9, 1996). Theoretically, almost half of Iowa's high school teachers could qualify for the position of high school principal. However, in 1995 only 22 of Iowa's 363 high school principalships were held by females; thus 6% of high school principals in Iowa were female. Multi-faceted phenomena of historic barriers, experiences, and leadership style appear to deter females from the role of high school principal.

Themes From the Literature

Historic Barriers

The past 3 decades of research have produced a wide array of explanations and models in an effort to identify and explain barriers to females in educational administration. Spradley and Mann (1975) suggested that a frequent method of creating a division of labor employs male and female differences. In school organizations women

instruct students; men administer adults (Shakeshaft, 1989). The females focus their activities on students and instruction. Supporting this distinction, Ortiz (1982) contended that males focus their activities around the management of schools and adults.

Several beliefs surround the female high school principal as revealed by Whitaker and Lane (1990). Based on a study of 226 female high school principals, Whitaker and Lane asserted four widely held beliefs: "Females cannot discipline older students, particularly males; females are too emotional; females are too weak physically; and males resent working with females" (p. 26). The low representation of females in educational administration has been explained by researchers according to three models: (a) Woman's Place Model, (b) Discrimination Model, and (c) Meritocracy Model (Estler, 1975; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Hansot and Tyack (1981) discussed three additional models. The first model focused on females as possessing internal barriers that keep them from advancing; socialization and sex stereotyping are seen as the guiding forces behind their behavior. The second model described an organizational structure that shapes the behavior of its members. Females behave in self-limiting ways not because they were socialized as females, but because they are locked into low-power, low-visibility, and dead-end jobs. The third model described by Hansot and Tyack (1981) depicted a

world that is male-dominated and male-run. According to this explanation, it is male dominance that has led to conditions that prevent females from advancing into positions of power and prestige.

Internal and external barriers exist for females in the entire educational system (Shakeshaft, 1987). Interwoven barriers are maintained by multiple sources. Hill and Ragland (1995) identified the complexity of the barriers for females in school administration as manifested in male domination of key leadership positions, female lack of political savvy, career positioning, mentoring, mobility, and an internal bias against women. The idea of "white males managing adults" perceived as superior to "women taking care of children and curricular issues" is a firmly entrenched educational tradition (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkison, 1986, p. 35).

Experiences of Female Educational Administrators

Much of the literature that reveals females' experiences in the role of educational administration uses examples or quotes from female educational administrators from a sampling of female elementary or high school principals and superintendents. Whereas these examples and quotes provide insights into specific and related experiences of females in educational administration, they fail to create a total picture of combined experiences for one individual (Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985; Chase, 1995;

Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Edson, 1988; Gross & Trask, 1976; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, 1988; Ortiz, 1982; Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Restine, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1989). Edson's 1979-80 longitudinal study of 142 females who sought a principalship in the public school system and the 1990 follow-up report offered a glimpse of segments of the females' experiences in facing barriers and working as a principal.

From studies such as Edson's (1988), a picture of the average female administrator emerged which does lead to the realization that the female educational administrator differs from her male counterpart in her experiences (Shakeshaft, 1989). However, the collection of studies, most of them a result of mail surveys, portrayed female administrators as a group. "We learn of the 'average' woman administrator but little of the individual" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 57). Shakeshaft advocated a revision of research of female educational administrators which would focus on the world of an individual female in her school from her own perspectives (Shakeshaft, 1987).

To date, only one major work exists that focuses on an individual female high school principal's experiences. This work is a personal narrative by Anna Hicks (1996). Hicks related her 4 years of experiences as a high school principal in the early 1990's. Hicks' personal narrative which highlights her 4 years of experience can serve as a

base for study in which individual females research other females. Interviews and observation of an individual female administrator in her own world will provide a rich and detailed account of the actual experience of one female administrator (Shakeshaft, 1987).

Female Leadership Style

An increasing body of literature indicates that females possess outstanding instructional leadership skills (Andrews, 1990; Chase, 1995; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). The Commission for Enhancing Educational Leadership in Iowa's Report and Recommendations to the State Board of Education in 1990 calls for attention given to placing more females into the candidate selection pool for school administrators.

Developmental leadership theories describe female leadership styles as collaborative, nurturing, and people oriented.

Females work in an organizational structure that is more web like than hierarchical (Feuer, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Demands for changing leadership paradigm and organizational structure abound (Bennis, 1990; Covey, 1989; Patterson, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1992). The call is for greater collaboration, less hierarchical structures, improved communication channels, and a more nurturing environment than has existed in public high schools (Beck, 1994).

According to Peters (1989), organizations face new requirements whether they are Fortune 500 companies or

public schools. Peters advocated the elimination of hierarchical organization and an emphasis on empowerment, ownership, information, and powersharing. Team-centered organization, partnerships, and an emphasis on lifelong learning and relationships should replace the old autocratic model. Leaders must be able to communicate easily and adapt to constant change. Peters asserted that these new realities of leadership read like a portfolio of females' inclinations and natural talents. However, although researchers and futurists continue to reveal the potential of females, in many cases females and males define roles and occupations as appropriate for one gender or the other (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993).

Several contemporary phenomena are synergistically creating new possibilities for leadership advancement of females. A critical combination of six factors produces an environment conducive to females obtaining administrative positions (Hill & Ragland, 1995). First, more than half of today's educational administrators have adequate years of service to retire. Secondly, many females hired as administrators in crisis districts have proven successful. Thirdly, as more females assume educational leadership positions, other females observe and extend their visions of possibilities. The fourth factor which creates new possibilities for female leadership is the expanded definitions of leadership. The fifth factor reveals that

graduate school settings in educational administration have hired more female faculty members and have reformed the rigid theory-bound models. Lastly, young females are shedding sex role stereotypes that previously limited their career aspirations.

New possibilities such as the ones cited by Hill and Ragland (1995) continue to develop. However, the reality of Iowa's low percentage of female high school principals serves to verify the strong influence of traditional barriers, to limit the possibilities for greater understanding of the experiences of female high school principals, and to reduce the potential for recognition of female leadership in Iowa high schools.

The Iowa female secondary principal in 1996 has transcended traditional barriers to attain her position and has faced challenges in a redefinition of the principal's role. The Iowa female secondary principal represents an individual both hindered and aided during this time of transition in school leadership. With the challenges education faces today, the demands for quality leadership encourage and welcome all forms of effective leadership. Because of the immediate need to employ competent educational leaders, all segments of society must be considered to find the very best. However, the female half of the population has often been untapped as a leadership source. Challenges confronting today's leaders demand that

we shed stereotypical images and seek leaders who are competent in fostering talents of others and are skilled at unifying constituencies to address problems (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Statement of Problem

Although aggregate descriptions of female school administrators exist, there are few specific case studies of female administrators. Histories, case studies, and ethnographies almost always center on the male principal or superintendent. No ethnographic work such as Wolcott's (1973) The Man in the Principal's Office exists that describes a female's experience as a principal. Consequently, little is known of the individual experiences and lives of females who occupy these positions (Shakeshaft, 1994). To compound this problem, research which addresses the female principalship often fails to differentiate findings on the basis of the elementary and secondary levels. This failure to separate elementary and secondary principals into two distinct categories blurs differences between female representation and experience at the elementary and secondary levels. The administration of a high school traditionally represents a much more male dominated sphere than that of the elementary school. "The high school principalship is the principal's highest hierarchical position," claimed Ortiz (1982). The saying, "The higher you go [in the hierarchy of school

administration and grade level], the fewer [women] you see" provides a succinct comment which describes the small numbers of females in the role the superintendent and high school principal (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 23).

Little research has focused on females' personal experiences in the passage from high school teacher to high school principal. Also, a void exists in the literature that presents the experiences of the female high school principal. William Webster's 1995 study, Voices in the Hall: High School Principals at Work, presents 150 high school principals at work but does not delineate by gender the voice of the forty females in his study. Existing literature focuses on the high school principalship in general without comment on gender. The literature usually combines information on females in all levels of school administration (Edson, 1988; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Ortiz, 1982; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). A lack of research and literature directed specifically at female high school principals leaves a serious void in better understanding of barriers, experiences, and leadership style of females in that role. Shakeshaft (1989) asserted that "Researchers need to redirect their inquiries not only to include women but also to see the world through female eyes" (p. 201).

Therefore, a need exists to expand the body of research and literature on females in the role of high school

principal. Research and literature on the barriers encountered, real-life experiences, and leadership style of Iowa's female secondary principals is nonexistent. Because Iowa ranks 47th in the national percentages of females serving as high school principals, a clear and comprehensive study of an Iowa female principal is worth exploration. Thus, this research fills a void in the literature and provides a beginning understanding of the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of one female Iowa high school principal.

Definitions

Androcentrism: The practice of viewing the world and shaping reality from a male perspective. This perception creates a belief in male superiority and a masculine value system in which feminine values, experiences, and behaviors are viewed as inferior (Shakeshaft, 1987).

Barriers: Obstructions, either intrinsic or external, which create real or perceived boundaries or limitations (Shakeshaft, 1987).

Career Path: The series of changes which lead from one career to another (Gustafson & Magnusson, 1991).

Gender: A cultural term which describes characteristics ascribed to people because of their sex. This is based on cultural expectations of what is male and what is female (Shakeshaft, 1994).

Glass Ceiling: A transparent barrier which prevents females as a group from advancing higher in their careers because they are female (Morrison, White, & Velso, 1992).

High School Principal: Chief administrator of a school responsible for educating students grades 9 or 10 through 12 (Iowa Department of Education, personal communication, September 12, 1995).

Leader: A person who, by word and/or personal example, markedly influences the behaviors, thoughts, and/or feelings of a significant number of his or her fellow human beings (Gardner, 1995).

Significance of Study

Feminist researchers have long been concerned with an absence of the voice of females in the body of research in education as well as the same absence in most areas of constructed knowledge. "The silence of females has been a cumulative process" according to Spender (1987, p. 59). The theoretical bases of educational leadership are overwhelmingly established on research generated by white males studying white male leaders (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Shakeshaft (1989) noted that educational research has focused for the most part on males. Furthermore, Shakeshaft argued, the resulting body of research and theory which has emerged from such research may be irrelevant and inadequate for explaining the female leadership experience in schools.

As Spender wrote, "Those who have the power to name the world are in a position to influence reality" (p. 165).

Biklen and Shakeshaft (1985) have suggested "The new scholarship on women will increase our understanding of human behavior and society, since an inadequate conceptualization of the female experience distorts our perspective on the human experience as a whole" (p. 47). Hill and Ragland (1995) contended that with the changed landscape of educational leadership which reflects expanded hues, philosophies, and another gender, newly formulated as well as replicated research is needed to balance the picture. Regan and Brooks (1995) asserted "The experience of women as school leaders has value and should be disseminated to all school leaders" (p. xv). The present body of research will provide new understandings of the female experience, offer greater possibilities for rethinking the male defined role of leadership, and suggest highlights of new successful structures. In addition to an increased understanding of the human experience as a whole, an examination of the female's role calls for a new definition of leadership.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe one female high school principal's career path to the principalship in an Iowa public high school. Specifically, this study will address four major questions:

1. What were the experiences which served as perceived barriers in the career path to the high school principalship for one Iowa female high school principal?

2. How does one Iowa female high school principal view her role, strengths, and limitations based on her experiences as a high school principal?

3. How does one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

4. How do those who work with one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

Assumptions

A case study can uncover a complex set of data which illuminates the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of one female principal. The purpose of the case study research is to provide a comprehensive description of the subject (Merriam, 1988). Through interviews with the participant and those who associate with her, direct observation of her in her role as high school principal, and study of archival records, a comprehensive description of one Iowa female high school principal will emerge.

Limitations

The case study will capture only one female high school principal's story within a limited time frame. The study is not generalizable (Yin, 1994); however, in examining a specific female high school principal, "the particulars of

the study serve to illuminate larger issues, and, therefore, are of significance" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Summary

This case study will identify, relate, and describe the barriers overcome, experiences encountered, and leadership style of one Iowa female high school principal. The documented singular voice of one Iowa female high school principal will add to the understanding of the role of females as educational leaders. Because Iowa ranks 47th in the national percentages of females serving as high school principals, a comprehensive study of an Iowa female high school principal is worth exploration.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to fully examine the female Iowa high school principal's career path to the principalship, her experiences in that position, and the leadership style she brings to her role, several bodies of related literature and research were reviewed. These areas included: (a) historical barriers to females in their career path to educational administration, (b) experiences of females in educational administration, and (c) leadership styles which represent feminine ways of knowing and dimensions of leadership.

Barriers to Females in Educational Administration

An evolution in the research on barriers to females in educational administration has occurred during the past 3 decades. A variety of barriers ranging from overt discrimination hiring practices to the female's belief that teaching is her natural role in the educational system have been identified. The decade of the 1970s produced a growing interest in the small representation of females in educational administration. Although the Women's Liberation Movement, beginning in the 1960s, drew attention to the under-representation of women in school leadership positions, very little impact from the movement occurred for females during the 1960s and 1970s. The percentage of women in school administration in the 1980s was less than the

percentage of women in 1905 (Shakeshaft, 1989). However, the impetus to understand why females were invisible in school administration did not begin until the 1970s.

Historical Perspective

Two seminal works during the 1970s focused on why females were invisible in school administration. The first work was Sex Equality in Educational Administration (American Association of School Administrators, 1975), and the second was The Sex Factor and the Management of Schools (Gross & Trask, 1976).

The American Association of School Administrators formed a 14 member Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education to address the low representation of females in school administration. Their report, Sex Equality in Educational Administration (1975) stated "Women are needed in administrative positions" (p. 1). Citing the overwhelming problems besetting schools, women's abilities, and the need to increase women's representation in administrative ranks to proportionally represent their numbers in schools, the Equality Commission also reminded members of the legal implications of sex discrimination (p. 3). Readers were warned of the expense of affirmative action and subsequent disruption of business if Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendment were ignored. School districts were encouraged to develop a plan to extend equal employment opportunities.

Traditional patterns in society, coupled with existing beliefs and attitudes, could not be overcome by a stroke of the legislative pen or strong advice from the American Association of School Administrators, however. Although personnel policies and practices had been noticeably influenced by the abundance of equity legislation, Bonuso and Shakeshaft (1983) found that it was only wishful thinking to assume that gender discrimination no longer exists in the hiring for administrative positions. In fact, studies of the past decade determined that there are still a great many barriers to women entering leadership positions (Chase, 1995; Edson, 1988; Funk, 1994; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Jones & Montenegro, 1990; Levine, 1989; Saltzman, 1991).

Nonetheless, the major national organization of school administrators, by its formation of an Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education and publication of its acknowledgement of the *need* for women in administration, contributed to a rising consciousness of under-representation of women in educational administration. The first step in overcoming the under-representation of females in educational administration was the identification of the reasons why females were under-represented. Without using the term barriers, the 14 member commission cited research which identified "seven reasons why so few females were administrators" (AASA Executive Handbook, 1975, pp. 2-3).

Based on McLure and McLure's study (1974), the Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education cited the seven reasons why so few females were administrators. The seven reasons included: (a) reorganization of school districts and the elimination of county school officers, (b) elimination of the Dean of Girls position, (c) increased salary levels, attracting more men into teaching, (d) entry of veterans into education after World War II and Korea, (e) decline in the job market due to declining enrollment and economics, (f) vogue of the executive image prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s, and (g) myths of male superiority (AASA, 1975, pp. 2-3).

Although the seven reasons identified by McClure and McClure and cited by the Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education explained why most administrators were male, the reasons why females either did not pursue or were not considered for administration centered around conscious and unconscious feelings. These four beliefs, originally identified by Meskin (1974) and cited by the Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education, included: (a) man is the breadwinner and woman the homemaker, (b) training for women is costly and wasted because women don't work as long as men, (c) women shouldn't compete for men's jobs, and (d) men don't like to work for women (p. 4). Thus, by 1975, some barriers to females in school administration had been identified by the American Association of School

Administrators through its action to formulate a special commission and publicize its findings.

The second important work which began to synthesize attempts to understand why females were under-represented in educational administration was Gross and Trask's (1976) publication of The Sex Factor and the Management of Schools. Gross and Trask specifically addressed the elementary principalship in their study of how the sex [sic] factor influences school administration. Their work sought to examine the impact of the sex [sic] factor on career decisions for principalship, if men and women differed in their educational values, if men and women perform their roles differently, and if the sex [sic] of the principals had any bearing on the functioning and productivity of their school (pp. 1-2). According to Gross and Trask, the percentage of female elementary principals actually decreased from 1964 to 1971 even after the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1964.

Gross and Trask (1976) offered four explanations for this "perplexing state of affairs" (p. 3). First, outright discrimination against women exists in promotion practices. Secondly, the decline in the number of female principals is the consequence of an informal male preference policy of school boards based on the belief that more men need to be retained and attracted to education in which the teaching force is largely dominated by women. The third reason,

according to Gross and Trask, is the school board's overreaction to major criticism that boys lack male role models and authority figures in the school culture. The final explanation places blame on the colleges and universities that prepare educational administrators. These institutions showed little concern for the sex [sic] imbalance. College and universities favored males in their recruitment and financial aid. Gross and Trask, therefore, contributed to the identification of some external factors which kept females from administration. They advocated continued research which would reveal if the external barriers which prevented females from leadership roles "simply reflect prejudices or if they have any real basis" (p. 5).

Perhaps one reason Gross and Trask (1976) wondered if females could perform as effective school leaders resulted from earlier works which firmly established male domination in education and leadership. John Franklin Brown's The American High School (1909) clearly established the importance of gender among the qualifications for the high school principal:

Generally speaking, men make better principals than women, especially in high schools. They are stronger physically; they possess more executive ability; they are more likely to command the confidence of male citizens; they are more judicial in mind; they are more sure to seize upon the essential merits of questions; they are less likely to look at things from a personal point of view; they are likely to be better supported by subordinates; and simply because they are men, they

are more likely to command fully the respect and confidence of boys. (pp. 241-242)

Ironically, the same year Brown's first of seven editions of The American High School was printed, Ella Flagg Young, Chicago's first woman superintendent, predicted that women were destined to rule schools of every city. Her aim as superintendent was to show critics and friends that a woman is better qualified for work in education than a man. Young was convinced that women would institute a whole new form of management, a feminine form that was rooted in solid human values that nurtures everyone connected with it (Smith, 1979).

By 1928, females held 55% of the elementary principalships, 8% of the high school principalships, and nearly 2% of the district superintendencies (Shakeshaft, 1989). Ella Flagg Young's dream of a golden age for women in administration looked promising for females. However, as schools enter the twenty-first century, Young's dream still appears deferred.

Despite the enactment of equal opportunity legislation and the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s, females continue to be under-represented in school administration. Although women comprised almost three-fourths of America's public school teachers in 1990, they held only 35% of the elementary principalships, 12% of the secondary principalships, and 5% of the superintendencies (Jones & Montenegro, 1990).

The voice of John Franklin Brown (1909) and his loud message, along with factors cited by the 1975 Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education (American Association of School Administrators, 1975) and Gross and Trask (1976), had interrupted Young's 1909 dream. Nonetheless, the decade of the 1970s brought a growing interest in the multi-faceted phenomena which kept the majority of females in education from leadership roles.

Barriers Identified

Another significant study from the 1970s also sought to explain the under-representation of females in educational administration. Estler (1975) explained the low representation of females in educational administration according to three models which included the: (a) Woman's Place Model, (b) Discrimination Model, and (c) Meritocracy Model. The Woman's Place Model assumes females' nonparticipation in administrative careers is based solely on social norms. The Discrimination Model draws on the assumption that institutional patterns are a result of the efforts of one group to exclude participation of another. The Meritocracy Model assumes that the most competent people are promoted and thus women are not competent. Estler supported the Woman's Place and Discrimination Models but found that the Meritocracy Model did not accurately reflect her view of the reality of women's competency, which was later supported by the research of Shakeshaft (1989).

As research on barriers to females in educational administration evolved, Adkison (1981) categorized barriers into four major areas. The categories included: (a) socialization and stereotyping by gender, (b) mobility and socialization within the career, (c) organizational structure, and (d) power and female's status within society (p. 311). An additional framework for analysis of barriers established internal and external barriers (Shakeshaft, 1989). By the late 1980s, researchers had categorized the barriers into six perspectives.

The six perspectives on barriers to females in educational administration categorized and synthesized by the late 1980s included: (a) more females than males lacked self-confidence, (b) devaluation of females existed, (c) home and family responsibilities created barriers for females, (d) females were less likely than males to receive encouragement or sponsorship, (e) a pervasive bias against female administrators in patriarchal educational systems existed, and (f) administrator preparation programs were gender biased (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988; Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991; Schmuck, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987). Each of these six perspectives represent interrelated phenomena which went far beyond the Advisory Commission on Sex Equality in Education's report (American Association of School Administrators, 1975). A definite identification of

the intertwined internal and external barriers were recognized.

Self-confidence. The first of the six barrier perspectives addressed the finding that more females than males lacked self-confidence (American Association of University Women, 1991a). Patterns of low expectations begin early with the female's school experience. Studies by the American Association of University Women (1991a) and research conducted by Sadker et al. (1991) revealed the existence of gender bias in schools at all levels. The work of Sadker and Sadker (1993) described patterns throughout K-12 schooling where boys receive more feedback than girls. Shakeshaft (1989) asserted that this absence of early feedback, often in the form of constructive criticism, explains why females often interpret criticism as a sign they are inferior.

Females receive messages about their attributes in relation to male development, whereas male behavior is regarded as the "norm," and female behavior is treated as some kind of deviation from that norm (Gilligan, 1982). Thus, an erosion of confidence occurs. "A person with low self-confidence is much less likely to attempt action than a person with high self-confidence" (Andrews, 1984, p. 3). Schmuck (1979) indicated that the lack of self-confidence represents an internal barrier reported by females that prevents them from considering school administration.

Hackett and Betz (1981) proposed a model for understanding the career development of females and their selection of traditional occupations based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy expectations are a belief about one's ability to successfully perform a given task or behavior (Whiston, 1993). Hackett and Betz concluded that, due to socialization experiences, males and females differ in their self-efficacy expectations. Consequently, females may lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in many career related behaviors. They suggested that the concept of self-efficacy might prove useful in explaining the under-representation of females in many male-dominated career fields and females' underutilization of certain abilities and talents related to career pursuits. Nevill and Schlecker (1988) found that females who were high in self-efficacy and assertiveness were more willing to engage in the nontraditional careers for females than females with low efficacy.

For some females, however, lack of self-confidence or low efficacy expectations is a major internal barrier. Females with low efficacy expectations cannot think of themselves as school administrators. For example, 51% of the beginning male teachers desire to become school administrators, whereas only 9% of the single females, 8% of the married females, and 19% of the widowed or divorced beginning female teachers say they would like to be school

administrators (Waddell, 1994). Females tend to keep their aspirations secret to avoid negative reactions and wait to be asked to apply for such positions (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993). Because females have not been conditioned to be ambitious and determined, they find it hard to fight old values (Waddell, 1994).

Devaluation. The second of the six perspectives on the barriers to females in educational administration reflected the external barriers of devaluation of females (Bernard, 1981). Females are seen as less than and different from males. According to Shakeshaft (1989), literally hundreds of studies indicate that attitudes which reflect a devalued attitude about females by those who hire constitute a major barrier to female advancement in school administration.

Attitudes that devalue females can be manifested in discriminatory actions when females seek administrative positions. Timpano and Knight (1976) identified discriminatory practices such as using word of mouth recruiting with only males; asking biased interview questions of women, especially about family responsibilities; offering females lower salaries than males and refusing to negotiate salaries with females; separating applications by gender and not qualifications; allowing males to skip steps on the career ladder but requiring females to have completed all steps; having only men as interviewers; and asking females how their husbands feel

about them becoming a school administrator. A number of researchers have concluded that sex discrimination is the number one barrier to females in school administration (Al-Khalifa & Migniuolo, 1990; Driver, 1990; Gerver & Hart, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1987).

Discrimination is often difficult to prove in societies in which people are often prejudged based on their gender or color. Discriminatory practices might be overt or exist on a level beneath consciousness. The prejudged beliefs do not need to be spoken to be shared (French, 1992).

Discriminatory practices are subtle and often not coded by the receiver or giver as biased. "The pressure to internalize societal bias as well as the lack of understanding about what sex discrimination looks like, means females don't recognize what happened to them" (Shakeshaft, 1994).

Home and family responsibilities. The third of the six barrier perspectives focuses on the barriers created for females due to family and home responsibilities. Traditionally, females were expected to care for children and, subsequently, take leave from their school careers to attend to homemaking and childrearing. Hansot and Tyack (1981) explained this as part of the Woman's Place Model. Family and home responsibilities are listed as barriers to females' achievement in administration in a number of

studies (Berry, 1979; Davis, 1978; Edson, 1988; Funk, 1994; Schmuck, 1986).

Shakeshaft (1989) contended that family and home responsibilities provide obstacles for females in administration in two ways. First, females feel the need to juggle all of their tasks. Secondly, they must contend with some people who believe they are unable to balance all responsibilities and that it is inappropriate for them to even try. Although there is no documentation that home and family responsibilities inhibit the ability of females to perform their jobs, many who hire administrators believe that family and home responsibilities make females undesirable candidates for administrative positions (Shakeshaft, 1994).

The entire issue of a female's personal life is wrapped in the barrier of family and home responsibilities based on society's external and the individual female's internal beliefs. Externally, marriage is not an issue when it comes to males aspiring to school administration, but for females marital status is viewed as the number one barrier (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993). Females may find themselves in a no-win situation. If females are married, school boards may wonder if they have time to manage the family and job; if not married, they may be perceived as not family-oriented. If divorced, females may be regarded as having no sense of family and permanency (Waddell, 1994).

Encouragement and support. The fourth perspective on barriers to females in school administration advances the idea that females are less likely than males to receive encouragement or sponsorship. According to Edson (1988), females never even think of becoming administrators because they often lack female role models in educational administration. Although, as the ancient Chinese proverb states, "Women hold up half the sky" (Helgesen, 1990, p. 13), most women see little evidence of females in leadership roles. Likewise, encouragement and sponsorship are essential to career advancement. "If sponsors are important for the success of men in organizations, they are absolutely critical for women" (Kanter, 1977, p. 183). According to Shakeshaft (1989), most women who pursued educational administration did so because some significant other such as mother, husband, father, principal, or college professor encouraged them. Brown and Burt's 1990 study concurs with Shakeshaft's findings.

Research reveals, however, that females have traditionally had little encouragement or sponsorship to pursue educational administration from family, peers, or representatives of educational institutions (Baughman, 1977; Gasser, 1975; Schmuck, 1986). Fisher's 1978 study found that 40% of males compared to 17% females were encouraged by an administrator to pursue educational administration. Brown and Burt (1990) also cited the importance of

encouragement by an administrative role model. Almost half of the surveyed 50 females enrolled in administrative certification courses were inspired by a female leader they admired. These aspirants had not considered becoming an administrator prior to the encouragement and support of their supervising female role model. Waddell (1994) contended that even though female role modeling and sponsorship help break down barriers, the small number of female role models (i.e., in 1990, 5% female superintendents and 12% secondary principals) sends a message to females. Females might assume that only extremely talented and skilled females become administrators, and thus, with potentially little self-confidence, many females will choose not to aspire to administration.

Research has found same-gender role models to be crucial for females but not for males. However, sponsors, mentors, or those who encourage females to enter the field of administration may be male or female (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Bias in educational system. The fifth of the six barrier perspectives brought forth by researchers argues that there is a pervasive bias against female administrators in the patriarchal education system. Although females represent nearly 75% of teachers employed in the public schools, the proportion diminishes rapidly as they progress up the hierarchical administrative structure (Gabler, 1987; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). The same disproportion is

also present in the corporate sphere. Whereas nearly a third of all entry-level management positions are held by females, only 3% of the Chief Executive Officers in the corporate world are female (Saltzman, 1991). The lack of attainment to top leadership positions in the corporate world was labeled the "glass ceiling" by the U.S. Department of Labor (Lewis, 1991, p. 268).

The Department of Labor's "Glass Ceiling Initiative," which began in 1989, released a 1991 report which showed the glass ceiling to be in place and that it existed at much lower levels than first thought (Morrison et al., 1992). The Glass Ceiling Initiative identified barriers which included recruitment by networking, lack of opportunities for women to take advanced education programs and career enhancing assignments, and lack of accountability for equal opportunity within the leadership ranks. Based on these findings, a 1991 report by the Feminist Majority Foundation predicted it will take 475 years for females to reach equality with males in the executive suite (Garland, 1991).

The label "glass ceiling" is also used in describing the barriers to females in educational administration (Restine, 1993). Morrison et al. (1992) explained the glass ceiling in education as an image representing obstacles that prevent females from advancing to the top of their careers. Females "bump into an invisible shield of resistance and can rise no further" (p. 13). These bumps in the invisible

shield of resistance lead to an important question researched by Shakeshaft (1989). Were those in a position to hire secondary principals giving lip service to equity but in fact not hiring women? Bonuso and Shakeshaft (1983) completed a study which examined the influence of gender in the selection of secondary school principals to explore whether gender is still an issue in hiring school administrators.

The target population for Bonuso and Shakeshaft's (1983) study were 59 superintendents in New York state who hired a secondary principal. Of the new principals hired, 92.3% were male and 7.7% were female. Those who made it to the final interview stage were 95.5% male and 4.5% female. The majority of superintendents claimed the reason few females were hired was because there were few, if any, qualified female applicants. Ironically, this is in a state in which more than 50% of all students in administrative certificate programs are women. Shakeshaft (1989) reminded researchers that what someone says they do and what they actually do may be very different things indeed. As Waddell (1994) asserted in citing Shakeshaft's study, either the excellent female candidates did not apply or bias against females still exists.

Whereas Shakeshaft's (1989) study revealed the outcome of actual hiring practices as bias indicators, another study (Stokes, 1984) of Florida administrators identified numerous

more subtle biases. Study participants indicated less access to power through lack of invitations to dinners or golf matches where decisions, alliances, or networking were often made. They recalled examples of feeling ignored during important discussions, interrupted when attempting to make a point, and dismissed through references that indicated or assumed that a male was really the one to make a successful decision. Hill and Ragland (1995) concluded from this study that women had to work harder than men to succeed or to overcome biases. Pellicer stated in his introduction to Hick's (1996) autobiography of her 4-year experience as a female high school principal:

As a society, we really haven't progressed very far during the past century in regard to our attitudes about women in leadership roles. Apparently, a substantial majority of men, and sadly, even women, still believe that ladies should be content to be the "fairer" sex, to nurture and support, to look pretty, smell nice, speak softly, and most importantly, follow rather than lead. (p. viii)

Administrator preparation programs. The sixth and final category of barriers identified by the late 1980s revealed administrator preparation programs as gender biased. Traditionally, faculty members in educational leadership departments have been male (Campbell & Newell, 1973; Schmuck, 1979). This dominance has influenced career paths and choices for females in many ways. First, university faculty members initially encourage or discourage prospective graduate students about pursuing a degree. Silver (1976) pointed to a possible conflict between the

females in educational administration programs who are "unusual people, having sought professional advancement despite all odds" and the male professors who are "much more traditional, middle-class and conservative in orientation" (p. 12). Adkison (1981) asserted that "men choose to sponsor females who conform to their stereotypes" (p. 323).

In addition to possible lack of support from male faculty, females experience a number of conditions which combine to discourage graduate school participation and success (Shakeshaft, 1989). Institutional barriers within the graduate program often hamper achievement for females. Lack of child care, informal networks consisting of male students and male faculty, inadequate number of female role models, and a lack of focus on females as students are cited by Shakeshaft as examples of gender biased conditions faced by females in educational administration programs.

According to a 1982 study of 119 educational administration programs, most educational administration departments do little to serve females (Williams, 1982). A number of researchers have commented on the relationship between curriculum biased toward males and the dampened career goals of females. These researchers critiqued the textbooks and journals in the field for gender bias and found a large proportion of sexist content in the research and writing (Nagle, Gardner, Levine, & Wolf, 1982; Schmuck, Butman, & Pearson, 1982; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986; Tietze,

Shakeshaft, & Davis, 1981). Thus, as Marshall (1984) concluded, graduate programs in educational administration develop and support "students in ways that do not promote equal opportunity" (p. 10).

Internal and External Barriers

Overall, the research during the 1980s, and subsequent expansion on the findings during the 1990s, indicate that females face both internal and external barriers. The internal barriers consist of the feelings females have about themselves and their roles. Because females have been taught to be followers, many developed self-limiting beliefs about their roles and abilities. Often females restrict their career choices to roles they believe to be "gender appropriate" (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993, p. 6). External barriers are the institutional structures and practices that restrict females' access to administrative positions. Females who aspire to school administration must acknowledge the existence of barriers and develop strategies to overcome them (Waddell, 1994).

According to Tryon (1996), a 1989 School Administrators of Iowa survey showed that Iowa's female administration aspirants do acknowledge the existence of barriers. A survey was mailed to 410 females in Iowa who were certified as school administrators but not employed in an administrative position. Of the 214 females who responded to the survey, 37% ranked "gender" as the greatest barrier

for females in seeking an administrative position. The second ranked response, with 23%, indicated prior experience as the greatest barrier for females in seeking a position in administration.

The big question of "Why have Iowa school districts been so slow to hire women school administrators?" is partly answered by the results of the 1989 survey (Tryon, 1996). Tryon stated: "One also has to wonder why only 6% of Iowa's high school principals are female when almost half of Iowa's secondary teachers are female." Even with the identification of the barriers nationally over the last 30 years, the existence of barriers to females in educational administration in Iowa prompts continued study.

In order to better understand the barriers to females in educational administration, the experiences of females who overcame barriers must be studied. Through the study of females who experienced the barriers and now serve in educational administration, a more complete picture of females in educational administration may emerge.

Experiences of Females in Educational Administration

Much of the literature on females' experiences in educational administration combines females' experiences in the various roles of school administration (Adler, Laney, & Packer, 1993; Edson, 1988; Flax, 1992; Funk, 1994; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Jones & Montenegro, 1982; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Restine, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1989). Because female high

school principals belong to the larger body of female school administrators, their profile and experiences can be partly revealed through the research and literature on female educational administrators.

Many experiences are common for females in educational administration whether the role is superintendent or high school principal (Shakeshaft, 1994). Therefore, the examination of experiences will first provide an overview of females in educational administration. Five areas of female experiences to be explored include: (a) encountering the glass ceiling, (b) deciding to enter administration, (c) preparing for educational administration, (d) seeking the administrative position, and (e) serving as an administrator. An examination of a female high school principal's self-reported experiences follows the examination of the overall female experience in educational administration.

Encountering the Glass Ceiling

The typical female educational administrator's experiences in considering, pursuing, and obtaining an administrative position looks nothing like the typical male educational administrator's experiences (Adler et al., 1993; Edson, 1988; Ortiz, 1982; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). Females face the glass ceiling which is a transparent barrier preventing females as a group from advancing higher in their careers (Morrison et al., 1992).

Barriers to females' advancement in administration are entrenched societal concepts (Hill & Ragland, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). An example of an entrenched societal concept includes the belief that women do not want administrative responsibilities (Edson, 1988). Yet, as Diaz (1976) concluded, contrary to popular belief, women do aspire to administrative careers. Ortiz and Covell (1978) concluded from their study: "Women have the same career ambitions as men, but they do not have the same opportunities" (p. 214). Females were held back not by a lack of aspirations but by "faulty characteristics subconsciously or consciously ascribed to them --characteristics assumed to predict failure as school managers" (Valverde, 1974, p. ii). Societal concepts impacted all female administrative aspirants as part of their common experience.

Thus, the most common experience characteristic for all females in educational administration is that, because of their gender, they all faced the glass ceiling. Traditionally, males controlled the highest administrative roles within school districts. The system "fostered selection of new administrators who resembled their sponsors in attitude, philosophy, deed, appearance, hobbies, church affiliation, and club memberships" (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 9-10). Kempner (1989) wrote: "Those individuals who do not possess these characteristics, notably women and minorities,

face extraordinary difficulty in entering and surviving in educational administration" (p. 119). According to Marshall and Mitchel (1989), such a selection process resulted in the new mimicking the old down to nuances of behavior.

Females often lacked the political savvy to understand that deals were often cut before females knew positions were available. The "good ol' boy" network represented a common challenge for females as they sought administrative positions (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Females lacked the career positioning or mentor's grooming which aided males to meet the demands and specifications that they needed later in their career.

Mentors offer assistance in career positioning and groom aspirants. However, females often experienced a lack of mentorship. Potential male mentors did not consider that females would want to lead. Pioneer female leaders often lacked understandings of the power and process of mentoring, had little time to serve as a mentor, or viewed themselves as a token in the position and therefore too threatened to serve as a mentor (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Female educational administration aspirants experienced a scarcity of supportive sponsors and mentors (Benton, 1980; Johnson, 1991; Rist, 1991; Swiderski, 1988; York, 1988). Most females in educational administration did not benefit from sponsors and mentors to encourage their career development. This lack of sponsors and mentoring meant that

most female aspirants and females holding administrative positions faced alone the myth that leadership ability belongs primarily to males. This bias against females was found among teachers, school board members, and superintendents (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988).

Regarding bias in leadership, Lynch (1990) wrote, "In spite of more than thirty years of data to the contrary, the myth remains that the ideal manager conforms to the masculine stereotype" (p. 2). Ironically, this pervasive attitude is not only typical for those in power but is widely accepted by females themselves within the profession (Garland, 1991; Gotwalt & Towns, 1986; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988). In addition, females frequently deny that sex-role stereotyping and bias is a barrier for them entering educational administration (Slick & Gupton, 1993).

A majority of females in educational administration usually answer "no" in studies that ask them if they have been discriminated against. Yet, if these same females are given a list of discriminatory actions and asked if these things ever happened to them, the majority will say "yes." As Shakeshaft (1994) explained at an American Association of School Administrators' Leadership Institute for Women Administrators, "The pressure to internalize societal bias as well as the lack of understanding about what sex discrimination looks like, means even women don't recognize what has happened to them." Nevertheless, the overwhelming

evidence identifies sex discrimination as the number one barrier all females must overcome in educational administration (Driver, 1990; Gerver & Hart, 1990; Nylén & Sorphus, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Females in educational administration all experienced and still experience the impact of the glass ceiling. Because of their gender, females' experiences in considering, pursuing, and obtaining a position in educational administration are unique to females. All female educational administrators are different from the traditional male administrator, if for no other reason than their very femaleness. Gross and Trask (1976) stated: "Being different is a disadvantage to people who aspire to positions new to their kind" (p. 10). Whereas individual female experiences may vary in regard to decisions to enter administration, educational preparation, interviews, and on the job, literature reveals that females experience the glass ceiling.

Deciding to Enter Educational Administration

Despite the glass ceiling faced by females, an increase in the numbers of females preparing themselves for educational administration has occurred over the past 30 years. "The increase in women in administrative training programs has been dramatic," according to Shakeshaft (1989, p. 131). A consistent pattern exists which reveals the increase in numbers of females seeking the doctorate in

educational administration spanning the years 1972 to 1991: 11% in 1972, 20% in 1980, 39% in 1983, and 49% in 1991 (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988).

A variety of factors which contributed to the increased numbers of females in educational administration preparation programs or who have enrolled in educational administration doctoral programs have been identified (Edson, 1988; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, 1984; Morrison et al., 1992; Ortiz, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1989; Yeakey et al., 1986). These include: recruitment of women in preparation programs, increased financial aid for women in preparation programs, the development of internship programs for women, and the U.S. Department of Labor's "Glass Ceiling Initiative" to promote equal opportunity for career development.

Shakeshaft (1989) stands as a lone voice, however, in citing another factor which may have contributed to the increased numbers of females in education administration programs. She noted the coincidence of the increased numbers of females in educational administration preparation programs at universities when enrollments in such programs had declined. Shakeshaft asserted that schools of educational administration turned to other markets as a way of keeping the student body robust.

Although external factors such as recruitment, financial assistance, and internship programs may have created a more favorable climate for females to enter

educational administration preparation programs, additional motivation needed to exist. Nearly 70% of the 142 respondents in Edson's (1988) longitudinal study indicated their motivation to enter a professional preparation program as a desire for professional growth and challenges inherent in school administration. Sixty-six percent of the respondents believed they would be good administrators once hired. Fifty-three percent plainly wanted to do something more positive for children in school than was presently occurring. The issue of increased salary or heightened prestige was seldom identified as a motivating factor with the exception of some divorced females. Very few females said they just "fell into" administration (Edson, 1988). Motivated by the desire for professional growth and challenge, belief in ability to do a good job, and interest in doing something positive for children, the typical female administrator probably completed her master's degree in her early 30s and the doctorate in her 40s (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Females moved into educational administration later in their lives than males. The average female principal spends 15 years as a teacher before seeking a principalship, whereas the average male spends 5 years as a teacher (Shakeshaft, 1989). A number of factors have contributed to females remaining as teachers longer than males. Barnett and Baruch (1979) found that, at midlife, self-esteem increased and females discovered self-worth. Paddock (1978)

found that the demands of the role of homemaker and mother were listed as a major difficulty for females in attempting to move from teacher to administrator. As these responsibilities lessened as children grew up, females were able to add the additional tasks of graduate school and school administration.

Whether reassessment of career options comes from years of teaching experience, returning to a university, a change in family obligations, or the emergence of self-worth, females tell of their desire to influence and change public schools. "Females speak of gaining power, but not personal power. They wish to influence the educational environment of children in a positive way" (Edson, 1988, p. 16). Edson reported that females believe they can do a better job than many current school leaders (p. 17). Although they value the teaching role, females believe they can accomplish more for students in an administrative role.

Preparing for Educational Administration

Whether for professional growth, life refocusing, or added career insurance, females who return to graduate school assess their campus experiences differently (Edson, 1988). The promise of professional growth and challenge was cited by females most often for their return to graduate school. Professional growth and challenges are the same reasons why females become interested in educational administration (Edson, 1988; Funk, 1994; Hill & Ragland,

1995). Eighty-seven percent of those questioned in Edson's study expressed a perception that females must be better qualified than males to be considered as a serious administrative candidate. As one of Edson's informant's stated, "There are a few of us who have chosen a doctorate as a vehicle for getting into administration. For myself, I hope it helps" (Edson, 1988, p. 40).

Although little is said to aspirants about obtaining a doctorate, the impression of many females is that to succeed a doctorate is necessary (Adler et al., 1993; Edson, 1988). Females believe a doctorate will increase their credibility once hired. A number of females have confided that they completed doctoral work so they could carry with them the aura of legitimate authority, transmitted by the title "Dr." (Anderson, Finn, & Leider, 1981). However, "...rather than increasing their credibility in a positive fashion, women holding advanced degrees may prove threatening to those men who already view their positions in jeopardy" (Edson, 1988, p. 25). Shakeshaft recognized this phenomena but framed it differently.

Using Kanter's definition of power, Shakeshaft (cited by Jacobson, 1985) identified power as the ability to get things done. Females have traditionally used expert power. "Women are often overprepared but have not yet learned the kind of bargaining and political skills needed to gain power," stated Shakeshaft (p. 47). One reason for the lack

of bargaining and political skills is the curriculum and preparation in educational administration programs fail to address these skills (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Nonetheless, females relate positive experiences in their educational administration preparation at universities. The respondents in Edson's study saw a direct link between the amount of challenging coursework and their satisfaction with the program (Edson, 1988, p. 25). Many females also reported the stimulation they received from other students and the networking that occurred. In some cases, the practica and internships garnered experiences and skills of school management. With the increased numbers of females in educational administration courses, females also learned to rely upon each other for support and encouragement necessary to maintain their nontraditional career goals (Edson, 1988; Hill & Ragland, 1995).

The importance of encouragement and support from the female's spouse in her pursuit of an advanced degree in educational administration is also important. However, research on the support of husbands is mixed (Shakeshaft, 1989). All respondents in three separate studies underscored the importance of husbands allowing them to succeed. Many females attested to this importance but indicated they did not benefit from much support. Yet, most females in the three studies felt some encouragement from their husbands (Coffin & Ekstrom, 1979; Doughty, 1980; Payne

& Jackson, 1978). Shakeshaft interpreted this mixed message to mean that what "women call support from husbands may be a lack of resistance to their aspirations. In these relationships, as long as the status quo is not upset, the husbands do encourage their wives" (p. 108).

In addition to the male support at home, females also reported their need for support from their professors at the universities (Edson, 1988). For the female educational administration student in 1972, 98% of her professors were male. By 1986, this percentage had changed to 88% according to McCarthy's 1988 study (Mertz & McNeely, 1990, p. 364). However, Short, Twale, and Walden's 1989 study revealed that in 1988 97% of the professors who prepare students for administrative positions in elementary and secondary schools were male (Mertz & McNeely, 1991, p. 365). In spite of the discrepancy between the percentages reported in the two studies, the percentages indicate that most of the professors in university educational administration departments are male. Females in Edson's study detailed various experiences with faculties who were dominated by males, usually over the age of 50.

Although some females in Edson's study indicated supportive professors and positive experiences in their preparation programs, many females specified their negative experiences. One female felt accepted as equal aspirants in administration but saw no female faculty. Some females

contemplated leaving graduate school because of the negative experiences with male professors. Negative experiences included: male professors counseled females to drop their administration career goals because the management of the family role and management role would be too difficult; females were called "girls" by male professors; and male advisors encouraged females to take Curriculum and Instruction courses (Edson, 1988, pp. 34-37). "In a midwestern city, females repeatedly were told they were not welcome in leadership classes because they were 'second-class citizens'" (Edson, 1988, p. 36).

In addition to the role of teaching administration courses, professors also serve in the role of securing administration positions for many of their students. As Shakeshaft (1989) indicated, educational administration professors act as gatekeepers to the profession. One of Edson's informants revealed "The good ol' boys system was very prevalent, even with the professors who said they were supportive of women. I heard such things as 'such and such district isn't ready for a woman yet'" (Edson, 1988 p. 36). Another informant reported the encouragement and grooming which occurred in her program. However, when it came time for a professor to recommend someone for a position, none recommended a woman (Edson, 1988).

Shakeshaft (1989) found that when females go to college to acquire administrative degrees, they are less likely than

males to find a supportive atmosphere. Silver (1976) indicated the potential conflict between the females who come to graduate school in educational administration and are viewed as unusual people and the male professors who are much more traditional, middle-class, and conservative in their orientation (p. 12). "Men choose to sponsor women who conform to their stereotype," concluded Adkinson (1981, p. 323). Often these experiences of gender bias are subtle and covert (Shakeshaft, 1989).

A not-so-subtle gender bias experience for female graduate students in educational administration is the instructional material (Shakeshaft, 1989). Several studies have critiqued the textbooks and journal articles in the field for gender bias and found a shocking proportion of sexist content and writing (Nagle et al., 1982; Shakeshaft & Hanson, 1986; Tietze, Shakeshaft, & Davis, 1981). Works such as Smyth's Critical Perspectives in Educational Leadership (1989) are cited as representative of the "additive mode." According to researchers, this fairly common practice of isolating females in one discrete chapter, or as an afterthought, presents females as a "deviant other" group outside the "real" world of male administrators (Adler et al., 1993, p. 58).

Many theories drawn upon in the field of educational administration rely heavily on all-male samples (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 159). Shakeshaft cited The Contingency Theory of

Leadership, Getzels-Guba's Model of Social Behavior, and Maslow's Theory of Motivation and Self-actualization as examples of leadership training theory based on an all male model (pp. 149-161). According to Al-Khalifa (1989), a male model of management emerges, one with which females are unable to identify (p. 90).

Although females' experiences varied based on the institution and professors' attitudes, a general picture emerged. Edson (1988) concluded from her study that when encouragement to pursue administrative careers is followed by equal commitment to inform females about job opportunities and to promote female candidates, females felt satisfied with their relationship with male professors. Female aspirants, however, realize the ultimate responsibility for obtaining a position rests on their own shoulders (p. 39).

Seeking the Administrative Position

Research reveals difficulties for females in securing a position as an educational administrator (Ryder, 1994). Edson's (1988) study showed that females seeking a principal position did not perceive any obstacles to obtaining a job until they tried to secure a position. Females had overcome their own internal obstacles but now faced institutional and societal external barriers in the job search (Waddell, 1994). Those who do not share the attributes of those who currently predominate in educational administration do not

find easy access to the "castle of administration" (p. 113). According to Kempner (1989), "Those individuals who do not possess these characteristics, notably women and minorities, face extraordinary difficulty in entering and surviving in educational administration" (p. 119). Sponsorship and mentoring, the interview process, mobility, and family responsibilities were identified by female aspirants as major issues in their attempts to enter educational administration.

Sponsors and mentors. Most females who were successful in acquiring an educational administration position had sponsors or mentors (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 116). Sponsors or mentors advise, support, and promote an aspiring administrative candidate. Sponsors provide access to a network which provides information on job openings as well as assistance in gaining visibility for the aspirant. Kanter (1977) defined a mentor as "teachers or coaches whose functions are primarily to make introductions or to train a young person to move effectively through the system" (p. 181).

Hill and Ragland (1995) cited seven major benefits of a mentoring relationship for the mentee. These include: safe sounding board, establishing connections, insights into the history of the organization, broader views, balance and feedback, safety net, and increased self-confidence (p. 75). An additional advantage to the mentee in a mentor

relationship is the perception within the organization that the mentee has extended power and influence. The perception of power and influence occurs because the mentee is somewhat protected and guided by the mentor (Fagenson, 1988).

A scarcity of supportive sponsors and mentors exists, however, among females in educational administration as well as executive positions across all professions (Johnson, 1991; Restine, 1993; Rist, 1991; Swiderski, 1988; York, 1988). Females have not traditionally benefitted from having sponsors and mentors to encourage and support their career advancement. On the other hand, the network among males, informally referred to as the "good old boy system," is strong and is considered a major vehicle used in seeking job candidates (Benton, 1980; Schmuck, 1986).

Most successful female executives indicate the importance of acceptance into or at least recognition by the male network. Recent research has emphasized the importance of females having mentors, either male or female, in order to make significant advances in administrative careers (Garland, 1991; Lynch, 1990; Myers, 1992; Pavan, 1987). Edson added the dimension that although gender of the sponsor or mentor was not critical, a female mentor or sponsor can also serve as a role model to aspirants (Edson, 1988, p. 75).

Sponsors and mentors assist the aspirant through the "screening system" (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993, p. 15). The

screening system can deny or grant critical job vacancy information, networking, and major professional decisions (Waddell, 1994). By sharing information that often bypasses the formal hierarchy and by providing "reflected power" or backing, mentors are invaluable resources (Kanter, 1977, p. 182). Edson's (1988) research revealed an acute shortage of mentors for female aspirants. Females in Hill and Ragland's (1995) study discussed a common thread of feeling they were the only one throughout their career. "Many exemplary women leaders have solitarily created a path and are just now discovering the concomitant gains of mentoring others" (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 13). Edson (1988) discovered that female aspirants knew they must find mentors and sponsors to succeed (p. 73).

The importance of sponsorship is reaffirmed in much of the literature which discusses the entry of females in educational administration (Chase, 1995; Edson, 1988; Funk, 1994; Hicks, 1996; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Morrison et al., 1992; Ortiz, 1982; Schmuck, 1979; Shakeshaft, 1989). For example, Edson (1988) stated, "Although spirited sponsorship also launches men on their administrative careers, it appears doubly significant to women" (p. 74). Informants in Edson's research reported that their confidence in their sponsor often alleviated doubts about their ability to overcome the odds in obtaining a position. Females in Edson's research who lacked a mentor or sponsor "felt

adrift, separated from sources of encouragement and support frequently afforded to promising male colleagues" (p. 80).

Funk's 1994 study of 57 Texas female education administrators also confirmed the importance of sponsorship. One of Funk's respondents summarized the impact and influence of her sponsors: "They were great role models, encouraged me to try things, opened doors for me and stayed with me so the door didn't close behind me. I am grateful for those guys!" (Funk, 1994, p. 4).

Interview process. Although sponsors or mentors may assist the female educational administration aspirant through encouragement, networking, and information sharing, a female aspirant faces the interview process alone. Shakeshaft reported in 1989 that, in spite of federal legislation to end sex discrimination in hiring practices, subtle discriminatory practices continue in the interview process (p. 143). Timpano and Knight (1976) documented specific behaviors that discriminated against females in the hiring process. These behaviors serve as hiring filters, according to these researchers. Timpano and Knight developed five categories of hiring filters which include: recruiting filters, application filters, selection filters, interview filters, and selection decision filters. Whereas sponsors may help female educational administration aspirants through the first three filters, according to Edson (1988), females often lack interview experience.

Most female educational administration aspirants were asked illegal questions as documented by several studies (Edson, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987; Shapiro, 1984; Timpano & Knight, 1976). Shakeshaft (1989) noted an absence of many females' understanding of illegal questions when she called for a change in educational administration course competencies to include knowledge of anti-discrimination laws and mandates (p. 143). A Catch 22 occurs, however, for females who are aware of illegal questions and confront their interviewers. Females who challenge the legality of an interview question during the interview are often rejected according to Timpano and Knight's (1976) interview filter identification.

Edson (1988) cited illegal interview questions that included: What does your husband think of your moving? What are your babysitting plans? How do you relate to men? and Can you work with men? (p. 47). Timpano and Knight (1976) identified in their interview filter category questions that focus upon the applicant as a woman rather than as a qualified professional. "Why would such a bright and attractive woman ever want to be a superintendent?" is an example of this type of question according to the interview filter. One of Edson's (1988) informants cited the following interview question that represented an example of a sexist question: "How are you--at 5'2"--going to handle

two competing football quarterbacks having a fight in the hall?" (p. 49).

In addition to interview filter questions, Edson's (1988) informants also reported token interviews in which they were informed that the decision had already been made. Edson's informants claimed that affirmative action quotas, not their qualifications, were the reason for their interview invitation. Although some of the females were angered by this, others accepted the interview as opportunities to gain interview experience (p. 50).

Edson (1988) concluded that the biggest hurdle for females in interviewing situations remains their lack of practical experience in the field. The reason they cannot get the administrative experience necessary to secure an initial interview is because they lack the proper connections with current administrators in the field. "The problem is circular: women are denied access to experience because they are female, and then they are told the reason they are not acceptable is because they do not have managerial experience" (p. 52).

Mobility. In order to gain experience in a career that often demands geographic mobility, females must display a willingness to relocate. Edson (1988) indicated that much of the literature in educational administration paints a portrait of the immobile female, an individual limited in administrative aspirations by family ties and

responsibilities. Kanter (1977) concluded that females "tend to be concerned with local and immediate relationships, remaining loyal to the local work group even as professionals, rather than identifying with the field as a whole" (p. 236). Harragan (1977) told females that in many cases "failure to move means automatic forfeiture of the ball" and urged them to display a willingness to move on the job (p. 157).

Lack of mobility is often not accurately identified by females as limiting career options (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 14). Mims (1992) asked Georgia female graduate students if they were willing to be mobile to secure a position. Fifty-seven percent said that they were. But when they were asked to clarify their concept of mobility, only 5% were willing to relocate beyond 100 miles, 10% would move out of their state for a position, and 36% would not go more than 50 miles. Edson (1988) reported that 75% of the females in her study indicated a willingness to move out of their district, and 39% were willing to move out of their state (p. 54). According to Edson, midwestern and northwestern females were the most willing to move for job opportunities. Mims found that the issue of job mobility does not carry the same weight for single or divorced females as for married females.

The issue of job mobility becomes more weighty for married females than females who are not married. Married

females must contend with the impact the move would have on a husband's employment or their children's schooling. Often females elected not to move to protect their husband's position, which in the past generally commanded the higher income. Over half of the females interviewed in Hill and Ragland's (1995) study had their own career interrupted or limited by their husband's career moves or the lack of his ability to move due to his job. Many of the females recalled losing good jobs with promising promotions to relocate with their husband and then became a substitute teacher (p. 14). However, a possible change is on the horizon with an increase in the number of females earning more than their husbands.

The balance of power in households is shifting due to increased salaries earned by females. In two paycheck households, 29% of the females earn more than their husbands (Sandroff, 1994, p. 44). Glimpses of a changing custom were seen by Hill and Ragland (1995) when a few of the interviewed females had experienced husbands following them to a new work location (p. 14). As Edson (1988) concluded, "The personal and career-opportunity costs that accompany moving to a new location--costs usually born by female aspirants in the past--now squarely face their husbands" (p. 60). Nonetheless, whether married or single, the issue of job mobility is central to the careers of female education administration aspirants.

Family responsibilities. Wrapped in the complexities of mobility for many female aspirants is family responsibility which focuses on the marriage and children. As one female aspirant stated in Edson's (1988) study, "I feel tremendous guilt pangs when my career demands extend beyond four-thirty. I must reassess my needs at home versus those of career development" (p. 91). Ryder's (1994) study of 19 female school administrators in the Torrance Unified School District revealed that to reduce the conflict of juggling family and career responsibilities, all the females in the study had postponed applying for an administrative position. However, 42% of the female administrators did have the responsibility of raising and caring for a family while serving as an administrator.

Edson's (1988) research also found that female aspirants often choose a career path that delays their administrative aspirations. Female aspirants who delay their career opportunities are able to avoid the problems inherent in trying to raise a family while pursuing leadership options. Because they make active, conscious choices, the younger aspirants do not feel defeated or powerless. Younger aspirants often select positions that show upward movement but with longer horizontal stopovers (p. 91). Yet some females seek to blend the responsibilities of career and family.

In various ways, marriage and family influence female administrators' career goals. All females are affected by the stereotypes of females as wives and mothers and men as husbands and executives (Edson, 1988, p. 113). Nonetheless, females seek to balance their personal lives with professional aspirations. The current image in the media of the females who can play multiple roles and succeed puts great pressure on females. As Edson concluded, "Family responsibilities, so often referred to as an insurmountable barrier for females in educational administration, are now simply givens" (p. 113). Females in Funk's (1994) study indicated that home and family were effective "de-stressors" when they kept work and home separate (p. 7). However, serving as an administrator demands many long hours away from home.

Serving as an Administrator

Although there are numerous voices that describe elements or general statements of females' experiences as educational administrators, a rich description of a female's administrative experiences appears through a singular voice. Edson's (1988) organization and use of direct quotes from female administrators targets specific experiences that provide insightful examples of the issues females face in the day-to-day role of an administrator. Females in Edson's study identified the impact of their gender on issues such as: sexual harassment, discipline, constituency relations,

and feelings of pressure, powerlessness, and loneliness in the role as an educational administrator.

Image. The issue of gender impacts female administrators in numerous ways. The unofficial criterion of maleness causes dissonance in what appropriate administrators look like and how they act. Issues of stature, physical attractiveness, voice, and attire surface regularly. One of Edson's (1988) informants indicated, "I would have a problem if I were profoundly ugly or dramatically beautiful. But luckily, I am just an ordinary person" (p. 125). Another informant said, "I was told I was under-estimated because my 5'3" stature made me look like a waif. I can't help that! I dress professionally and stand up straight. Do I have to fool them somehow?" (p. 126) Bonuso (1981) concluded from his "leadership shell" study that the factor of height is very important in terms of presence and what people think of you as the leader. The image of a leader is someone who is tall (Jacobson, 1985). Females, therefore, often must battle the stereotypical image of what a leader looks like.

Voice. Another issue confronted by females deals with the pitch of the female voice. Many female administrators have higher pitched voices than males. Female administrators often have trouble establishing authority because the idea of an authoritative person is one with a deep and low voice. Shakeshaft, Educational Administration

Administration Department Head at Hofstra University, often receives complaints about her voice. "People will say, 'You should really do something about your voice. You should lower it.' I answer, 'But I am a woman and women have higher voices.' People want me to conform to a male leadership model" (Jacobson, 1985, p. 46).

Attire. An additional issue females face in administration focuses on attire. As Chapkis (1986) suggested in Beauty Secrets, females have always known that how they look is often regarded as more important than what they do or how they do it. As one female administrator who resented that females had to consider the impact of dress stated, "I wear the power-dressing uniform and know precisely what I'm doing! I am acutely aware of the games people play to dress to get instant respect and authority" (Adler et al., 1993, p. 79). But some females, such as Shakeshaft, have tried to move beyond image. "Rather than spending a lot of time molding myself in the male image, I spend my time working to change expectations of what a leader is" (Jacobson, 1985, p. 52). Yet no matter how a female may dress, speak, or act, gender continues to impact the experiences of females in educational administration.

Sexual overtones. Sexual overtones also have unique and upsetting repercussions for females in administration (Edson, 1988). Females often hear rumors which accuse her of "sleeping with the boss" to attain a position (p. 126).

One female administrator was asked outright, "Who are you sleeping with?" when she was recruited for and obtained an administrative position (p. 126). Another female administrator was accused of receiving a position because she was the superintendent's "friend" (p. 125). She recognized the double standard in which it is okay for males to sleep around because that's part of proving yourself but females are accused of using their sexuality to advance their career. People are still stuck at this level, rather than saying someone was chosen for his or her competence. Most females in Edson's study responded to such allegations with humor or anger.

Although Edson's (1988) study contained no direct questions about sexual harassment, three females related outright incidents. Edson theorized that if three volunteered this information without a specific question, then there may have been many other informants who also experienced the problem (p. 127). Sexual harassment occurs more often in groups with a skewed, rather than equal, sex ratio, with the minority members of the group victimized (Gutek, 1985). Therefore, as females move up the administrative ladder as minorities, they are more likely to experience sexual harassment than females in traditionally female roles.

O'Reilly (1980) indicated this is not a new problem but one which females are just now beginning to discuss. This

increased acknowledgement of sexual harassment was documented in Hill and Ragland's 1993 study. Of the 35 interviewed in their study, only seven indicated that they had never been sexually harassed on the job (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 107).

Females once saw the problem of sexual harassment as isolated only to the individual and probably her own fault (O'Reilly, 1980, p. 119). As one of Edson's (1988) informants stated, "Sexual harassment is typical here. I dress like a professional person and in no way attempt to get someone hot for my body. I behave myself. Last year our principal came up to me and said, 'I'd sure like to put something up your ____.' Other females in the district have similar stories" (p. 127). Two other informants gave examples of males who were "supportive" of females but not for professional reasons (Edson, 1988).

Discipline. Although the issue of sexual harassment impacts all levels of females in education from teachers to superintendents, student discipline issues center mostly with females in the role of a building administrator. Female administrators report that their gender is both a liability and an asset in the area of student discipline. Overcoming the widespread belief that females cannot be effective disciplinarians represents a liability to many females. "I've had to work through the image of a woman being a soft touch. Parents and kids often feel

double-crossed when I don't act the sweet, supportive granny they were expecting," stated one of Edson's (1988) informants (p. 129).

Another of Edson's (1988) informants indicated, "At first I didn't think my personality was one that fit the administrative role. Administrators are supposed to be stern and forceful, and should give orders to students" (p. 130). A third informant summed up her experience with the discipline issue, "Many people believe that it takes a strong man to discipline kids. But discipline does not take physical force; in fact, sometimes thinking you need force is detrimental. Men on my staff are always amazed that I can handle situations without force" (p. 131). For many female administrators, gender actually aids them in managing disciplinary problems.

Edson's informants noted the positive impact of their gender in dealing with students. "Being a woman, I can walk up to any student in the building and say, 'May I help you?' The male administrators often seem threatening. Students know I am not going to slug it out with anyone, so I can walk between two boys who are fighting and they immediately stop" (p. 130). Another informant reflected the same experience, "Because I am a woman, kids aren't threatened by me. If I ask students to break up a fight, they do. They save face because I'm female" (p. 131). Noting the asset of her gender, an assistant principal in Edson's study

indicated, "Some individuals say to me, 'My kids won't do anything for a female administrator,' or 'You're no bigger than my kid!' But people find out quickly that their kids are better off responding to reason than to strength" (p. 131). However, the perceptions and reactions of the female administrator's constituency are varied (Hart, 1995).

Scrutiny. Many of Edson's (1988) informants commented on feeling as if they were watched carefully and often tested. "I think women administrators have to prove themselves by being even more competent than men. I know I was faced with some things a man would never face. I've been tested a lot," said one informant (p. 140). Although females in Edson's study disliked the spotlight, they felt they had much to contribute. They were also keenly aware of how their own performance could affect other females in the field. "When the first or lone woman does a poor job, the repercussions can be far-reaching" (p. 142).

Support. Paradoxically, often female educators fail to provide needed support to female administrators so female administrators can succeed. Caplan (1981) explained, "It is not surprising to encounter a lack of nurturant attitude in men, but women who seek nurturance from other women and are disappointed in their expectations may experience a kind of resentment" (p. 44). One female administrator theorized, "The anti-female sentiment in this district comes from females who are envious of other women's success" (Edson,

1988, p. 134). One female principal recalled, "After I was introduced at the staff meeting, eight men came over to introduce themselves and wish me luck, but not one single woman did so" (p. 135).

Funk (1994) asserted that hostility among female educators goes beyond simple jealousy and is much more complex. "Women teachers view women in administration as a radical departure from the status quo. I have more difficulty proving myself to them than I do to the men," one Midwestern principal revealed (Edson, 1988, p. 135). A midwestern informant stated, "The older women seem jealous because they never had the opportunity to go back to school and advance. They feel they could have been qualified for some of these jobs. But they lacked support and they resent that" (p. 135).

Friday (1996) believed that nothing cuts the newly won ground out from under females like the inherited denial of competition. "Females compete but call it other names rather than learning the rules that would allow for healthy competition" (p. 79). Many females in educational administration feel psychologically isolated from other females (Woo, 1985). Will (1978) argued that a "cold war" exists between females because of the perception that females prefer to work with males (p. 100).

Funk's (1994) study of 57 female administrators revealed similar frustrations for female administrators when

dealing with staff. One administrator reported a lack of being taken seriously, a lack of receiving respect, and accusations by males of being too soft or dumb (p. 3). Edson's (1988) informant recalled, "A worker accidentally broke the glass on the fire alarm. A male teacher said, 'Why would that dumb woman have a fire drill now?' which I overheard. I replied, 'That dumb woman is not having a drill; it may be the real thing'" (p. 140). Edson concluded that, with few exceptions, gender bias has a major impact on females' experiences with their constituency (p. 280).

Evaluation. Gender also impacts female administrators in the area of evaluation by supervisors. Interviews with female administrators indicated that most do not receive as much corrective feedback as male administrators. Lack of supervisors communicating problems or supervisors fixing female administrators' mistakes without the female's knowledge occurs frequently (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 203). Female principals in Hart's (1995) study identified the lack of feedback as a major obstacle to success (p. 112). This lack of honest performance feedback and corrective measures stems partially from the supervisor's fear of tears on the part of the female administrator (Shakeshaft, 1989). In reality, few female administrators give way to tears (p. 203). The perception that correction will cause females to cry, and therefore is avoided by supervisors, prevents

females from serving as effective administrators and results in demotion, firing, or stagnation.

In addition to the differences found in the supervision, evaluation, and feedback between male and female administrators, a salary gap also exists between male and female administrators. Studies of principals found that female principals earn less than male principals, even when the length of service, preparation, and other factors such as size of district are equal (Shakeshaft, 1989; Smith, 1977). Females earned 66¢ for each \$1.00 earned by males (Wallis, 1989). On an average, females in a management position such as the principalship, earned 42% less money annually than males in the same position (Heidrick & Struggles, 1987).

A Female High School Principal's Self-Reported Experiences

Experiences of female high school principals often are related in isolated references or generalities in the literature (Adler et al., 1993; Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985; Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Edson, 1988; Funk, 1994; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, 1988; Ortiz, 1982; Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). With the exception of Hick's 1996 autobiographic description of her 4 years as a high school principal, it appears that the literature lacks a comprehensive overview of the female high school principal's experiences. Therefore, the majority of the following female high school principal's

experiences will be drawn from the singular voice of Hicks. The experiences written by Hicks read like a microcosm of the world experienced by female high school principals presented as fragments in the literature.

Anna T. Hicks (1996) assumed the high school principalship in 1991 at the age of 40. When she was 18, Hicks chose a career in education as a high school English teacher because she loved school. The older of two children, she had stepped on the achievement treadmill early in life as an "A" student who earned honor after honor. Hicks' mother counseled her into teaching because it was a good career for a woman who had to work and who wanted summers and afternoons with her children.

Hicks had never planned to be a principal; however, life changes and experiences evolved which led Hicks into administration. She served as district coordinator of language arts and attended graduate school after a divorce. Juggling the role of single parent of three adolescent daughters, teacher, and student required time management, organizational skills, humor, sacrifice, and encouraging support.

As a student in the master's program, Hicks was greatly influenced by a "gentleman scholar and former superintendent" who lured her into the challenge of school administration (Hicks, 1996, p. 9). He and two other male professors served as sponsors, mentors, and cheerleaders who

"made me laugh and celebrate my uniqueness as a female administrator" (p. 9). Upon reflection of why her major mentors were male, Hicks speculated that each one reminded her of her father who had died of cancer in 1985. They were positive, supportive, giving, and never scolded her for wrongdoing. As Hicks said, "Each of my mentors somehow stroked my self-esteem and gave me wisdom and courage to detach to view the big picture" (p. 10).

Hicks needed much self-esteem as she faced an intensive interview process for the high school principalship. The position she sought was in the high school where she had spent most of her career. The interview process was 3 months of surprises and disappointments (Hicks, 1996, p. 4). To her surprise, Hicks encountered more females than males with a problem envisioning a female as the high school principal. For example, the only female school board member demanded a national search because no one in the state was good enough. A female friend informed her of a lengthy debate at female bridge clubs questioning Hicks' ability to take a gun away from a student.

In addition to becoming the subject of much discussion in the community, Hicks also encountered what Timpano and Knight (1976) had documented as interview filters. During her interview, the superintendent asked why a single woman with three children would want to be a high school principal. She turned his question into an opportunity to

present evidence of her personal success rather than a negative issue in the selection process (Hicks, 1996, p. 4). The superintendent then reminded her that if she were selected, she would not make much more money than she currently earned. Hicks knew she had encountered blatant discrimination questions and comments during the interview that were intended to make her withdraw from consideration.

Two male parents, however, wrote letters on her behalf, citing the need for more females in leadership positions as role models for their daughters, and the search committee chose her but only after a male candidate from out of state had turned down the job. Hicks would never have known she was second choice if the female school board member had not called the press and complained about the lack of a thorough search. "Those headlines hurt and still do," admitted Hicks (1996, p. 5). On July 1, 1991, she moved into the principal's office.

During Hicks' second day as high school principal, the associate superintendent, who played the well-meaning fatherly role, gave her his "How to Look Like a Principal" speech. He stressed the importance of the power suit, proper length of skirts, and a professional hairdo. She also received early in the job her symbol of power, the walkie-talkie. Although it took the head custodian awhile to adjust to a female voice summoning him, he eventually responded.

Even with her professional hairdo, proper skirt length, and walkie-talkie, Hicks soon discovered she lacked certain common traits of the largely male administrative team. She was 10 years younger than most, had never coached, possessed no desire to put notches in her belt for every child expelled, and did not believe that teachers and students were meant to be controlled; she preferred to empower (Hicks, 1996, p. 7). She asked herself, "I don't look the part and may not even act the part. Am I in the right profession?" (p. 7).

Throughout her 4-year tenure as principal, Hicks often wondered, "What does it take to be good enough?" (Hicks, 1996, p. 37). Serving as the first female high school principal in the district was lonely and frightening. Her need for affirmation was powerful, and she missed tangible proof that she was good enough. Hicks' experience with her salary which was considerably less than the district's other two male high school principals was an example of one's worth or "good-enoughness" measured in dollars and cents (p. 41).

State law required the building principal to be the highest paid employee in the building. Hicks earned about \$1.00 a day more than the athletic director (Hicks, 1996, p. 39). An outside consultant published a recommendation of an annual \$15,000 increase for Hicks. The consultant's published recommendation was the first time the inequity was

made public. When asked by outraged patrons why Hicks received a lower salary than the male principals, the superintendent could not explain. Hicks was the only high school principal in the district holding a Ph.D. in addition to serving the district's largest high school.

Hicks used a pro baseball player's explanation of salary to reveal the relationship between salary and the concept of "good-enoughness." The baseball player had indicated that if players were paid more, it meant they were better players. Thus, the message Hicks had received for 2 years was that the other principals were "better players" and that females are inherently not as proficient at playing ball as males (Hicks, 1996, p. 41). Although the salary controversy resulted in an increase in Hicks' salary, she felt sadness that her contribution as a 21-year employee had not been valued. However, slowly Hicks learned that being good enough is validated only through acceptance of self (p. 38).

Hicks identified her experiences as an ambivalent journey. Her journey revealed the uniqueness of the high school principalship with its traditions, assumptions, and rites of passages that often erect barriers to females (Hicks, 1996, p. 2). The loneliness and alienation often overwhelmed her (p. 8). She credited her survival in the high school principalship to individuals who knew her well enough to know she would not ask for help but needed it.

Even though she valued many staff members, there were times when only someone outside the building could offer the necessary support, mentoring, or shoulder. Hicks admitted that during her first year she had been reluctant to seek such support, viewing this need as a sign of weakness. It took Hicks a year as principal to acknowledge the loneliness and finally build a support system (p. 51).

Much of the need to seek support, mentoring, or a shoulder stemmed from frustrations felt by Hicks in dealing with parents, faculty, and school transformation. She discovered these frustrations resulted from the ongoing question: "What is my real authority?" (Hicks, 1996, p. 13). The system never defined site-based decision management; however, practice defined site-based decision management as: "Decisions were left up to the schools unless they became controversial" (p. 14). She learned that change such as moving to a block schedule brought media attention, personal attacks on her, and despair for teachers who wanted to move the school forward.

From this early battle over block scheduling, Hicks learned she needed to detach from students (ironically), the district office, faculty, and the administrative staff itself. This detachment seemed to contradict the 20 years of experience and attachment under which Hicks had previously operated as a teacher. However, Hicks gradually internalized the words which she quoted from Drs. Thomas and

Patrick Malone in The Art of Intimacy (1987, p. 271): "We are not the systems in which we participate" (Hicks, 1996, p. 11).

In addition to the valued support, mentoring, and shoulders, Hicks learned the key to survival is detachment from the system and realization that some people will never see the big picture. According to Hicks, males who successfully operate in hierarchies have learned to depersonalize. Females must learn to do the same but also realize the value of their ability in leadership roles to lead in a humane manner. "For the female principalship, support for the person trying to be both humane and courageous is essential" (Hicks, 1996, p. 50). After this realization, Hicks formulated her concept of the role of the principal.

According to Hicks, the principal's role is one of stepping back to reconcile competing interests (Hicks, 1996, p. 11). She served as the facilitator who repeatedly asked, "In whose best interests are we making this decision?" with the hope the answer was "The students" (p. 12). Throughout Hicks' journey as high school principal, she committed herself to seeing beyond narrow interests to take care of all children. She expressed frustration with the many adults who worked with adolescents who neither understood nor appreciated their true nature or potential (p. 24). Hicks based her dealings with students on two questions that

adolescents are really asking when they challenge adults. These two questions are: "Do I have permission to disagree with you?" and "If I disagree, will I still be loved and accepted?" (p. 24). Hicks believed in students and often worked directly with students in handling such issues as racial tension, prayer at graduation, the "Pom Pom Wars" (p. 20), and wearing hats.

Taking issues to the faculty was not as easy. Hicks remembered often verbalizing her preference for working with kids instead of working with adults (Hicks, 1996, p. 29). She mediated numerous "turf" battles between teachers, such as room allocation, and the most sacred turf, the master schedule.

One teacher masterminded a student petition against the proposed block schedule whereas three other teachers used class periods to distort the plan. Hicks understood how deeply entrenched the "teacher friendly" 50-minute period was within the system. The defense and protection of the "factory model" brought out the worst in teachers. Nonetheless, she quickly realized that any principal can measure the quality of a teacher with one simple question: Would I place my child in that teacher's class? (Hicks, 1996, p. 43) In all her efforts to reconcile conflicting interests, she remembered the wise words of a former personnel director, "We are not an employment agency. We are here for the kids" (p. 34).

Most of Hicks' experiences in reconciling conflicting interests with parents centered around extracurricular activities. During a transitional year in the band program, the Booster Club became a hotbed of warring parent factions. Hicks discovered the existence of parents whose entire lives revolved around their children's extracurricular participation. She was powerless to assist the parents in developing their own separate lives (Hicks, 1996, p. 13).

The cheerleader elections and required camp caused a major legal battle. Some of the newly elected cheerleaders who were required to attend cheerleading camp had a conflict in their summer schedule. Hicks worked out a compromise after many tears, much anger, and some disrespectful behavior. When Hicks met the mothers of the disrespectful cheerleaders, she realized who had served as the girls' role models.

Hicks called a meeting with the cheerleaders and sponsors to announce the compromise solution which she believed would bring a new sense of teamwork and spirit. She took the opportunity to speak with the all female group and said the following:

What I observed in this experience is something that reminds me of a sad reality. All too often, women do not take care of each other. Rather than supporting each other, they engage in petty competitive jealousy as they climb the ladder to success. That ladder is hard enough for women to climb. I challenge you as representatives of your female generation to fix what my generation hasn't. (Hicks, 1996, p. 22)

Hicks thought the "Pom Pom Wars" were over. "Peace would have followed if parents had not become involved" (p. 22). A cheerleader had informed her "Daddy" that she had been verbally abused by other cheerleaders at an unsanctioned cheerleading meeting. Because this cheerleader had broken the long-hidden "Confidence Code," she was required to grab her crotch at a pep rally. Following the shocking display at the pep rally, Hicks removed the cheerleaders from the domain of the athletic department, threw out the constitution, and directed the athletic director to treat them like any other athletic team.

According to Hicks, the toughest system for the female high school principal is the male-dominated world of high school athletics. Most principals had been coaches in Hicks' region of the United States. "It was clear that the head football coach and athletic director was uncomfortable with a female in the main office" (Hicks, 1996, p. 15). He would bypass Hicks and go directly to the superintendent. Hicks respectfully reminded the superintendent that his first question should be, "Have you talked with Anna first?" (p. 15).

Hicks realized early in her job that she could have done what some female principals did and delegate full responsibility to the athletic director with instructions to "keep me informed" (Hicks, 1996, p. 15). However, Hicks started to attend the State League's meeting. As the only

female at those meetings, she heard bashing and joking about other female principals in the state whom they considered pushy. Hicks heard talk of decisions which she felt were not in the best interest of kids. She discovered that decisions were usually made before meetings via a sophisticated telephone network. By her third year, she became friends with two male principals who were not threatened by her presence, who knew her athletic director did not give her complete information, and who faced similar academic challenges at their schools. As a result of her eventual leadership within the State League, cheerleading was declared an official state sport, to begin in 1996 (p. 17).

Although Hicks had "dared to be different" as did a few other females who assumed the high school principalship in a male-dominated hierarchy, she learned that most males accepted her as long as she did not "show them up" (Hicks, 1996, p. 49). She also realized the difference between cultural gender stereotypes and sexism. Cultural gender stereotypes are not the exclusive purview of males and are not necessarily pathological (p. 49). The superintendent who had tried to discourage Hicks' pursuit of the principalship fully supported her after she was hired. Her greatest conflict with gender stereotypes, paradoxically, arose from other females. Hicks called their behavior backstabbing and said it represented a more covert threat to

a female principal than any of the overtly sexist acts of the superintendent who had hired Hicks (p. 50).

On the other hand, Hicks also experienced sexist treatment. The superintendent who succeeded the one who had hired her was outwardly nonsexist. Yet Hicks and other females were often targets of his temper tantrums that resulted in verbally abusive one-way conversations. Although no sexist language came from the superintendent's mouth, his remarks reflected a male-dominance/female subservience motif of long standing (Hicks, 1996, p. 50). Although Hicks tried to detach from his treatment, it threatened and alarmed her.

Nonetheless, Hicks reflected on the various gender issues which impacted her as a female high school principal. She understood why one of her associate principals would say, "No male wants to screw up for any female boss" (Hicks, 1996, p. 46) Although she would have preferred people asking her staff, "What's it like working for Anna?", she understood why they asked, "What's it like working for a female boss?" (p. 47). She theorized that the gender battles still rage in relationships and the workplace. Hicks concluded from her observations and experiences that these battles are, in reality, issues of control. Control is indicative of where people are on their individual journey to self-actualization (p. 47).

The self-actualized person's goal in leading others is fostering their own self-responsibility (Hicks, 1996, p. 48). Although Hicks claimed to be far from self-actualized, many of her actions revealed someone well on the way. For example, she had many mentoring experiences. Her most rewarding was serving as a site supervisor to female South African high school principal practicum students involved in an exchange. She "supervised two courageous women who were a part of a second revolution in South Africa--the fight for the equality of women" (p. 64).

Yet, in the role of principal, Hicks believed that she needed to be everything to everybody, sometimes pleasing no one, and she struggled to take care of herself (Hicks, 1996, p. 51). She indicated that her principalship training prepared her well for many aspects of the job. But no one had prepared her for one of the most vital parts of the job --taking care of herself (p. 54). Hicks asserted that a female's guilt is powerful in the high school principalship. She brought to the role the collective guilt of her gender: that of not being able to be everything to everybody (p. 54). She called the dilemma in which the tendency of a female to mother those in her charge at the expense of taking care of herself the "Stress Trap" (Hicks, 1995, p. 54). She experienced physical symptoms of lethargy and irritability and occasionally felt like a tightly-wound top.

She learned to go away and found solace in reading and writing.

These distancing activities helped; however, when she first went away, she called school, hoping to ease her guilt and worry. She found herself apologizing for going away if an incident occurred in her absence. But with time and self-permission to take care of herself, she eventually convinced herself that no apologies were necessary (Hicks, 1996, p. 55).

In addition to the guilt Hicks experienced in taking care of herself, she also experienced guilt and role-conflict as a mother of three daughters. Her daughters were powerfully aware that their mother was a public figure with much responsibility. Hicks' greatest frustration in the parent-principal role was trying to be there for her kids when her job told her to be somewhere else for someone else's kids, the ones she was hired to serve (Hicks, 1996, p. 60). In an attempt to maintain a proper balance, Hicks struggled frequently in a professional tug-of-war.

After 4 years as principal of her state's highest scoring SAT high school, Hicks' intuitive decision to leave came from her body's "not feeling right" (Hicks, 1996, p. 68). During her last year as principal, she experienced a general ill feeling at the sound of the alarm clock each morning. Once she decided to leave the principalship, she was free to analyze why she made that decision. Hicks

realized that her leadership style was an extension of who she was. Because of district office turnovers, she was expected to adopt a leadership style that was more directive and controlling than her natural style. She realized that to adopt another's style would make her an extension of that individual and his or her philosophy and make her a nonperson (Hicks, 1996, p. 68). That reality was unacceptable, and Hicks had no choice but to change to a healthier environment. Hicks' explained this in southern terms: "A lady knows when to leave" (p. 67).

Leadership Style of Females in
Educational Administration

Review of Evolution on Research

An evolution in the research on female leadership styles has occurred in the past 3 decades (Adler et al., 1993; Beck, 1994; Blackmore & Kenway, 1993; Chase, 1995; Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995; Fishel & Pottker, 1975; Gilligan, 1982; Gross & Trask, 1976; Helgesen, 1990; Hemphill, Griffiths, & Frederiksen, 1962; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Jacobson, 1985; Morsink, 1970; Neuse, 1978; Regan & Brooks, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989; Van Meir, 1973; Wolf, 1993). Shakeshaft (1989) contended that much of the leadership style research was wrapped in political agendas, interpreted according to the lens of the researcher, or studied in the context of male leadership style (p. 166).

Thus, literature on female leadership style varies and evolved through various stages. Some literature simply describes female leadership styles; others compare female leadership styles to the stereotypical male leadership style. Still other literature and research attempts to prove female leadership styles are superior to male leadership styles. Therefore, the examination of female leadership styles in educational administration will first provide an overview of research which compares female and male leadership styles, focuses on females in the context of their gender, and advances the theory of female superiority. Secondly, an examination of the most recent literature calling for a recognition of a balanced blend of male and female leadership styles will then be explored. Leadership style refers to a complex set of actions which consists of the manner in which a leader will: focus on group processes, project personality, induce compliance, exercise influence, exert persuasion, relate power, achieve goals, impact interaction, and initiate structure, change, and consideration (Bass, 1990, p. 20).

Differences Between Male and Female Leadership Style in Educational Administration

A wide disparity between the leadership styles of male and female educational leaders has been uncovered by researchers. Shakeshaft (1989) stated, "Not only are females' day-to-day interactions different from males',

females' styles of administration offer contrast to the ways males manage" (p. 166). Although the activities that males and females undertake to fulfill their administrative role are primarily the same, differences exist in the ways they spend their time, handle day-to-day interactions, determine priorities which guide actions, understand perceptions of them by others, and derive satisfaction in their position (p. 170).

For example, Berman (1982) and Kmetz and Willower (1982) provided support that the day-to-day activities of principals may differ depending on the gender of the principal. Pittner's (1988) study of male and female superintendents found that although males and females tend to do the same thing in carrying out their work, they may put a different emphasis on the importance of the tasks. Synthesizing research, Fishel and Pottker (1975) categorized four aspects of the leadership style contrasting male and female principals. Fishel and Pottker reviewed research completed from 1959 to 1974 to determine if evidence existed to demonstrate that the characteristics of successful principals were gender linked (cited in Berry, 1979, p. 25). The four categories of leadership styles included: instructional supervision, relations with students, relations with parents and community, and general administration.

Fishel and Pottker's (1975) synthesis of the research completed from 1959 to 1974 revealed that female principals were generally more democratic, displayed a greater respect for their teaching staff, achieved better communication and conflict resolution results, appeared less rigid, and reconciled conflicting demands better than male principals. Research synthesized by Fishel and Pottker also indicated that female principals placed greater emphasis on productive behavior of teachers, influenced teachers more in the use of desirable teaching methods, and showed more willingness to assist beginning teachers with instruction compared to male principals.

Female principals, according to Fishel and Pottker (1975), also exhibited greater knowledge of teaching methods, displayed more awareness of student problems, and placed greater emphasis on learner evaluation than did male principals. In relations with students, higher morale existed in schools where females were principals. Students in high schools with female principals were more encouraged to be involved in school than in schools where males were principal. Parents approved more of the learning activities and outcomes, showed greater acceptance of the way in which discipline was handled, and looked more favorably on schools where females served as principals compared to schools where males were principals. Based on their synthesis of research, Fishel and Pottker concluded, "The few women who

have been able to obtain administrative positions have performed as capably, if not more capably, than men" (p. 116).

Stages of Research

Shakeshaft (1989) contended that research such as the research synthesized by Fishel and Pottker (1975) was meant to bring about political results. The research was intended to help break down barriers for females in administration by showing no difference between males and females or differences favoring females (p. 168). Thus, much of the intent in the female leadership style research synthesized by Fishel and Pottker was to build a case for females in educational leadership (Shakeshaft, 1989).

A second stage of research in the comparison of male and female leadership styles went beyond the attempts to break barriers for females in educational administration. The invisible and silent female became visible and vocal through a growing new feminist consciousness (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995, p. 2). The decade of the 1980s brought about research that confirmed the view that females' experiences and approaches to life are different from those of males. A number of authors (Bernard, 1981; Ferguson, 1984; Gilligan, 1982; Jacobson, 1985; Lenz & Meyerhoff, 1985; Noddings, 1984) wrote about a female culture and female world. "Males and females not only experience the world differently but also the world females experience is demonstrably different

from the world males experience" (Bernard, 1981, p. 3).

Gilligan elaborated:

In the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the dilemma itself is the same for both sexes, a conflict between integrity and care. These different perspectives are reflected in two different moral ideologies, since separation is justified by an ethic of rights while attachment is supported by an ethic of care. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 164)

Female administrators more often are guided by what Gilligan described as an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the real and recognizable trouble of this world, whereas male administrators are informed by an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment (Shakeshaft, 1989, p.8).

According to Blackmore and Kenway (1989), leadership theories which dominated educational administration supported behaviors and moral orientations commonly associated with masculinity. In effect, these theories have "rendered women invisible in administrative practice" (p. 94). Blackmore suggested that models for administrative practice need to incorporate the perspectives of females and research findings about ways females lead. Studies of moral orientations of females provide a useful perspective for exploring the differences in gender role orientations. Gilligan (1982) noted a disparity between females' experiences and the prevailing model of human development. According to Kohlberg (1981), moral maturity is reached when

the individual emphasizes respect for individual rights and applies rational, universal principles to moral and ethical dilemmas.

Gilligan (1982) challenged Kohlberg's findings and investigated the conceptions of self, morality, and experiences of conflict and choice for three groups of females. Gilligan contended that females exhibited a strong tendency toward relationships, caring, cooperation, and empathy. To solve moral dilemmas, females reconstructed the problem in terms of relationships and human connections rather than individualism and a system of rules. Solutions that included everyone's needs were sought. Hierarchical structures were replaced by webs of inclusion.

Male and Female Voices

According to Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1988), when forming moral judgments, two voices are heard: (a) the feminine voice of care, connection, protection from harm, and response; and (b) the masculine voice of justice, equality, reciprocity, and rights. The ethic of care views the self and others as interdependent and develops relationships with others through networks. The ethic of justice and autonomy sees the individual as separate. Relationships are viewed as "hierarchical or contractual" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 8).

Noddings (1984) associated the voice of caring with a feminine approach that is grounded in receptivity,

relatedness, and responsiveness. Females ask for more information when faced with dilemmas (Noddings, 1988). Caring is viewed as a relational ethic which exists between the one caring and the one cared for.

Shakeshaft (1989) echoed Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care with her conceptualization of the world of the female educational administrator. Shakeshaft's research documented that relationships with others are central to all actions of female administrators (p. 197). Females spend more time with people, communicate more, care more about individual differences, are concerned more with teachers and marginal students, and motivate more than their male counterparts. Staffs of female administrators rate females higher, are more productive, and have higher morale. Students in schools with female principals, also have higher morale and are more involved in student activities (Shakeshaft, 1989).

The second area conceptualized by Shakeshaft (1989) revealed that teaching and learning are the major focus for female administrators. Shakeshaft indicated that female administrators are more instrumental in instructional learning than males, and they exhibit a greater knowledge of teaching methods. Females are more likely than males to help new teachers, create a school climate more conducive to learning, and coordinate instructional programs (Shakeshaft, 1989).

The third area conceptualized by Shakeshaft (1989) affirmed that building community is an essential part of a female administrator's leadership style. From speech patterns to decision-making styles, females exhibit a more democratic, participatory style than males that encourages inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. Teachers and staff receive a great deal of support from their female administrators. Greenberg (1985) described the female school world: "Whatever its failures, it is more cooperative than competitive, it is more experiential than abstract, it takes a broad view of the curriculum and has always addressed the whole child" (p. 4).

Females have been found to view the role of principal or superintendent more as a master-teacher or educational leader whereas males more often view their role from a managerial-industrial perspective (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 173). Females are more likely to be seen by their staffs as instructional leaders than their male counterparts (Shakeshaft). Palmer (1983) reported that female managers in his study favored more people-oriented projects than males. A study of general male and female values indicated that females value the orientations of beauty, freedom, happiness, self-respect, independence, intellectualism, and loving more highly than males (DeVito, Carlson, & Kraus, 1984). This approach to the job as a service to the community or to society results in an administrator who is

different from a job holder who sees the job as an indicator of personal status and achievement or who views the school from a corporate perspective (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Male and Female Lenses

Whether in the corporate world or education world, managers and administrators must supervise. A gender difference study by Garfinkel (1988) attempted to determine if male and female superintendents conceptualized their administrative teams differently and valued different traits. Garfinkel found that both males and females valued competence and trust, but they gave each a different priority. For females, competence is the first priority in a team member; trust is lower on the list. Males identified trust as their number one criterion for team membership and viewed competence as less important.

To complicate matters, females and males define trust differently. According to Garfinkel (1988), males, both superintendents and team members, were more likely to describe trust as the "ability and comfort to say what they wished to say, confident that the persons they were sharing their thoughts or opinions with would not ridicule or repeat these thoughts elsewhere" (p. 311). Female superintendents and their female team members defined trust as the "expectancy, held by the individual, that word, promise or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on" (p. 311).

Thus, according to Garfinkel (1988), males see a person as trustworthy who will not divulge information or discuss actions or conversations with others. Females did not interpret those actions as untrustworthy. Females expected people to discuss conversations, actions, and feelings with others. Males did not identify a person as untrustworthy if he or she did not deliver on time. Females saw as untrustworthy someone who had failed to do what they said they would do. Males saw those who did not deliver as an issue of time management and competency. Therefore, females and males may approach the supervisory process by valuing different characteristics. Garfinkel suggested that even when trained in a similar approach to supervisory interaction, males and females may still bring with them expectations and behaviors based on gender.

Another major area of differences between male and female leadership style that is based on gender is the conception of power. Males and females view the concept of power quite differently. When asked what motivated them to pursue administrative careers, most females said they want to develop new skills and impact the organization (Woo, 1985; Brown & Burt, 1990). "Females are very uncomfortable vying for power and even more uncomfortable achieving it. Central to their concern is the loss of relationships and the isolation which might result" (Levine, 1989, p. 126).

Typically, females have a tendency to downplay status differentiation. Their interactions are less formal than those of males in that subordinates will often address females by their first name but not males. During meetings, females generally assume a more limited control of the agenda than males. "A number of studies provide evidence that females use power to empower others. This sharing of power is based on the notion that power is not finite but rather that it expands as it is shared" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 206).

An interesting paradox emerges for female educational administrators because of their tendency to downplay and share power. Kanter (1977) found that people who do not want to work for a female really do not want to work for a boss they think has no power. Shakeshaft commented on this phenomenon:

A lot of studies have shown that people want to work for people who have power, and women and minorities tend not to have as much or display power in an organization as do men. Therefore, people don't want to work for them not because they're women or minorities--though that is the reason they tend to give--but really because women and minorities are perceived as not having power. (Jacobson, 1985, p. 47)

Because of this tendency of female administrators to downplay power as part of their leadership style, subordinates might see their leadership style as powerless. On the other hand, male administrators do not have to confront this perception of power.

One respondent in Adler et al.'s (1993) study described herself as a fairly powerful person who dislikes the power structure of schools. She said, "Hierarchy, secrecy, deviousness, intrigue and all those kind of power words . . . I want to work in the opposite way, with openness, collaboration, and co-operation" (p. 93). Another respondent was unhappy with the word power and preferred to redefine it. She would like to use her managerial power to empower others. Her expectations of the job are in terms of service rather than power (p. 81).

Male and Female Communication Styles

Another area of sharp contrast between females and males which may be problematic for females is communication style. A wealth of research exists to show that females and males use language differently (Borisoff & Merrill, 1985; Lakoff, 1975; Scott, 1980; Spender, 1987; Tannen, 1990). Scott detailed some of the differences, noting that females are more likely than males to use expressive language, to shy away from universal pronouncements, to use language that encourages community building, and to be more polite. Spender found that females show respect for their audience by listening and remembering what had been said, giving signals of courtesy. Females and males communicate differently, and they listen for different information (Borisoff & Merrill, 1985; Tannen, 1990).

In verbal communication, females have been found to use correct speech forms more often than males. Females tend to exhibit a wide range of pitch, variations in loudness, and changes in the rate of speaking (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 180). Additionally, females tend to use questions for a variety of purposes. For example, females use questions to express opinion as in "It's a lovely day, isn't it?" (p. 181). This tentativeness is also reflected in females' use of hedging constructions such as "apparently," "it would seem," or "you could say" (p. 181). Females shy away from use of universal pronouncements that would indicate that there is only one way of seeing things or that the way they understand the world is the only way (Scott, 1980).

Similar differences between female and male spoken language appear between female and male written language. Females tend to hedge and use expressions of uncertainty, use correct grammar, use words that express participation in a psychological state, and give more justification for statements (Warshay, 1972). Goldman (1981) documented females' practice of using qualifiers to simple statements. Females use may or could in places where is or were are used by males. Females also justify their arguments with words such as "because" or "since" more often than males.

Males and females also differ in non-verbal communication. Females and low status people take up less space than males and high status people. Males intrude

females' space significantly more often than into other males' space (Borisoff & Merrill, 1985). Dominant members smile less than nondominant members. Females smile more than do males because they were taught to smile and because it is expected of them (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 184). Submission is also reinforced through eye contact. Females look at others more but avert their eyes when looked at. These responses are representative of lower-power position (Henley, 1977).

When gender differences in communication were first reported, females' language and communication patterns were presented as deficient (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 184). Lakoff (1975) concluded that females should develop male language patterns in order to become more effective communicators. Books for females in management told females that they must communicate like males if they were to become successful (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 184).

Female Dilemma

Wrapped in some of the female and male difference literature is a message to females that they should emulate male leadership styles to succeed. Females receive the message that they are not tough enough to handle the political environment or the discipline problems of a high school (Restine, 1993). Edson (1988) labeled females who try to advance in the field by assuming tough male characteristics as "pseudo men" (p. 249). One of Edson's

informants indicated that in order to convey her ability she had to "walk tough and appear as if I could eat nails" (p. 249). Porat (1991) predicted that it is highly probable that some female administrators will continue to imitate the leadership styles of males. They will do so for two major reasons. First, this approach to leadership has been established as acceptable to the public and successful in attracting promotion and recognition. Second, feminine role models are still few and far between.

Almost 2 decades ago, "survival manuals" (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 199) for aspiring females promoted the theme of male imitation. Books such as Games Mother Never Taught You (Harragan, 1977) and The Managerial Woman (Hennig & Jardim, 1977) used studies of male and female differences to assist females in strategies to overcome their feminine characteristics. Females were told to "act like a man," "not to cry," and to "dress for success." (Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 199). However, these books failed to examine ways in which acting like a male may not be the best strategy for a female and might interfere with the goals of an effective school (p. 199).

Nor was the female impostor or "pseudo man" told she may exact a very high personal price in stress, impaired health, loss of joy, and an uneasiness in one's audience. The impostor forfeits the opportunity to realize her own potential and make a genuine contribution (Porat, 1991).

Schaefer (1985) contended that "While males see leadership as leading, females see leadership as facilitating, enabling others to make a contribution while they simultaneously make their own" (p. 218). Empathy, kindness, and caring are built into the female self-concept along with the traditional responsibility for child care (p. 227).

Whereas some females may have applied the earlier research of the differences between male and female leadership styles to remaking themselves in a male image, other females began to hear a different message from more recent literature. "The time has come for women to question the appropriateness of the traditional masculine model of school leadership. The time has come to capitalize on the effectiveness of feminine leadership traits" (Porat, 1991, p. 413). Literature suggests that females may be succeeding because of feminine characteristics such as caring, cooperation, and building relationships (Helgesen, 1990; Jacobson, 1985; Rosener, 1990). An increasing body of literature indicates that females possess outstanding instructional leadership skills (Andrews, 1990; Chase, 1995; Regan & Brooks, 1955; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Female Leadership Attributes

The Six Stages of Research on Female Leadership Style

The focus of literature on females in leadership and their style has evolved through various stages over the past 3 decades. Shakeshaft (1987) delineated six such stages.

Stage One documented the lack of females in educational administration. Stage Two identified famous or exceptional females in educational administration; these successful females were examined to determine if they had done the same things as males and if their achievements met male standards. Stage Three investigated females' place in educational administration from the framework that they were disadvantaged or subordinate because of their gender. Stage Four studied females on their own terms, and the female world began to be documented and accepted. Stage Four is leading into Stages Five and Six. Stage Five challenges the existing theories in educational administration dominated by the masculine approach. Stage Six transforms theory so that male and female experiences can be understood to formulate an inclusive vision of leadership based on differences and diversity rather than sameness and generalizations.

A voice ahead of her time, Bach (1976) recommended that female leadership style be accepted and masculine leadership style questioned:

The ideal principal must now cultivate all the virtues that have always been expected of the ideal woman. Women have finally lucked out by having several thousand years to train for jobs where muscles are out and persuasion is in! (p. 465)

Porat (1991) reflected the thinking which Shakeshaft labeled Stages Four and Five when she called for questioning the appropriateness of the traditional masculine model of school leadership and encouraged females to capitalize on the

effectiveness of feminine leadership traits. Cohen (1989) suggested that females, rather than striving to be like a male, learn to use their strengths to enhance their effectiveness. She argued that it makes sense that traits usually associated with feminine behavior, such as caring and kindness, can have a positive impact in the work of school administrators.

Literature representative of Shakeshaft's Stage Four has reflected an increased awareness that the effective female does not copy the effective male nor does she find that what works for him necessarily works for her (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 12). Feminist researchers have repeatedly called for studies which focus on the experiences and leadership style of females so that the educational canon could be made more complete. Westcott (1979) contended that we need new feminist research to correct distortion and misrepresentation and suggested that such research must be "done for women, not simply on them" (p. 32).

Westcott (1979) also recommended women study women for the purpose of transforming the conditions of the lives of both. Westcott believed:

Women studying women reveals the complex way in which women as objects of knowledge reflect back upon women as subjects of knowledge. Knowledge of the other and knowledge of self are mutually informing because self and other share a common condition of being woman. (p. 426)

This focus on the individual female is particularly important as a way of adding to the knowledge base in the area of educational administration as Shakeshaft (1989) noted in her six stage model of research on females in educational administration.

Justification for Female Story Sharing

Heilbrun (1988) advocated the creation and sharing of stories by females as a liberating act. Stories are a powerful way of reducing isolation and a method of defining identity and individual authenticity. Likewise, Stahl (1989) suggested that personal narratives serve to portray the speaker as "heroine" or primary character for these very specific purposes. "The overall function of the personal narrative is to allow for the discovery of the teller's identity and to maintain the stability of that identity for both the teller and listener" (p. 21).

Langellier and Hall (1989) observed that the efficacy of narrative extends to personal and political empowerment. For example, the meaning of narrative may be impacted by gender, class, and race. Kalcik (1975) concurred noting that storytelling in women's consciousness raising groups brings women together and empowers them by making them aware that their problems and concerns are not simply personal but instead are frequently shared by other women as well. Schien (1985) asserted, "Through stories an organization can communicate its ideology and basic assumptions--especially

to newcomers, who need to know what is important or normal" (p. 82). Kalcik (1975) noted that storytelling is a collaborative activity among women who often draw on one another's narratives as a way of supporting and empowering each other.

The narrative process brings to light how a female administrator shapes her self-understanding and makes sense of her experiences. Chase (1995), a former superintendent, found an ease of talk to exist during the interviews in her narrative case study of female superintendents. The female superintendents and Chase drew on taken-for-granted understanding of the superintendent's role, the culture of schools, and educational jargon. Chase documented this phenomena and described it as "ease of talk."

Thus, as feminist research theory continued to grow, female administrators were urged to share their perspectives with other females to encourage, empower, and embrace their feminine qualities in leadership roles. Attributes of females such as collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision open new nuances of meaning as derived from females' experiences of leadership (Regan & Brooks, 1995). The male model of leadership style no longer represents the only option for females.

A phenomenon that is impacting management in business is also shaping thoughts about school administration. Peters (1989) cataloged management's survival requirements

for the 1990s as follows: (a) destruction of hierarchy, replaced with boundary-less, ambiguous networks; (b) empowerment, ownership, information, and power sharing; (c) team-centered organizations; (d) adversarialism giving way to partnership; (e) lifelong learning; (f) an emphasis on relationships; (g) "soft" intangibles; and (h) constant change and fluidity as the norm (p. 16). Peters asserted that these survival traits read like a portfolio of females' inclinations and natural talents. Forbes, a lecturer in the School of Education at Seattle University, was quoted by Peters (April 11, 1989) in the Seattle Post contrasting the male and female leadership styles:

Women have been conditioned to put the needs of others first. They value relationships and connections. Women consider commitments in the context of life and moral relationships. Women are not as likely to desire domination and control and instead value egalitarian relationships rather than hierarchy. Women use power differently and adapt to change more easily because they aren't as conditioned to seeing themselves as dominant and able to control events. Women tend to be more interested in the group and listen more and more empathetically. Women are just as capable at abstract and logical thought, but their ethical principles influence their decisions more. (p. 16)

Based on management's survival requirements and Forbes' list that is backed by research, Peters predicted that males and females will intersect with and participate in organizations in startling new ways in the future. Peters contended that more females in management could provide a strong advantage for businesses and education.

The identification of female leadership attributes often results in giving gender categories to these characteristics, however. "When we begin matching men and women to characteristics, we build socially acceptable boxes that mitigate and restrict the intricate blends of leadership qualities" (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) have called for the blending of gender roles into a "synthesis of the best qualities and characteristics of male and female, a reconciliation of what was once thought to be opposite values into a new whole" (p. 138). The blending of gender roles, based on differences and diversity, reflects Shakeshaft's Stage Six in the desired contemporary leadership model.

Balanced Blend of Male and Female Leadership Styles

Characteristics of leaders for contemporary settings have shifted from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s models (Feuer, 1988). The old leadership model of the all-knowing, iron-fisted, top-down, isolated kingdom of the Lone Ranger leader has been replaced by other desired skills; these include: information collection, problem analysis, interpersonal sensitivity, motivating others, and public relations (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Weiler (1988) identified skills required of contemporary leaders to include "softer" skills, such as showing consideration of people, and "harder" skills, such as developing strategies for building a power base. Hammons and Keller's 1990 study of leadership

competencies identified both soft and hard skills components as necessary for effective leadership.

Skills components involving interpersonal relationships, information processing, network building, imparting a vision, and delegation were part of the leadership dimensions identified as essential for educational administrators. In addition to the traditional personal characteristics components of sound judgment, sense of responsibility, integrity, and communication, the contemporary educational administrator also must exhibit a sense of humor, emotional balance, risk taking, wellness, positive attitude, flexibility, creativity, empathy, and patience (Hammons & Keller, 1990). When considering the lists of leadership qualities, the time has arrived to use our resources to develop the best and to select the best leaders regardless of gender descriptors (Dominguez, 1991; Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Although the profiles of female educational administrators and their history in administration are not the same as the profiles and history of males in administration, theory and practice needs to take into account the experiences of all players (Shakeshaft, 1989). She noted:

Researchers need to redirect their inquiries not only to include women but also see the world through female eyes, and administrative training programs must incorporate this literature into their courses so that both men and women can begin to understand how gender affects their administrative style. (p. 201)

Thus, a reconceptualization of theory and practice would include both males and females. With the inclusion of the female perspective of educational leadership, a synthesis transcending both the male and female knowledge base would emerge (Regan & Brooks, 1995).

The literature documents little or no difference in the competence of males and females in educational administration (Fishel & Pottker, 1975; Frasher & Frasher, 1979; Shakeshaft, 1989; Restine, 1993). Although females and males overall tend to do the same things in carrying out their work, they may put a different emphasis on the importance of the tasks or have different work patterns. (Shakeshaft, 1989). For example, Berman (1982) reported that female high school principals: have a higher percentage of contacts initiated by others; have shorter desk work sessions during the school day and spend more time after school hours; and have longer average duration for scheduled meetings, phone calls, and unscheduled meetings compared to their male counterparts. Rather than considering interruptions disruptive, females view unscheduled tasks to be opportunities and keep themselves accessible to build relationships with those with whom she works (Helgesen, 1990).

Regan and Brooks (1995) argued that this relational leadership model represents the female strand of the double helix of effective leadership. The masculine strand of the

double helix is the strand taught in educational administration training programs and the one most familiar in the classical literature on leadership (p. 93). They call for continued efforts to integrate masculine and feminine attributes of leadership into practice. Males and females need to share stories of experiences to ensure that the perspectives of both genders are available for interpretation and instruction (p. 107).

Few studies document what school administrators actually do during the day, how they interact with people, the substance of their tasks, their vision, and their leadership style (Shakeshaft, 1989). The few studies of the day-to-day activities of school administrators examine only the behavior of males and very few samples include females (Restine, 1993). Thus, the vision of Regan and Brooks' (1995) "double helix" that integrates the male-based and female-based knowledge and practice of school leadership can only emanate from the experiences of both males and females.

Therefore, instead of studies concentrating on the differences in leadership styles of males and females or arguments of which style is "best," more research needs to be completed to better understand the role of gender in leadership effectiveness. Research needs to focus on understanding females and males in the following areas: interacting as workers, making moral and ethical decisions, understanding different points of view, balancing one's

time, or seeing the important tasks for administrators (Shakeshaft, 1989). Research of leadership practices should provide windows for administrators to see their world and mirrors for them to see themselves. Most current research provides only a hall of mirrors for males and provides only windows for females to see the world as others do.

In order to provide mirrors and windows for both genders that leads to Shakeshaft's (1987) Stage Six of an inclusive vision of leadership or Regan and Brooks' (1995) double helix of leadership, Stage Four, documentation of females' experiences must be extended. The following case study of one Iowa female high school principal's experiences and leadership will contribute to a better understanding of the real-life situation of a female in educational administration.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to identify and describe one female high school principal's career path to the principalship in an Iowa public high school. This case study of one Iowa high school principal explores her experiences in overcoming the barriers to females in educational administration, her experiences when encountering the principal's role, and the dimensions of her leadership style. Because the major focus of this study is to provide a thick description of one Iowa female high school principal, the appropriate design is qualitative using a case study.

Epistemological Basis

In-depth interviews with one female Iowa high school principal and individuals associated with her were conducted over a 6-month period following written consent from all participants (see Appendix A). In addition, direct observation of this female high school principal conducted over the same 6-month period covered events in real time and in the context of the event. Archival documents provided by the participant contributed additional information. A major strength of the case study is the use of multiple resources that allows the investigator to address the broad range of historical, attitudinal, and behavior issues. Thus, the findings and conclusion in a case study are more likely to

be accurate if based on several different sources of information (Yin, 1994).

The use of several different sources of information in a case study is called data triangulation (Yin, 1994). Data triangulation is generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meanings and verify the replication of an observation or interpretation. However, no observances or interpretations are perfectly repeatable. Triangulation serves to clarify meaning by identifying varying ways different observers view the phenomenon (Flick, 1992). Lincoln and Guba (1985) coined the phrase, later adopted by Marshall and Rossman (1989), "truth value" to refer to the criteria against which the trustworthiness of the study can be evaluated. The four components of the truth value include: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The case study was undertaken to better understand the particular story of one female Iowa high school principal. The purpose is not to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon or to build theory. The voice of one female Iowa high school principal is unusual and of general public interest because it relates to a real-life situation. The real-life situation of the female Iowa high school principal in this case study has not been studied in the past. According to Yin (1994), this

situation lends itself to the production of an exemplary case study.

In order to collect data on the barriers encountered, the experiences in the role, and the leadership dimensions of one female Iowa high school principal, the interview allowed the researcher to gather descriptive data in the participant's own words so that the interviewer could develop insights on how the principal interprets some pieces of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96). The researcher is enabled to understand the feelings, thoughts, values, and perceptions of the individuals who participated in the research process (Owens, 1987). Spradley (1979) argued that the interview offers the researcher tools to discover the meaning of behavior from the viewpoint of the participants. He reaffirms the importance of that perspective by asserting that "Any explanation of behavior which excludes what the actors themselves know, how they define their actions, remains a partial explanation that distorts the human condition" (p. 13).

Several scholars have documented the exclusion of the female perspective by researchers in the construction of knowledge and give further support for the use of the actor's explanation (Biklen & Shakeshaft, 1985; Dobris, 1989; Helle, 1991; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Presnell, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1989). Feminist researchers have repeatedly

called for research which focuses on the experiences of females as leaders in education.

This focus on an individual female is important as a way of adding to the knowledge base in the area of educational administration as Shakeshaft (1989) has noted in her six stage model of research on females in educational administration. Shakeshaft described a fourth stage of research where females are asked through interviews and observation to describe their own experiences.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) recognized the importance of the researcher's own personal history in the selection of a research agenda. They wrote, "The research agenda is developed from a number of sources. Often a person's own biography will be an influence in defining the thrust of his or her work. Particular topics, settings, or people are of interest because they have touched the researcher's life in some important way" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 59). This study reflects my own history on both a personal and professional level.

My own experiences for the preceding 3 years as a female principal of a small high school figured significantly in my decision to study another Iowa female high school principal. My experiences enabled me to quickly establish a rapport with the participant and to listen and observe with empathy. On the other hand, I recognize the potential for bias because I am a female high school

principal. The body of research on females' communication acknowledges that females communicate differently with other females than with males. This has been documented in studies discussed in the previous chapter.

Because of my role as a high school principal, I knew the challenges of the principalship and the lack of opportunity to communicate with other principals, especially female principals. I also knew from personal experience the challenge of administering a school as a female in a school accustomed to male leadership and permeated by a culture that perpetuates male leadership models.

Research Design

This exploratory case study addressed my own interest and the need for expanded research on females in educational administration by focusing on one Iowa female high school principal. Part of the research method for collection of data was semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participant and those who work with her. Because the barriers encountered and the past experiences are impossible to replicate, interviewing is necessary (Merriam, 1988).

Because the participant was asked to recount the stories associated with her entry into and experiences encountered in the role of high school principal, the interview method was particularly appropriate. The in-depth interview is well suited for the exploration of the participant's perspective and for interaction between the

researcher and participant. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) noted that the research plan evolves as more is learned about the participant and the setting. In consultation with members of the dissertation committee, it was decided to allow interviews to flow naturally and to use recounted stories as a source of information. The interview questions (see Appendix B) provided only a framework for the interviews.

Two types of narrative research are: (a) descriptive narrative research that relates the narrative accounts people already hold; (b) explanatory narrative research that attempts to explain why something has happened through the establishment of cause and effect. Narratives are an integral and recurrent part of most interviews (Mishler, 1986). Participants are most likely to recount stories when they are allowed to continue in their own way. In this case exploratory study, descriptive narratives were the heart of the interview process.

Whereas interviews revealed information on barriers, experiences, and the leadership style of the participant, direct observation of the principal fulfilling her role provided valuable leadership style data. Direct observation entailed the systematic written recording of events, behaviors, surroundings, and artifacts in the participant's school setting. Through direct observation, the researcher learned about the behaviors and meanings attached to those behaviors. "An assumption is made that behavior is

purposive and expressive of deeper values and beliefs" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The data gathered through direct observation revealed both verbal and nonverbal interactions (Erickson, 1977). The amount of participation on the part of the researcher during observations over a 6-month period was limited to such activities with the principal as eating lunch in the school cafeteria, joining in hall and bus supervision, and asking questions to learn more about a particular activity.

Direct observation and interviews provided in Marshall and Rossman's (1989) words are "the staples of the diet relied on by qualitative researchers in the fundamental techniques" (p. 79). A supplemental source of data was provided by a video tape of the participant interviewing for a high school principalship. This archival record was deemed relevant to the researcher because it showed one of the actual interviews described by the principal. The specific audience of the video had been school board members and members of the selection committee. The purpose of video recording the interview had been to provide the decision makers a means to review the interviewee's answers. The principal received the video as a courtesy after the school hired another person. Thus, the interview video tape provided a source of evidence to support the participant's account of the interview.

Selection of Participant

The selection of the participant for the exploratory case study incorporated several factors. The first factor included the size of the 22 Iowa female principals' high schools. Because 19 of the 22 female high school principals served in small, rural schools with graduating classes of 100 students or less, the voice of a female from one of the rural, small high schools would address the environment in which most Iowa female high school principals were serving.

Secondly, the demographics were considered. In order to represent the Iowa experience, the principal would need to be native to Iowa and have received her elementary, high school, and college education in Iowa. As a native Iowan, the participant's socialization would then be steeped in the culture and educational system of Iowa. Thirdly, the experience of the female was considered. To provide depth of experience representing both years and location, the participant would need to have at least 5 years of experience in the high school principalship and to have served in at least two school districts. The fourth factor focused on the willingness of the participant to share archival documents, to spend time in the interview process, and to agree to have her voice heard through the researcher. Finally, the principal's school district must consent to her involvement in the study.

The School Administrators of Iowa assisted in the identification of female principals who had served in at least two small high schools and had had at least 5 years of experience in that role. The principals identified by the School Administrators of Iowa were contacted by phone to learn if they were native to Iowa and educated in Iowa. The participant was then self selected according to the criteria established. During a telephone conversation, the principal was invited to participate in the study. She accepted the invitation and received permission from her school district to be involved in the study. In order to maintain confidentiality, she will be referred to as Sue throughout the study.

Description of Participant

Like 18 of her Iowa peers, Sue serves a rural school. Sue was born in a small town in Iowa and attended elementary and high school in that small town. After graduation from high school, Sue earned a Bachelor of Science degree from a private 4-year college in northwest Iowa. Sue earned a Master of Educational Administration degree from one of Iowa's three Regents Universities. She had 8 years of experience as a math teacher in Iowa in addition to teaching experiences in a New Jersey inner city school and the Peace Corps. Sue has served 6 years as principal in her current position. Prior to her current position, Sue was a high school principal for 2 years in another rural Iowa

community. Sue agreed to be observed, interviewed, audio-taped, video-taped, and to share archival documents. Her school district consented to her involvement in the study.

Sue is in her mid-40s, married, and a mother of one child who attends college. In addition to her duties as principal, Sue is active in numerous civic organizations, church, and professional organizations such as the School Administrators of Iowa and Iowa Women Educational Leaders.

Pilot Studies

Two pilot studies were conducted in Spring, 1994. In both cases, open ended questions were asked of the Iowa female high school principals at the beginning of the interviews. The pilot studies were legitimate because they drew from the actual group of the study (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Although some established questions focused on the barriers, experiences, and leadership style, questions also emerged during the course of the interviews. As Glesne and Peshkin asserted,

Questions may emerge in the course of the interviewing and may be added to or replace the preestablished ones; this process of question formation is more likely and the more ideal one in qualitative research. (p. 64)

In both pilot studies, the interviewing was preceded by direct observation that provided a chance to derive questions from sheer fortuity, as strongly recommended by Glesne and Peshkin. Through the interviews and direct observations, the strengths of interviews and direct

observation became apparent. The interviews focused directly on the study topic and provided casual inferences. The direct observation covered events in real time and in the context of the event (Yin, 1994).

In the current study, both pilot studies have informed the use of preestablished questions. For the purpose of this study, there are four major questions. To help guide the interviews in the research of the four major questions, subquestions were used as prototypes to assist the interviewer (see Appendix B).

Data Collection

Interviews

As recommended by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), the preestablished interview questions were developed to fit the topic so that the answers would illuminate the phenomenon of inquiry. The preestablished questions were anchored in the cultural reality of the participant (p. 66). The four major questions included:

1. What were the experiences which served as perceived barriers in the career path to the high school principalship for one female high school principal?

2. How does one Iowa female high school principal view her role, strengths, and limitations based on her experiences as a high school principal?

3. How does one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

4. How do those who work with the one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

These questions with the subquestions provided the framework and focus of the multi-session interviews. Yet often during the interviews unexpected leads or something observed prompted the researcher to probe with expressions such as "tell me more," "help me understand," and "explain" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 92). The elaborated responses provided the affective and cognitive underpinnings of the participant's perceptions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The on-site interviews with the principal were conducted in the her school during the school day. Some interviews occurred with no interruptions whereas other interviews were interrupted with the need for her to attend to business. This provided the researcher opportunities to observe the principal in her daily routine as she interacted with students and faculty. At times the interviews occurred during walks through the hall, lunch in the cafeteria, and supervision. The participant allowed the researcher to hear and observe all aspects of her working day. Other interviews with the principal occurred during the summer at her school, through telephone conversations, and at an extended lunch during the School Administrators of Iowa Conference.

The researcher interviewed 9 male and 8 female teachers, the guidance counselor, the activities director,

head custodian, 2 cooks, the school secretary, a bus driver, the superintendent, 2 school board members, and 6 community members. With the exception of the community members, the interviews with those associated with the principal were conducted at the school during the school day. Informal contact and discussions with students added depth to the on-site visits.

Observations

Detailed notes were written by the researcher during interviews and on-site observations. The fieldnotes included a written account of what was heard, seen, experienced, and thought of in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Nonverbal elements in the interview process are important because they communicate attitudes (Gorden, 1980). Looks, facial expression, body posture, long silences, and dress informs by the consonance between verbal and nonverbal communication (Goffman, 1961). Therefore, the written notes served as "the most common component of the database" (Yin, 1994, p. 95). Interviews with the participant were also audiotaped.

Data Analysis

A reflective field log was maintained to record the researcher's thoughts. Memo writing frees the mind for new thoughts and perspectives and captures the analytical thoughts as they occur, no matter how preliminary or in what form (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 128). Likewise, the

principal's interview video-tape was reviewed several times and perspectives were recorded in the field log.

The analytic file was built as the data was collected (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). The four major organizational files consisted of the participant's reflections on the barriers she experienced in becoming a principal, her experiences in the role of principal, her leadership style, and the description of her leadership style by those who work with her. Within each of these categories, divisions and subdivisions began to emerge (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The ultimate goal in the organization of files "is to treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions, and to rule out alternative interpretations" (Yin, 1995, p. 103).

As divisions and subdivisions emerged, salient themes, recurring language, and patterns of beliefs that linked people and settings together were identified. Patton (1980) described the processes of inductive analysis where the salient categories emerged from the collected data. The process entails uncovering themes, patterns, and categories "that requires making carefully considered judgments about what is really significant and meaningful in the data" (p. 313).

Miles and Huberman (1984) claimed that "you know what you display" (p. 22). Matrices, graphs, flowcharts, and other visual representations of the data assisted in making

sense of the data and exposed gaps where more data was needed (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). As the collected data from interviews, direct observations, videotape, and archival documents revealed gaps, probing questions were developed for continued interviews and observations.

The ultimate goal in the analysis of the gathered data is to "treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions, and to rule out alternative interpretations" (Yin, 1994, p. 103). However, the analysis does not refer to one stage in the research process. "It is a continuing process that should begin just as soon as your research begins" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 81). The interviewing and observation process is also a time to consider relationships, salience, questions, and explanations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Data collection and analysis go hand in hand to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). And, according to Erickson (1986), one basic task of data analysis is to generate empirical assertions that vary in scope and level of inference.

The data analysis itself consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, and recombining the evidence to address the purpose of the study. This process entails uncovering patterns, themes, and categories--"a creative process that requires making careful considered judgments about what is really significant and meaningful in the data"

(Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 116). Because few fixed formulas exist, "much depends on the investigator's own style of rigorous thinking, the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations" (Yin, 1994, p. 103).

The depiction of one Iowa female high school principal's career experiences adds to the existing state of knowledge with a rich description of one particular case. As Rawlings (1942) wrote, "A man [sic] may learn a great deal of the general from studying the specific, whereas it is impossible to know the specific by studying the general" (p. 359). Therefore, through the qualitative study, the researcher hopes to bring something beyond the case itself to the attention of others. The narrative process used in the case study brings to light how a female shapes her self-understanding and makes sense of her experiences (Chase, 1995).

Narratives

Most scholars concur that all forms of narrative share a fundamental interest in making sense of experience, in constructing and communicating meaning (Jameson, 1981). Narrators draw on experiences as they tell their own story, a story that is distinguishable from any other individual's story (Carr, 1986). Heilbrun (1988) suggested that stories not only tell about ourselves but that the stories we tell form who we are and how we live. Intensive interviews

create a particular context for narratives that differ interactionally and linguistically from that in which written narratives such as autobiographies are constructed. The conventions of intensive interviews allow for public expression with the protection of pseudonyms. This condition removes at least one layer of constraint on speech (Chase, 1995). "Interviews and subsequent written narratives invite accomplished women to claim their achievements and experiences more than any other narrative contexts might" (p. 11).

The description, organization, and analysis of the narratives and observations transmitted through the writing gives form to the "researcher's clumps of carefully organized and categorized data" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 151). Glesne and Peshkin suggested that the act of writing may provide "a description and analysis of concepts not previously seen or fully appreciated" (p. 148). Furthermore, the act of writing stimulates new thoughts and new connections.

Writing One Iowa Female High School Principal's Story

Therefore, "writing, like data analysis, is not a discrete step in the qualitative research process. Long before the phase of work called 'write-up time,' you should be writing" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 156). As data were collected, literature review expanded, and data analyzed, writing of the results occurred. The results were written,

edited, reshaped, expanded, and revised throughout the research process. A sense of people, experiences, place, and their interactions began to take shape (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). As the writing of one Iowa female high school principal's story emerged, care was given to help the reader "participate vicariously in the events and experiences described" (Eisner, 1991, p. 89).

Summary

The case study explores the barriers overcome, experiences encountered, and leadership style of one Iowa female high school principal. Through in-depth interviews with the participant and those who work with her, on-site observations, and examination of archival documents, the real-life situation of one Iowa female high school principal will emerge. The Iowa born and Iowa educated principal serves a small, rural high school. She has served as principal in two districts. Four major interview questions guided the interview process.

Extensive field notes were compiled based on interviews and observations. Audio tapes of interviews were transcribed and archival data studied. An analytical file was built, analyzed, and categorized as data was collected. Follow-up interviews and observations occurred throughout the research process in order to provide a thick description of the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of one Iowa female high school principal.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction to Sue

The one-story, red brick high school building sits on the north edge of an Iowa town founded in 1879. A panoramic view from the school's asphalt parking lot includes a nursing home, bus barn, football field, golf course, homes, and farmland. Parking spaces nearest to the building are reserved for visitors. As I parked my car in a visitor's space for the first time, I thought about the many other rural Iowa high schools with similar views. My 13 years as a high school teacher in a rural town taught me about the importance of the school's role as a focal point in a small community. Today, the community's future, their young people, quickly filled the parking spaces with their shiny four-wheel-drive pick-ups and late model, sporty cars, symbols of affluence.

Resembling their peers across Iowa in 1996, the students, clad in fashionable, tattered blue jeans and t-shirts, walked in groups, laughed loudly, and carried brightly-colored athletic duffel bags. The boys wore baseball style caps that displayed a logo of a seed company or sports team. Girls with long, gentle curls, ran fingers through their hair as the breeze rearranged the carefully created hairdos. The high school I was about to enter appeared to be a typical small-town high school except for

one major difference. Unlike most Iowa high schools in 1996, this high school has a female principal.

I followed a group of teens toward the building feeling like a transfer student at a new school. Then I heard my name. There by the main entrance door stood Sue, the high school principal. Of course, Sue is not her real name. For the purpose of this study, pseudonyms are used to conceal the participants' identities. Holding the door open for the students with one arm, she used her other hand to motion me toward the main entrance. After about ten students entered, Sue walked outside and our conversation began. "Vickie, glad you made it. Long drive? Look, see these bricks? How nicely they match the rest of the building? We put this addition on in 1993. Spent hours trying to make sure the bricks matched the rest of the building that was constructed in 1969. What do you think?" Before I had time to respond, Sue said, "Come on in. We'll go to my office. You can leave your purse and bag in there and use the office as home base."

We walked through the spotless glass door of the main entrance. A fast talker and processor, Sue walks with a long stride and with the pace of someone on a mission. Once inside, Sue's high heels clicked on the polished gray tile floor as she led the way to her office. Sue slowed down long enough for me to catch up, smiled, and acknowledged the noise of her clicking shoes. "I wear heels every day. My

nickname is 'Hell on Heels.'" We paused long enough to make eye contact and laugh, bound by an unspoken, mutual commitment to walk tall.

As we quickly walked to her office, Sue spoke to each student by name. Sue's secretary sat behind a counter, simultaneously collecting lunch money, talking on the phone, writing out an admit slip and greeting us with a smile. The introduction occurred while we walked. "Judy, this is Vickie from the University of Northern Iowa. Vickie, meet Judy, my right hand. Judy's the one that really knows what goes on around here." Passing through the busy reception area, Sue led me into her office. A green chalkboard shared one wall with a student-painted mural of a large tiger. A second wall displayed motivational posters precisely arranged in proportionate distance from each other. The inspirational posters encouraged teamwork, a positive attitude, and effort. A long counter held a microwave, sink, and small refrigerator against the third wall. Three large file cabinets sat at the end of the counter. Sue displays her framed Iowa teaching and administration licenses, master's degree, and a plaque of recognition on the fourth wall. The gold inscription on the dark maple round plaque identifies Sue as a state-wide organization's "Administrator of the Year, 1994." A computer resides on a counter beneath the wall of recognition and accomplishments. A large, round table with five chairs sits in the middle of

the room. Book cases filled to capacity with books, folders, and papers are situated under the chalkboard. Sue's glass-topped oak desk, located near the second door to the room, appears neat and well-organized. A framed picture of a smiling young man dressed in a red band uniform and an oblong brass desk plaque that reads "I know I am efficient-- now tell me I am beautiful" add color and humor to the desktop.

As if reading my mind after I glanced at the picture and the second door Sue explained. "That's my son. He is a sophomore at _____ University in _____. I like having two doors. It gives students privacy to enter my office without going through the reception area or passing my secretary. Students or teachers can just slip in. When I came here, this had been a special education resource room. The resource program needed a bigger space, so I just took this over. I keep that door to the hall open most of the time. That way I know what's happening in the hall. I use the table to help students with homework, math especially." In the same chain of events, Sue sat on a straight blond wooden chair at the round table, raised her eyebrows, and asked, "So, what is it you want to know?" I looked at my watch. Only 5 minutes had elapsed since I surveyed the view from the outside of the building. Intuition told me that the view from this female in the principal's office would be

just as memorable as the outside view of the farmland, football field, and surrounding homes.

Career Passages--Barriers Overcome

The Journey Begins: Sue's Background

Sue had never planned to be a high school principal. Growing up on an Iowa farm in a family she classified as lower middle class, Sue knew she would be a teacher, but she also considered the ministry. She loved school and excelled in all subjects. Teachers considered her gifted. Her father presented her with a slide rule when she was in the third grade. Sue easily mastered the slide rule at an early age and "fell in love with math."

The presentation of a slide rule represented only one of the numerous ways Sue's father influenced her life. She became "her father's eldest son" and accompanied her father on farm errands. Father and daughter spent many hours at the local farmer's co-op talking crops, politics, and Iowa's weather with other farmers. A workaholic, Sue's father labored hard on their 160-acre farm and the 160 acres of cash rented land to provide the bare essentials for the family. Sue's father served as captain in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II. He spent 2 years in Europe reconstructing bridges damaged by combat. His highest level of education, except for his technical military training, was high school. An articulate and well-read individual, Sue's father took time from his farm work to enjoy his

association with Toastmasters. He was respected and well-liked in their farm community. During a telephone interview with me, Sue's father described his daughter as "strong-willed, determined, and very bright." In his opinion, "there was nothing that could stop her."

Sue characterized her mother as very traditional. Not working outside the home, Sue's mother kept busy as a farm wife and mother. Artistic, poetic, and a talker, this high school principal's mother always had time for her children--two daughters and a son. Her highest level of education was high school. During our phone conversation, Sue's mother agreed with her husband's description of Sue but added "independent." The family unit encouraged, supported, and lovingly cared for each of the five family members.

After graduating from high school as a National Merit finalist and at the top of her class, Sue attended a small 4-year college in Northwest Iowa. "I had the finest professors. They were dedicated. I got lucky and received an internship to teach math alongside the best of them." Her senior year in college, Sue married Dan. After college graduation, Sue and Dan taught in an inner-city school in an Eastern state for 1 year. They joined the Peace Corps and served as teachers in the Pacific island region. Sue taught English and math in an all girl's school on one of these islands where she was "treated like a god." Then, as Sue

said, "We got pregnant. It was time to go home." They returned to Iowa to find teaching jobs.

Sue and Dan found positions in the same high school, teaching almost side by side for 8 years. "Those were great years," recalled Sue with a smile and a rare pause before continuing her humble description of her history. "I served as a coordinator of teachers and assumed more and more leadership roles during those 8 years. My female teacher friends began to encourage me to pursue administration. We had a very weak male principal. So I listened to my female colleagues and believed that I could have a greater impact on more students and learning if I became a principal." Sue followed that statement with a high shrilled laugh and direct eye contact. Slowing her speech, she asked, "Who invented this job, anyway? It is a crock. I have to work hard to make time to impact education and students. The teacher evaluation system doesn't improve teaching, and I spend most of my day dealing with the most negative aspects of kids and adults. We need to expand the role of principal beyond discipline and paperwork." Believing she could extend her influence on education, Sue began her journey from teacher to principal in 1985.

The Journey Into Administration: Deciding to Enter the Principalship

Sue reflected on her path to the principalship. "I'm always looking for new challenges. Eight years is the

longest I've stayed in one position at any school. About 6 years into my stay as a math teacher, I wanted a new challenge. Although I was recognized by the community as one of their finest teachers, had solidified my position in the community as supportive of students, and listened to the kids to the point that the students insisted I stay on as their Student Council sponsor, I needed a change. So I started a master's program. I knew I wanted and needed a master's degree but not in mathematics. Field and group theory just doesn't excite me. I was especially encouraged by a female colleague whom I respected to work on an administrative endorsement. Plus, I had a terrific female principal who also served as superintendent. She was the first female school administrator that I knew."

The female principal/superintendent, Anne, served as Sue's role model of professionalism. Dedicated, caring, bright, and a risk-taker, Anne lacked one characteristic that Sue believes essential for all administrators. "Anne did not dress the role. She was sloppy and often appeared in public dressed more for field work than image. I wear a suit or dress with heels each day." We both looked down at our two inch heels and laughed. Sue continued, "I dress up every day for school and never go out of the house looking grubby. We play a role and must dress to fit our position. I don't want to be hypocritical, but I think the public expects me to dress up. Guess we learn what to do and not

do from our role models, right? I learned the importance of proper attire from Anne by watching what she did not do."

As Sue began to contemplate her move into administration, she continually discussed the possibility with her husband, Dan. He related, when I spoke with him, that they both intended to earn a master's degree. Family finances dictated that they could only afford one master's program at a time. "Because Sue wanted to go into administration, we decided she should go first. I didn't and still don't want any part of administration," said Dan. Sue explained, "Dan and I support each other. It wasn't a matter of him letting me but just a mutual understanding that this was for us."

The Journey: Sue's Educational Administration Training

Sue spent two summers living alone in a dormitory while working on her master's degree in educational administration at an Iowa Regents university. Dan remained at home with their only child, a son, who was 8 years old when Sue began her graduate program. Sue appreciated the opportunity to be alone and free from family responsibilities in order to concentrate her energies on only one endeavor. "You know, even though Dan wanted no part of administration for himself, he understood my need to grow professionally and supported me through his actions. We've always shared the parenting responsibilities for our son."

Sue's expectations of rigorous courses and cutting edge leadership training during her educational administration graduate work proved disappointing. "I was amazed at the low standards set for students in educational administration courses. Professors demanded almost no homework. Although about a half of my peers in the courses were females, we didn't fit in like the male athletic directors who all knew each other. All my professors were male, and they spent time discussing with the athletic directors various coaching positions open around the state and what teams looked good for the season. I like sports, too, but...." At this point Sue rolled her eyes and leaned forward to add, "We spent little time on how to actually improve student learning. The professors were friendly, but we sure weren't challenged. An almost unspoken agreement existed that if we put in our time; we got our credit. I also felt that many of my comments during discussions were brushed off." I couldn't resist; I asked, "What should also be included in educational administration courses?" She quickly answered. "We have to learn to deal with gender issues. How men and women deal with each other! We also should be expected to demonstrate all the skills needed as administrators and develop our vision of moral leadership."

An aspect of her graduate program that disturbed Sue centered around the informal network of job placement. "The professors knew where openings for principals would be

occurring and also knew many of the key people who do the hiring. They taught many of the superintendents or knew them through workshops. During classroom breaks, I often overheard professors mention to the men in the class that a particular school district would be hiring a high school principal. I vividly remember one instance. I decided to join the small group and inquired about a district being described. Very kindly, the professor told me, "They aren't ready for a woman yet. They had a very bad experience with one about 5 years ago." I replied, "I wonder if they ever had a bad experience with a man?" and walked away. Even though I knew I was entering an area of education dominated by men, I had no clue that the image of high school principal was so firmly entrenched as a male image. But I knew I had the ability and background to be a good principal."

The Journey: Sue's Internal Perspectives

I asked Sue how she knew she had the ability to be a good principal. "That's easy. I believe the best teacher in the building should be the principal, and I am an excellent teacher. Plus, growing up, I had many leadership opportunities. My parents and teachers told me I was very smart, and I believed them. I think people based their belief on my smartness on the fact that I excelled in math when most girls struggled at it. Plus, I am very verbal and can articulate my thoughts, have lots of energy, and am

organized. I've always known I can do anything I want. When a few friends asked me if I could manage men as a principal, I laughed! I would rather deal with men any day than with women. I can relate better with men. Hanging around my dad and his farm friends as I was growing up gave me an advantage in knowing how men act and think. I can't remember anyone ever discouraging me in anything I wanted to do, and I've always believed in myself. I'm a hard worker." With confidence in herself and her leadership abilities, Sue embarked on her journey to obtain a principalship.

The Journey: Sue's Principalship Search

The search began for Sue's first principalship in 1988 after she received her educational administration degree. She scanned the Des Moines Register each Sunday and mailed applications to about 10 small districts. "Frankly, I had a terrific resume, outstanding letters of reference, and some pretty good experiences such as the Peace Corps in my package," Sue recalled. Sue was asked to interview in four "tiny districts." The question of discipline came up at each of the four interviews. Sue responded to the discipline concern with a prepared standard answer that she automatically recited to the interviewers. Sue gave a large grin as she rapidly shared her well-rehearsed discipline response.

"The question usually came about midway in the interview. They didn't beat around the bush. 'How are you,

as a woman, going to handle big high school boys?' or something very similar at all the interviews. I would smile, although I wanted to say 'Drop dead!' and matter-of-factly say, 'The time is long gone to discipline kids by physical means. Men have no advantage over women anyway. Furthermore, women have a distinct advantage over men. When dealing with girls, men dare not touch--I sometimes can. And dealing with boys? When men discipline, their macho ego gets involved. The boys wonder, 'Can I take him?' But when I deal with a boy he knows he can take me--so his ego is not involved. We can then deal with the problem.'"

Sue indicated that she expected to receive questions about discipline, but her biggest surprise and hurt during the principalship search occurred with the rejection from her role model, Anne. Anne, Sue's role model and superintendent in a town where she had applied "Frankly wouldn't give me a job in favor of a non-certified man because 'It wouldn't be right having two female administrators in a district.' Nuff said." With the words "nuff said," Sue sent a strong message that this subject was closed.

During a conversation I had with Dan several months after Sue had closed the subject of Anne, Dan recalled the experience with Anne as an example of what he called "The Queen Bee Syndrome." "Anne was Sue's idol. Sue used to say

that Anne was the only administrator who evaluated her so that she truly grew as a teacher. Anne knew how Sue had served as a leader among teachers. She also knew that Sue ran a tight ship in her hallway. Yet, when that principalship opened, Anne gave the position to a male teacher who had been in the district only 2 years and held just a temporary certification. He wasn't even finished with his program. We both taught with that teacher. He was weak, and kids walked all over him. For Anne to have selected him over Sue was unexplainable. I figured it had something to do with Anne being threatened by how good Sue was. We were sure surprised when Anne told Sue that she didn't receive the job because it wouldn't be right to have two female administrators in the same district. They don't say that about men, do they? Sue still talks to me about how much she learned from Anne, but we don't discuss Anne's decision not to hire Sue."

The Journey's Temporary End: Sue's First Position

One of the four very tiny school districts offered Sue the position as principal for the 1988-89 school year. She accepted the offer from "a wonderful and ideal district that was a perfect match for us." Sue described the district as economically rich with supportive parents and a dedicated faculty. "We had three teachers for every study hall and never had a class scheduling conflict. A sense of family existed in that school. The community was very into

education." An added dimension of Sue's first position as principal came when the district received a late resignation in Dan's subject area. "They hired my husband, and I was his boss my very first year as an administrator! We established hard and fast rules. I would only talk to his role at school, and we would not talk shop at home. We honored that completely. I assume that works the same way for a male principal when his spouse works for him."

As Sue worked with students, faculty, and parents during her first year, she came to realize that the district's very small size hampered educational opportunities for students. Although the spirit of the community was strong, the curriculum could simply not offer the students what they needed. In collaboration with the superintendent, Sue recommended to the school board that the district merge with a neighboring district. Although she was thrilled when the district reorganized at the end of her second year, Sue had recommended the elimination of her own job. "It was the right choice for the kids. The merger went smoothly. Yet, I hated to see the end of a district where, at lunch, the cook served each student a chicken leg, not just a wing, with real potatoes."

The Journey Begins Again: Sue's Second Principalship Search

Once again, Sue set out to find another school to serve. One interview stood out in her mind as a "nightmare." In addition to the usual discipline question,

and Sue's well-rehearsed discipline response recited in interviews only 2 years before, Sue was treated disrespectfully by the teachers on the staff. "I knew it was because I was female." The teachers recounted to her with pleasure an incident of sexual harassment directed at a female teacher by a male teacher. The current principal had taken no action. The faculty members let Sue know that "he did the right thing by ignoring that situation."

Sue was offered the principalship in that district but turned down the offer. "It was just too intimidating. The match had to be right!" During the time she turned down that offer, Sue was one of three finalists for the principalship in a large Iowa high school. Although she believed the interviews went well, she did not receive the position. She was told, "You are a wonderful candidate, maybe even too good. But you just don't have enough experience." The man hired by the district had 1 year more experience than Sue.

Another large school district called Sue for an interview. She met with the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and principal of the district's other high school. Sue recalled, "The interview went great. The assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum and I talked education for an hour. In the end, he was asking for my advice. Even after I found out I didn't get the job, I mailed him a five-page letter outlining some further ideas

on what we had discussed. But I could tell that the principal just didn't like me. He sat with his arms folded across his chest during the entire interview. The superintendent seemed neutral."

Sue's current superintendent, Bob, had known that Sue interviewed with that large district. After receiving Sue's application, he phoned the large district's superintendent and asked what their reservations had been in not hiring Sue. According to Sue's superintendent, the large district did not hire Sue because she was "too pushy and assertive." He added, "She has a very strong personality, and I think that was threatening to the other principal."

Another Journey's End: Sue's Reception

Sue then interviewed for her present position. "I had that discipline question so down pat; I could repeat it in my sleep!" said Sue with a laugh. Bob recounted the district's need to hire a principal who would "restore discipline" to the high school, and said, "Sue fit our need." She was offered the position and accepted. However, the day she moved to town with her husband and son, the community's weekly newspaper was published. The small town paper's headline revealed the school board's vote on their decision to hire Sue. The vote was 6 to 1. "Sue would never have known that one board member opposed her, if it were not for the newspaper coming out the same day we moved to town. Strangely enough, the realtor who greeted us when

we arrived gave Sue a copy of that paper," recalled Dan. The next week's edition of the newspaper included several letters to the editor in support of hiring Sue. The older members in the community pointed out that the high school had a female principal 45 years ago and that she was good. According to Gerald, the school's guidance counselor, "The school's history was in favor of Sue! The issue died down, and the dissenting school board member wasn't re-elected. Except for the initial newspaper's negative greeting, Sue was well-received here."

Although Gerald's assessment of Sue's reception into the community and the school reflected a positive acceptance of a female high school principal, a few teachers and the superintendent revealed undercurrents of reservations within the community and school. Superintendent Bob remembered the coffee shop talk during Sue's first year. "We hired Sue with a 6 to 1 vote. The negative voter was hung up on her gender. He was an older farmer and liked to play devil's advocate. During her first year, she was referred to as 'that female or woman principal.' A morning at the coffee shop didn't pass without someone asking me, 'How's that female principal doing?'" The superintendent continued, "But Sue had come roaring in and made a big improvement in discipline and attendance that first year. She proved herself, and eventually that question died down. However, I am well aware of the community and school's

gender bias, especially when she uses her power card. A man could do that, and they wouldn't twitch an eyebrow. I've never roped her in or forced her to do anything. She runs the high school. But I'll tell you, the community members paid close attention to Sue's every move."

Teachers also reflected on their reluctance to work with a female principal when Sue arrived. Tom, a teacher and coach, openly discussed his feelings in front of Sue during one of his numerous visits to Sue's office. "I was the worst about having a female boss. But something happened at a faculty meeting during her second year, and she yelled back at me. Guess I learned to respect her when she stood up to me when I was wrong and she was right. Now we have our disagreements in private. She marches into my room and tells me how I screwed up. Now I don't think I would like to work for anyone but her." Sue laughed and nodded her head in agreement and added, "Don't listen to Tom. He's a major suck up." Tom responded with a good natured chuckle. When he left the office, Sue commented, "The issue of me being a female boss had to be addressed separately and in a different way or through a crisis with each faculty member. I am not quite done with that process yet. Tom is one of many males on the faculty licensed for administration. When they get to micro-managing too much, I say, "If you want to be an administrator, go get your own job."

Lee, another coach and teacher who retired after the 1995-96 school year viewed Sue's arrival as his new, female principal from a different perspective than Tom's. "At first I thought, 'It just isn't right having a female tell males what to do.' I joined the part of the faculty being resistant to this change in administration. A good share of it was that she is a female and outspoken at that! But part of her challenge in working with us had to do with the stability of our faculty. Many of us had been teaching together for 18 or 20 years, and we were just plain resistant to change. But, by her second year, if she said, "Lee, do this or do that." I always did.'"

Lee added another theory on the adjustment that Sue and the faculty experienced the first year. "Our coaches pretty much dominate our faculty. You know, coaches are very competitive and hate to lose. They see everything as win or lose. They saw working with the new principal as a male/female struggle for power, and they didn't want to lose. I was part of that, too. We never identified all that in words, but I know that's what was happening. It was just hard for us to see a 'her' as our boss." Lee emphasized the word "her" and followed up by saying, "But that's different now for most of the coaches. She proved herself." When I asked Lee to tell me how she proved herself, he thought a minute and answered, "She was tough

and never backed down. Simple as that. I guess you could say that she won."

Even before Sue began her first year with the faculty, two essential family matters needed consideration. First, she hoped to stay in the district to provide continuity for her son. He was entering junior high, and Sue realized the importance of connections and consistency for him. Therefore, Sue worked hard to be successful. The second matter focused on Dan's teaching career. Dan interviewed for positions within a 50-mile radius and accepted a job 50 miles from Sue's district. "Between Dan's commute, and my school days that start at 6:30 and end at 5:30, and evening school activities, we didn't see much of each other during those 3 years. But we always reserved Sundays for family days."

The Journey's End: The Husband's Role

During Sue's third year in her current position, Sue recalled, "We got lucky again. A teacher resigned at my school leaving a vacancy in Dan's subject area. Actually, my superintendent suggested that Dan apply. Of course, I'm part of the interview and selection team. For obvious reasons, I asked to be left out of this particular hire. It just wouldn't have been right, you know?" Dan and several other good candidates interviewed for the position. When the selection team, minus Sue, offered Dan the position, the superintendent's only comment about the interview was, "You

know, Sue, he's nothing like you. He thinks before he speaks." Sue gave one of her shrill laughs and leaned back in her chair and said, "That has become a standard joke between Dan and me, but it sure is true."

Again, Sue became her husband's boss, and the rules established in her former district now apply in this district. She only addresses his role at school, and they don't talk shop at home. "That line of division must be clear. The 1996-97 school year will be very interesting because Dan is president of the teachers' association. So we have management and union living under one roof." However, good-natured bantering occurs between Sue and Dan about faculty issues. On a rare occasion, Dan joined us for lunch in the school cafeteria. Noting the teachers' very full schedules of teaching 7 periods out of 8, I asked how the teachers felt about this full load. Dan immediately declared, "If we had just two additional teachers, we could have a second work period to better prepare for instruction." Hardly before Dan completed the sentence, Sue responded, "Right. And we could have had the money to do so, if you teachers didn't bargain for such hefty raises. Now earn that money." The exchange brought chuckles from the four other teachers seated at our long table. As I walked out of the cafeteria, a male teacher hurried to join me. He quietly said, "You know, it would be hard to be the

principal's husband." I decided to ask Dan about his role as the principal's spouse.

Dan and I ate breakfast together one morning before school. My simple question, "What is it like being the husband of the high school principal?" evolved into a lengthy conversation that revealed both Dan's role and his view of some unspoken school dynamics. Dan recalled two vivid memories that he described with humor. "I attended the New Secondary Principal Workshop in Des Moines with Sue before she assumed her first principalship. I think this was sponsored by the Department of Education. Anyway, while Sue attended her workshops, spouses were given the opportunity to attend "Spouses Workshops and Activities." These were geared for females! One afternoon was even set aside for shopping as a group. Another session focused on entertaining the board. I didn't go, but now I wish I would have and given them grief!"

Dan's second vivid memory includes many different scenarios but with similar behavior. "Whenever Sue and I are introduced with the usual opening, 'I want you to meet the principal of ____ High School,' the strangers look at me first and usually extend their arm for a handshake as they ignore Sue. I then say, 'No, Sue is the principal,' and this results in a moment of confusion while everyone regroups. Usually after that, I am left out of the conversation." Sue had discussed with me how much protocol

and etiquette is based on gender. Dan now had provided two examples of how gender-based protocol and etiquette impacts his experiences as the male spouse of a female high school principal.

Dan also revealed his feelings of "being in a fish bowl" at school and in the small community. "I know many people think, and a few even say to me, "Why don't you keep her in line?" All of this was really multiplied when I was hired to teach in Sue's school. People took glee in chewing my butt. Teachers weren't helpful and were convinced I got the job because of Sue." Bob, the superintendent, concurred with Dan's assessment. "When we hired Dan, people talked that now they would be earning \$150,000. Of course that isn't true. I defended Dan's hiring at the coffee shop and reminded those who expressed their concern that we hired a good teacher. But there's always that jealousy problem in any community."

Gerald, the school's 37-year veteran guidance counselor, also referred to Dan's unique position. "Dan is the Association's president because it was 'his turn' and teachers respect his intelligence. But there is a community and school feeling of 'Why can't he keep her under control?' The usual image of the male being the leader, well, Dan has no desire or push for it."

When I asked Dan about the possibilities of Sue accepting a position in another school district, he revealed

that a possible move this time would be a little harder financially. "I have never really been attached to any school district, so I didn't mind moving. But now I have become more expensive for a school district and wonder if I would be hired nearby. Guess we'll just cross that bridge when we come to it. Sue might be ready for a move."

Dan indicated he maintains a low profile at school by keeping to himself and in his classroom. During my frequent visits, I saw Dan in the cafeteria and Sue's office only once. However, he feels he understands the dynamics and attitudes at the school through Sue's actions and his own observations. "Sue works 14-hour days and senses--no, she knows--she has to work harder than a man in the role. She also has to battle women teachers. The old rules are gone for women teachers. They can't bat their eyes or cry to get their way with Sue. Sue just hands them a box of tissue." Dan followed these comments with two seemingly unrelated thoughts. "You know, there's no male equivalent term for 'bitch.' Women call other women 'bitch.'" He then added, "Let's be honest. There's people out there that believe women shouldn't be a high school principal." When I asked Dan what people he thought believed women should not be a high school principal, he replied, "Other women. The acoustics from the hall to my classroom are pretty good, and I listen."

After talking with Dan, I asked Sue if she viewed her gender as a detriment in fulfilling her role as principal. "I probably had to work harder to gain confidence, trust, and support than a man would when I first came here. But any new principal will experience a transition phase. I am me--panty hose, perfume, heels, and all. Being up front about gender issues or stereotypes really helps. In case you didn't notice, I'm pretty vocal and outspoken." I had noticed.

Experiences Encountered

Experiences: Earning Respect

One of Sue's characteristics described by everyone I interviewed includes her rapid speech and quick response time. Sue concurs with others who say she talks rapidly and constantly. She explained, "There are so many words and ideas and so little time." One faculty member summed up the feeling expressed consistently by his colleagues. "Sue processes so quickly and responds just as rapidly. Sometimes that gets her in trouble, or we get the impression that she isn't listening to us." Those who work with Sue recognize the intelligence behind the fast processing but are critical of her rapid speech because "we often can't get a word in edgewise." Students also commented on Sue's rapid speech. One girl indicated, "She gets things done just as fast as she talks. I admire that." Another girl said, "If you get called into the office, you know it won't take long

to get your consequence. She doesn't drag it out." The faculty and students demonstrate respect for Sue, the principal, and Sue, the person.

Sue acknowledged that she receives respect and attributed this to several factors. First, those with whom she works recognize her as a true master teacher. Sue gave several examples that verified her self-assessment. "Whenever I walk into Dick's math classroom, he sees me as soon as possible and asks for suggestions on improvements, even if I'm only in there delivering a note to a student. I always give him one, and he always implements it and lets me know how it went." In talking to Dick about Sue's input, he agreed. "She knows her math, she knows kids, and she knows how to link the two together. I can struggle to figure out how to get something across, and Sue can nail it in a minute."

Another teacher, when asked how Sue spends her day, grinned and said, "Much of it is with kids in her office. Did you see that round table in there? Kids who need some extra help with any subject feel very comfortable going to her. She makes a difference for them." Students also expressed their appreciation for Sue's willingness and ability to help them. Even the students sent "to the office" for disciplinary reasons know that Sue will require academic work while spending time out with her. One junior girl who had been sent to the office confided, "Sometimes

the office is a better place for me to learn. Mrs. Jones expects us to learn and is right with us. She really cares."

In July of 1996 the superintendent and school board granted Sue's request to teach one of eight periods. Although reluctant to have Sue out of the office and burdened with even more work, the superintendent and school board accepted Sue's logic and argument for this additional responsibility. "I told them that I wanted to teach math. They expected me to teach calculus or Algebra II but that's not what I asked for. I asked to teach the lowest level of math, where the real problem students are. I work with most of them on an individual basis anyway. Plus, this might eliminate some discipline problems if these kids can feel success in the classroom. So, I am saving time in the long run and may be even helping other teachers in the process. The teacher who normally teaches that math will supervise halls and serve as my temporary replacement while I'm in his classroom. It is worth a try, don't you think?"

The superintendent revealed to me that it was Sue's master teaching ability that persuaded the board and him to allow this unorthodox arrangement. "Everyone in the community knows about Sue's extraordinary ability to reach and teach kids. We had to allow her request. With her energy level, she can handle it. I've never had a principal before who asked to teach." Sue had stated in an earlier

discussion about the principalship that "the best teacher in the building should be the principal." By the remarks given from faculty, students, and superintendent, Sue is recognized and respected as the "principal" head teacher.

The second factor which contributes to the respect others show Sue resulted from "one of the most important lessons that I learned from Andrew, a principal in a neighboring district." Sue identified Andrew as one of her three important mentors, a sort of "godfather." "I called Andrew for advice on a student who had repeatedly been suspended. She was at the point where this last offense called for expulsion. My heart went out to this girl because of her family environment and, frankly, bad luck. She was the type that just always got caught. I wanted to hear from Andrew that we needed to give her one more chance, you know what I mean? Andrew didn't say what I wanted to hear. 'Sue,' he said, 'I have a heart, too, but you have to look at the big picture. You've got to do what is best for the whole student body.' I knew what he meant. I just couldn't make exceptions, especially when I did it because of my heart. I had to stand firm."

Over the years, Sue's reputation for being fair and consistent in dealing with all students has earned her great respect. One morning a student stopped in with a note from a parent requesting the student be excused from class early. I watched Sue read the note, reach for the student handbook,

open it to a page, and show it to the student. "What does this say?" Sue asked kindly but firmly. The student took a deep breath and said, "A hair appointment is not excused." Sue nodded her head in agreement and said, "You have about 2 minutes before your next class. Call your mother and reschedule." As the student walked out of the office, Sue explained, "There's no debate or discussion. They know that. We've got to hold firm and stay on the path. Kids too often miss consequences. What kind of lessons are we teaching when we make exceptions?" During every discipline action I witnessed in Sue's office, she spoke respectfully to students, reminded them of the rules, handed them their detention or Saturday School notice, and concluded with a comment such as, "Kiddo, I expect better from you." Never once did a student argue or show anger.

Sue's fair and consistent manner in "doing what is best for the whole student body" is also apparent in her interactions with anyone with whom she comes in contact during the school day. She greets everyone by name as she rapidly moves down the hallway, through the lunch line, or into the library. Cooks, faculty, secretaries, students, parents, and custodians all receive the same treatment. Sue explained, "Hillary says it takes a whole village to raise a child. We all play an important role in this school, and I work hard to model respect for each person. No one is more important than anyone else." The respectful treatment shown

by Sue is in turn, shown her. Yet Sue's actions go beyond modeling respect.

An incident occurred with one faculty member after a female was hired as a replacement for the 30-year veteran "ag teacher." "Word got back to me of comments such as 'We've hired an ag teacher with indoor plumbing,' 'Wait 'til the community hears we've now hired a female for the ag job,' and 'She's a Russian shot putter.'" Sue tracked down the sources of the derogatory remarks and called in the main perpetrator of the nasty comments. "He came into my office anticipating the reason I wanted to see him. Taking the offensive, he said, 'I might have known you would hire a female.' I replied, 'When you are ready to talk like a rational and decent human, come back in.'" Sue had confronted this teacher on previous occasions with similar types of behavior. "To my surprise, later that afternoon, he came to my office and apologized. He admitted that he had been out of line with those comments." Sue indicated that since then, this teacher has "curbed his tendency to say nasty things."

"The faculty knows where I stand. We might not always agree, and that's fine, but there are basic human values and common decency that demand a strong voice. I'm not afraid to confront, especially when others' rights are violated. When I first started here, a few faculty meetings almost turned into shouting matches. Now, we do it a little

differently. Teachers march in and privately tell me how I screwed up, or I tell them privately how they screwed up. This works much better. Open communication is important, but there is a time and place to vent." Teachers agree that they have easy and quick access to Sue for dialogue of any type. As one teacher said, "She's always available and easy to talk with when you need to. Although she talks a lot, I think she hears us."

Experiences: Facilitating Change

Although Sue feels somewhat successful in creating a climate of respect at her school, her major source of frustration with teachers comes from the issue of lifelong learning. According to Sue, "One of the biggest problems I confront is that our teachers are not engaging in lifelong learning, either pertaining to their profession or in some other pursuit. I often copy articles for selected teachers, and only a few acknowledge reading those. A recent staff development effort confirmed my worst fears. Only two teachers admitted to reading anything professional on a regular or even intermittent basis. Last year, we read a book from ASCD together, giving teachers time at faculty meetings to read. I worked hard to follow up but found that the most common reaction to the book was derision. On faculty meeting days, lunchroom conversation was picking apart pieces they had read that morning and chalking up the

authors as 'idiots who don't know the terrible kids we deal with.'

Sue's frustration with the teachers' lack of a desire to read, stay current, and be lifelong learners emerged during our private talks. Sue's passion for learning and dismay at those in the 'business of education who aren't buying it for themselves' continually surfaced. Although Sue laughed often when discussing other issues or experiences, she became very serious and intense when discussing the business of education. Wrapped in her frustration is the lack of many teachers' desire to change. "We complain here constantly about the state of kids today, yet refuse to change ourselves. Many of our teachers have a vision no greater than longing for the good old days, which probably never existed. Some see a need for change, but they want change to come in the form of more supportive parents and better-prepared kids. Few see the need for change in themselves or teaching methodology. They don't see the connection between their learning, change, and their responsibility." Sue framed her perspective another way in a similar conversation that focused on her frustration with teacher attitudes about the state of kids and education. "We sit around and complain about kids. I think to myself, 'Things ain't as good as they used to be, and they never was.'"

Sue's basis for her assessment of teachers' attitudes stems from frequent informal contact with them. She eats lunch at the teacher table in the cafeteria every school day. While she quietly eats, Sue listens carefully to the good-natured bantering and comments of the teachers. After several meals with Sue and the teachers, I asked her about her atypical silence at the lunch table. "I use that time to pick up on what's happening with students and what's going on in the community. Sometimes as a result of listening at lunch, I can offset potential problems like fights between kids. But much of the talk is complaining about students and very little on solving the problems. I gain insight on what teachers are thinking and really what they value during those informal contacts. Didn't you notice a lack of discussions on lessons, books read, or any professional growth?" Sue became silent after these comments and stared at the chalkboard in her office. Taking a deep breath, she again repeated a question she often asked, "Who invented this job anyway?"

At this point in the conversation, Sue's phone rang. Sue assumed her public, positive voice as she responded to the Josten's representative over the phone. When the business about signing contracts concluded, Sue asked how the representative's new baby was doing, adding "I expect to see pictures the next time you're here." When she finished the phone call, Sue looked at the stack of papers and forms

on her desk and said, "I spend two hours a day writing receipts, signing my name, writing reports, or dealing with some crazy adults. Now tell me, how does that impact learning and change?"

Although Sue expressed frustration about the faculty's lack of desire to be lifelong learners and the paperwork her job entailed, she identified some areas where she has made a difference. When Sue accepted the position as principal, student behavior and attendance were at an all-time low. Sue concentrated her efforts on these problems the first few years by working with the school board, faculty, parents, and students to rewrite the student handbook. In addition, she spent most of her day patrolling the halls and parking lot. A community member recalled, "I came to school to pick up my daughter a few years ago. Sue was bundled up for the cold, directing traffic. One boy gunned his car and swerved toward Sue. She stood her ground, and he stopped with barely an inch to spare before hitting her. I watched, horrified, as she calmly walked up to his car and said something to him. He parked his car, and they walked into the building together. I later heard that he lost his privilege to drive to school. Not too long after that, problems in the parking lot became nonexistent." Another community member stated, "She's tough but fair. Sue really turned our school around!"

Sue's nickname, "Hell on Heels," originated from students in a neighboring district. Attending every school event, Sue closely monitors the behavior of her students and the visitors. During a Saturday music festival hosted by her school, Sue received an additional nickname, "Devil With the Blue Dress On." On that particular day, Sue wore a blue dress and had reprimanded several visiting students for littering. As she walked away, they sang, "Devil With a Blue Dress On." Sue laughed and told me, "So I bought more blue dresses, and I make sure I always wear one when I supervise music events. Gotta have a little sense of humor when dealing with students." Sue's sense of humor "keeps me sane" and also provides insights similar to political cartoons. For example, Sue often uses this line with teachers, "Elementary students hug you at the end of a good day. But with high school students, you know you've had a good day when, as they leave, they don't flip you off."

Sue initiated a 3-hour Saturday School in 1992. After students accumulate more than four detentions, they spend three very quiet hours studying under Sue's supervision. Sue acknowledged that this required additional time for her but that it has paid off. Five years ago, she spent three Saturdays a month monitoring students. She now monitors only one Saturday a month, and often teachers have volunteered to take the duty. Sue indicated, "I think

teachers are beginning to also feel ownership for discipline."

In addition to the improvement in student behavior and attendance readily attributed to Sue, she also brought her school into the technology age. Although Sue's high school received no state funds to equip an Iowa Communication Network classroom, Sue worked with a special foundation from a large city and with the school board to acquire the necessary funds. The ICN room in the high school now provides her students post-secondary options and additional high school courses. "We've expanded student learning opportunities," Sue proudly proclaimed.

Technology has also increased communication within the school. Again, because of Sue's efforts in acquiring a special foundation's funds "that no other school took the time to apply for," all classrooms are networked. Attendance is transmitted through office mail. Sue receives many messages or questions through the office mail during the day. As we sat in her office, an occasional "ding" sounded from her computer. Sue would then move to the computer and respond to a message or question while continuing her conversation with me. "We've really improved our communication, and therefore efficiency, this year with our office mail," Sue commented.

In addition to the acquisition of technology funds, Sue worked to bring a school-based work experience program to

the high school. "A year ago, I asked an aide, Kim, a jack-of-all-trades and highly capable, if she would monitor students who have early release for job experiences. Over the summer, she contacted 12 businesses and lined up placements. This year, she does a weird thing; she actually observes kids on the job! Kim and I continually discuss the purpose of the program, and we are writing a Perkins Grant for a hand-held video camera she can use while visiting sites. Isn't that a great idea? The kids will actually be able to see themselves on the job and make self-assessments." Sue acknowledged that this program, designed and implemented by Kim and herself, seemed a bit unorthodox. "But, the program was all but dead before. We feel we are making a positive difference in the lives and futures of 11 students right now. Gotta take a risk. Of course, I felt confident in Kim's ability to organize this program. The key to successful changes is to have the right person. Kim is that person." I asked Sue how she knew Kim would be effective. "That's simple. I know my people," answered Sue.

Sue not only knows her people, she does not give up on her people whether they are teachers or students. "When you give up and show them the door, you give up on yourself," Sue stated one late afternoon when the halls were silent and the phones and copy machines at rest. "We initiated an agreement with a larger school district to provide an

alternative school opportunity for those who for one reason or another were not successful here. I took some heat on this new program. On the one hand, I hold firm on discipline, and kids know the consequences of their actions. But, who says all kids do or should fit into the traditional school environment? Our school is a traditional environment, but I recognize that some kids need something different that we cannot offer. I will not just watch a student fail and then say, 'Good-bye.' It is my responsibility to provide every option available. Therefore, my guidance counselor and I contacted _____ High School to see if we could send students to their alternative program. Some community members thought we should just let those kids fail because they deserved it. I saw it differently. Anyway, we currently send two students to the Alternative Program and so far, so good."

When I asked Sue if she perceived herself as a change agent, she laughed and said, "Heavens no! I just want to do what is best for the students. If that means doing something differently than the way it was always done, then we'll do it a new way. You have to always ask, 'What's best for kids?'" I reminded Sue of her earlier statement that expressed her desire as principal to impact more students and learning through the principalship and asked, "Don't you think you are making a difference?" She answered, "Not enough."

Experiences: Working to Make a Difference

Sue arrives at school by 6:30 a.m. to "figure out where I am headed for the day." Within the first 30 minutes, she turns off the answering machine after noting messages, calls substitutes, updates the school's phone hotline that gives school announcements to community members, and puts in a load of P.E. towels. She then meets with Ivan, the guidance counselor, to discuss any disciplinary actions taken the previous day. As suggested by Sue, Ivan visits with all students following Sue's disciplinary measures. During their informal meeting, Ivan, under doctor's orders, eats half a grapefruit. "I eat the other half. Ivan hates grapefruit, so I eat half with him to make sure he eats his grapefruit!" Sue said in explanation of this daily ritual.

By 7:30, the secretary has arrived and teachers walk through the outer office and poke their head into Sue's office for a morning greeting. Sue jokes with each or takes care of small business matters during the short exchanges. As she talks, she stands at her green chalkboard and maps the day's classroom visit schedule. The master contract requires teachers be observed in every class for 5 minutes each year, but Sue observes much more often. "Sue, where do we sign up for flu shots?" asks one teacher as another states, "I'm sending John in first period. He needs an attitude adjustment." With master schedule in one hand and chalk in the other, Sue prints the initials of the teachers

she will visit during the day's eight periods beside the numbers 1 through 8 while responding to the teachers. "Sign up sheet is in the outer office. That's been in the bulletin for a week. Where have you been?" answers Sue with a humorous evil eye look. With just a moment's pause, Sue responds to John's teacher. "Send John in right at the beginning of the period with a written summary of the problem." The teachers exited from the outer office door as a student entered from the hallway door. "I've got my check for the next payment for the trip." Sue thanks the student as she takes the check and says, concerning the upcoming big trip, "Only a few weeks until we go, Sara. I'm already packing. How about you?"

As I observed Sue completing her observation schedule for the day while conducting business, she revealed, "I hold firm to these observations. I go in, unannounced. The faculty is used to that. I am only there 5 minutes. Using an NCR [no carbon required] form, I jot down what I see and then give feedback or ask a probing question about the activity or lesson. I keep one sheet and give the teacher the other copy for immediate feedback." Sue puts the form in the teacher's mailbox, and most stop in to have a quick discussion about Sue's comments. According to the teachers, they appreciate the quick turn-around and the frequency of Sue's visits. Sue explained this was the effective method used by Anne, her mentor and role model. Each observation

sheet is filed in a working file for every teacher. Sue commented, "When it comes to writing recommendations or reports on each teacher, I have data with specific examples. This is one area that many principals say they just don't have time to do. But I just schedule these observations daily, and they are my appointments. Not much will keep me from missing an observation."

During Sue's observation explanation, her secretary appeared, "Sue, my computer has a glitch. What do I do about attendance reporting?" "I'll check mine, and we'll just have to use it until I can get Earl in to reset yours," answered Sue. Sue then reminded me that I had met Earl, the district's technology coordinator. "You met him last Spring. We have been sharing him with another district for the last 2 years. I think I have a plan so we can keep him here full time. He taught me how to handle the server as a back up, but life would be easier if we could always know he is here." Flu shots, student attitude adjustment, money for the out-of-state travel with students, and computer glitch behind her, Sue finished her observation schedule. Clipboard and pen in hand, she moved quickly out the door to begin another day by greeting students and teachers in the commons area and hall.

Sue's commitment to "getting into classes and giving teachers feedback," as she calls it, is recognized by students. "She makes it to at least one of my classes every

day," stated a junior who then added, "I wish she would do my homework for me, too. She's smart, you know." Sue recognized an additional benefit to her constant classroom visits. "When parents express a concern about a teacher or an activity, I usually have a pretty good handle on what is happening."

For example, during one of my visits, a parent of a student who had been ill for 2 weeks, but who did not qualify for homebound instruction, visited Sue in her office. As the parent and Sue began their conversation, Sue outlined the courses the student was taking and the activities he had missed during the last 2 weeks. The meeting's outcome outlined modified requirements for the student based on his needs. When the parent left, Sue used the office mail and requested teachers bring in the student's work by 3:00 that day. Throughout the day, teachers brought Sue folders with the student's work. As one teacher brought in the work, she confided, "Sue saves us a lot of meeting time in handling these kinds of situations. I trust her judgment. She knows the students, and if she says, 'Modify,' I modify." Before the parent picked up the folders, Sue went through each folder and read the assignments. As I watched her do this, she laughed and said, "Okay, you've caught me trying to keep all the teachers accountable." As she continued to read, I noted,

"Good example of Sue's actions reflecting the teachers' nickname for her: Bulldog."

Experiences: Remembering the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Sue reflected on the many positive and negative experiences encountered during her years as a principal with an explanation of why she failed to journal. With her usual high shrilled laugh and intense eye contact, Sue commented, "Who has time to write about what you're doing while you're doing it? You know, I go flat out all day, and if I'm not exhausted at day's end, I feel that I wasted energy. Anyway, I think some memories are pretty well ingrained in my mind. We remember what's important."

Sue's favorite and most vivid memory occurred on Halloween in 1995 when the school's principal was absent. In her place, a witch wearing black high heels cackled and clicked down the high school halls. According to Sue, "I dressed up as a witch for most of the day. We really had fun. Kids and teachers are still talking about it. Because I had a meeting, I changed into my normal clothes before school was out. An elementary student approached me in the lobby. She had been at our building during the day and had seen the witch. With eyes wide, she said, 'There was a witch at your school today!' I answered, 'Oh, no! A witch, and you didn't report it to the office?' Every now and then you just have to do something a little wild and crazy. It keeps people excited and gives them something to remember.

Why not create memories?" About a week after Sue described her day as a witch, she received a phone call from a coach from another district who needed the date of a coaching clinic he had attended at Sue's school. Sue emitted a very high pitched laugh and said, 'Oh, the day the witch was in school? That was me. I can easily tell you the date.'" Sue's coaches had shared the story of the witch's visit to other coaches at that clinic.

I teased Sue about having a Halloween fetish. Even a month before Halloween, Sue displayed a friendly-looking witch sitting in a rocking chair on the round table in her office. When I saw the four school cooks clad in orange t-shirts with the words, "You can't scare me--I work in the school cafeteria," I knew immediately who added this touch of humor and Halloween to the lunchroom. Sue confirmed that she had ordered the shirts for the cooks. In addition to creating a positive school climate through such actions, Sue sends a message to the cooks that their contributions are valued.

Sue joyfully recalled the day the witch came to school but revealed a different emotion as she described another experience. "I can remember only once when I really broke down and cried at school. A mother of a special education student charged me with interfering with her son's special education program. The Area Agency's Special Education Director called and informed me of the charges. He

recommended that the superintendent be notified immediately. I was looking at losing my administrative license! I knew I was falsely accused but felt so out of control of my fate. My secretary, without even asking what the problem was, sensed my need for privacy. She closed the office doors and held all calls while I sat at my desk for half an hour and wept." Sue paused for about 2 minutes before she recounted the end of the story. The controlled, confident, and composed image Sue usually projects contradicted the picture Sue created as she described crying at her desk. "I just sobbed out of anger, frustration, hurt, and fear. My legs were weak, and I trembled all over. I was so devastated and probably went through a half of a box of tissues to keep up with my tears. Finally, I pulled myself together and called the superintendent. Following the superintendent's advice, I went home the rest of the day. The following morning I began a 2-week process of collecting documentation. The inconclusive evidence that the mother brought forward in addition to my documentation resulted in the investigator concluding the hearing in about 5 minutes." At this point, Sue pantomimed the investigator's slow and deliberate actions as he closed the case folder. "Yet that experience really sticks out in my mind. We are so vulnerable in our positions." The reflective moment passed when the dismissal bell rang just as Sue finished her last sentence. She rose from her chair, slipped her feet into

her high heels and walked with her usual erect posture and fast pace into the hallway. Following Sue, I watched as she spoke to each student on her way out the main entrance for bus supervision.

Sue assigns teachers weekly bus supervision on a rotating basis. She often joins the supervision to confirm the teacher's presence, make contact with students and bus drivers, and provide additional adult presence. Another one of Sue's memorable experiences occurred on an afternoon when a teacher was alone on bus duty. "While students were lined up waiting for the buses, Tom, a 6 foot 3, behavior-disordered Junior, swore at the supervising teacher, Gloria, after she asked him to step away from the curb. Words were exchanged, and then Gloria lost her temper and slapped Tom's face."

Sue leaned forward as she added an aside to this assault story. "You know, we should really in-service our adults on temper control. We need to realize that when a kid is backed in a corner, the teacher has to give a little." Sue then reached for a thick daybook on her desk, opened it to a page of notes, and wrote "Discuss with in-service committee possibility of 'conflict management' for future topic." Returning the daybook to its proper place on her desk, Sue said, "Thanks for making me think of that." Before returning to the bus incident Sue explained her daybook. "Remember when I told you about the principal

at _____ High School who is my mentor and godfather? He taught me that organizational technique of writing down an idea right at the time of the thought. I've been doing that for about 4 years now." Because we were already off the subject of the assault experience, I asked, "Have you talked to him lately?" Sue squinted her eyes, scratched behind her ear, and answered, "No, I haven't! I'll bet it has been 5 months since I last called him for advice or just a chat. Gee, maybe I'm growing up."

Just as I attempted to return us to the bus incident by saying, "So what happened next with Gloria and Tom?" the Activities Director, dressed in a black and red nylon warm-up suit, entered Sue's office. "Sorry to interrupt. We've got a problem. Can we dismiss the track team an hour early tomorrow? It is a long bus ride to _____ High School, and the coaches want the team to have plenty of warm up time." Sue answered just as he finished his sentence. "I hate to pull kids out of class." The Activities Director fired back, "Do you want quality programs or not? The coaches...." Sue interrupted, "I also want quality academic performance. We'll compromise this time. We'll dismiss them 30 minutes early. Do me a favor. At your next A.D. meeting, discuss starting track meets a little later." As the Activities Director left, he smiled at me and said, "Don't mind us. We talk to each other like this all the

time." Sue nodded her head in agreement and waved good-bye to him as he disappeared out the hallway door.

Despite the interruption and our digression into the subjects of daybooks, mentors, and early dismissals, Sue returned to the assault experience. Remembering exactly where she had stopped in the story, Sue continued to describe the events. "Well, you can imagine what a B.D. student would do next. He slugged Gloria, and she fell. The bus driver jumped out of the bus, grabbed Tom, and told a student to get me. Meanwhile, the students were congregating to see what would happen next. I came running and heard about 10 voices telling me what they had seen. I asked the bus driver to help Gloria who was still lying on the pavement, crying. She was hurt, and the extent of her injuries was unclear. I sent a student to ask my secretary to call the ambulance." I had the picture clearly. Within 5 minutes, the usual routine of bus loading had erupted into a "principal's nightmare."

Sue spread her hands out as she asked, "Tell me, where in our administration courses do we get trained to handle violence, screaming kids, an injured teacher, and all the legal implications that flashed through my head? I isolated Tom, who continued to swear and show off for the ever-growing crowd. As calmly as I could, I said, "Tom, let's go into my office." He glared at me, and I glared right back. Tom took a step forward, glanced at all the kids, and

shouted, "This place sucks!" Then he joined me as we walked into the building. I could hear the sirens of the ambulance and town police as we entered the school."

Sue paused, giving me a chance to fully comprehend the legal implications of a teacher slapping a special education student and the subsequent assault on that teacher. "Tom and I walked silently into my office. Without being told, he sat on one of those chairs at the round table where I often had helped him with math. Tom put his head on the table and cried. I phoned his mother and asked her to come to the school because Tom and a teacher had an altercation." Sue paused again, as she looked at the round table, as if seeing the sobbing Tom. "Then the situation went from bad to worse. About the time I hung up the phone and moved from my desk over to a chair at the round table, Gloria's husband stormed into my office. He had heard on his emergency scanner that Gloria had been hurt. Remember, Vickie, we are in a small town and news travels fast. Shouting every four-lettered word I've ever heard, he shook his fists at Tom and me. Tom buried his head in his arms at the table, and I slowly stood up and said, 'Ray, let's go talk in the hall.' The last thing I needed was Ray punching out Tom! Luckily, Ray complied."

Ray continued to shout at Sue about her allowing dangerous kids like Tom to attend school and making his wife supervise bus loading. "He gradually wore down. By this

time, several teachers entered the hall and stood quietly. I was mighty glad to see a little back up. I asked one of the teachers to go in and sit with Tom and another to go out to the buses and get them rolling. Finally, Ray quieted down long enough for me to suggest that he needed to go to the hospital to be with Gloria. A teacher stepped forward and offered him a ride. Ray and the teacher left. A few minutes later, Tom's mother arrived."

Sue abruptly switched from storyteller to teacher. "Have you ever used 'day of separation'? It is a great way to buy time for investigation without going through the suspension process. The legal justifications are explained in a school law bulletin summary that came out a few months ago. Did you read it? I have mine filed, and remind me to make a copy for you." I knew a reminder would not be necessary.

"Now where was I?" Sue asked as she returned to the story of the student and teacher altercation. "Oh, the mother was irate. A friend of Tom's had accompanied her from the parking lot to my office and had informed her that a teacher had hit Tom. Now, we had to work on getting out the truth. The mother sat by Tom, and she asked, "Who hit you?" Tom told his mother his side of the story without telling her that he then hit Gloria. I intervened and told her that Gloria was in an ambulance on her way to the hospital. This didn't seem to make a difference to her.

She said, "We'll be filing abuse charges." I informed her that a Level I investigator would be contacted and that Tom should remain at home the next school day while the investigations began. After they left, I called our school's attorney who recommended that the school file an assault charge against Tom. During the next school day, I interviewed 12 students. Each interview lasted about 10 minutes with me asking each student the same questions. I took detailed notes. Interesting, the kids restaged the event very well."

Sue verbalized the question that kept occurring to her throughout this ordeal. "Where in our administrative training did we learn to investigate, uncover the truth, and deal with so much law?" With a laugh, she answered her own question. "I say I didn't. Experience is the best teacher. But, Vickie, do remember the 'day of separation.'"

"I then had to receive written permission from each parent of the interviewed student in order to release the investigation notes to the County Attorney. Tom's parents eventually decided not to file an abuse of student charge, and he is currently served through a homebound program. The county has yet to act on the assault charges, but that is out of my hands. Also out of my hands were the rumors that permeated in the community. One rumor had Bob, our superintendent, beating the crap out of Tom, allowing me to escape. Bob wasn't even in town on that day!" After Sue

had completed this story, I assumed that this was the school incident alluded to by Grace, a lifelong community member.

During a conversation in the cranberry candle-scented room behind her gift shop, Grace said, "Sue is tough as nails. She works out, runs every day, and could take any student at that high school if necessary. A few months ago a rumor went around town about the superintendent saving Sue from physical harm. I didn't believe that rumor for a minute!" This same gray-haired community member added, "Sue goes to my church. You should hear her sermons. She combines academics and heart. There's not much she can't do." Sensing the answer, I requested, "Tell me what you think of having a female high school principal." As Grace poured tea for me into a fancy, porcelain cup, she said, "We would hate to lose her. The first year was a little rough because the kids were out of control, and I think the teachers were, too. But Sue worked night and day to restore order." Grace felt confident in her knowledge of Sue because of a close connection she has with Sue's secretary, Judy. She said, "I know more than most about what happens in that school."

Experiences: Working With the Staff

Sue's secretary, Judy, stayed after hours one day to inform Sue that she was 3-months pregnant and would resign at the end of the 1996-97 school year. "Ironically, that was the same day my newly-hired Home Ec teacher also told me

she was pregnant. I'm celebrating the Great Passover in this office, let me tell you!" A minute passed before I grasped the humor in Sue's Biblical reference. Resuming our composure, after laughing over the message Sue conveyed in her joke, she continued. "When Judy told me, I smiled and congratulated her, but on the inside I was upset. Don't get me wrong; I love children, but how do you replace a secretary who taught your job to you? Sometimes she even thinks she's my boss. Although Judy isn't very efficient and organized, and at times I think 'I can do it easier myself,' I have to remember to delegate. I'm not very good at bossing, but I am getting better."

Judy is in her early 30s, graduated from this very high school, knows every family in the community, and likes working with Sue. "When she first came, I wasn't used to the fast pace she set. She wanted everything done right now," Judy recalled. "But during her first year, we worked out our 'pace differences.' She types all her own correspondence and does most of her own filing. She even goes through her own mail, piece by piece. I don't sort the junk mail for her. She says, 'There might be a treasure in the junk.' My job is to run the outer office, answer the phone, deal with kids and parents, track attendance, and let her know if there's a problem. Although Sue is constantly on the move, she always takes time to notice a new outfit I'm wearing or thank me for this or that. Between the two

of us, we know about everything that's happening in the building."

A happening in the school that Sue knows every day is the lunch menu. During my visits, Sue would recite the day's lunch menu to me with pride and make culinary comments highlighting dessert. "When I first came here, the lunch program turned out food I wouldn't feed a starving dog. I had just served in a district that provided five-star meals, and the contrast in the quality and variety of the lunches made me sick. I observed kids throwing away most of their food or just not eating. Now, how are kids going to learn if their stomachs are empty? My dilemma, how do you go into another woman's kitchen and tell her she is a bad cook?" I laughed and asked, "Is this another example of what the educational administration courses leave out of their curriculum?"

Sue discussed the quality of the cafeteria's food with Bob, her superintendent. "When I was hired, Bob had made it clear that I would be in charge of my building. But I wanted his input on the history of the lunch program and personnel before I opened up a hornet's nest. I wondered why our school was just going through the motions of feeding kids. Bob told me that not much had ever been said about the food and what was said usually seemed like typical comments on school food." Sue then began her lone and quiet cafeteria campaign.

Sue began her tactful cafeteria campaign by spending time in the kitchen talking to the cooks to build a rapport. "Gradually I asked questions about recipes, food suppliers, and the students' favorite foods. I also wrote notes to compliment the occasional delicious main course or dessert. When I received the notice on the Iowa's School Hotlunch Conference, instead of just sending the head cook, I sent the entire kitchen staff. I don't take credit for the change that occurred, but, for once, those educational administration courses had prepared me. Our cooks simply needed someone to pay attention to them and feel important." The cafeteria food at Sue's school is excellent, served with a smile, and consumed. I saw very little food left on student trays needing to be scooped into the green plastic-lined trash containers. Sue's particular favorite school dessert is cherry cobbler; I concur with her choice.

One afternoon as Sue was packing her "homework bag," she reached under her desk for a white, foot-long pump. "Sue, what is that for?" I asked. "Dan and I had a church function at my house last week. I bought a gallon can of chocolate syrup to serve for the ice cream sundaes. We hardly used any of it. I brought the syrup to the cafeteria so the kids could squirt chocolate on their ice cream if they wanted to. The cooks returned the pump to me with a note of thanks." Sue placed the plastic pump in her bag along with paperwork, her new copy of The School

Administrator, and math papers. "Thought I would be done with homework when I grew up to be a principal," Sue said as she readjusted her glasses, put on her black trench coat, and checked her computer's office mail. Before she walked out the door, she activated the school's answering machine and called the phone company to update the parents' phone hotline. We walked out of the building together at 5:45 p.m., each carrying a heavy-duty canvas bag at our side. The contents of our bags were concealed except for Sue's white plastic pump that stood above the papers in her bag. Of all the papers, notes, and tapes in my bag, that white pump in Sue's bag represented to me the essence of Sue.

Sue's working relationship and experiences with the cooks, bus drivers, and custodians reflects her respect for their contributions to the school. Andrew, the head custodian, commented, "Sue doesn't miss a thing. If a light bulb is burned out in the gym, and I replace it, she thanks me. She reminds students to wipe their feet when they come in the building. I like that. Do you know what some of the farm kids bring in on their boots some wet mornings? Last year one of the mirrors in the girls' bathroom kept having lipstick kisses on it. Sue watched the girls and figured out by their lipstick color who was doing it. She had them on mirror clean-up duty for us. I've got my own mailbox in the mailroom now. Sometimes Sue puts a custodian cartoon from the paper in it or a little candy bar to, as she says,

give me energy." I complimented Andrew on the highly polished floors that I had noticed on my first visit and added that this was one of the cleanest high school buildings I had seen. Andrew smiled and said, "I'm glad you noticed. We care around here."

School bus drivers, like school custodians, serve a vital role in the operation of a school. Sue's interactions with the bus drivers reflect her feelings of their importance. "Not only do we rely on the drivers to deliver the kids safely, but their contact with the kids in the morning can either help or hinder the kids' attitudes at school. I ride the bus routes about once a month. We have a large geographic district, and some of the kids ride the bus about an hour to and from school. We've been lucky to have drivers who can relate to the students. They need management skills just like teachers." Despite the teacher and student altercation between Tom and Gloria, the transportation of Sue's students usually occurs without problems.

I asked Ed, a 10-year veteran bus driver, about his contacts with Sue. We sat on folding chairs in the bus barn located behind the high school. "I see her every morning or after school in the loading and unloading zone. She either waves or gives a thumbs up. When she sends out the bus route in the late summer, she always includes the rules. We helped write those rules with her and the elementary

principal. From time to time we get a kid who is mouthy or won't sit. I use the two-way radio and let the office know. Sue handles it. She's worked to pair-up elementary kids with high school kids like a buddy system on the bus. The big kids feel responsible for the little folks. Sue stops in the bus barn about once a week before we take out the buses and talks to us about the kids, the week's schedule, or the weather. 'Course, you have to be on your toes with Sue. She talks real fast, and if you aren't paying good attention, you'll miss her jokes or puns. She's quite a gal." As we left the bus barn, Ed walked toward his bus to wash the windows. Andrew's words came to mind, "We care around here."

Following my visit to the bus barn, I sat in Sue's office, waiting for her to return from a visit with Bob. I closed both doors and reflected on the connection between Sue's past experiences and her leadership and the relationship between her style as leader and her experiences. Leadership style and experiences seem intertwined and difficult to separate. Experiences reflect leadership style, and the leadership style shapes the outcome of experiences. Although an event such as the Gloria and Tom altercation began without Sue's involvement, once the problem reached her, this became part of her experience. Sue's way of handling the altercation reflected her leadership style. The following descriptions of Sue's

interactions with people and events provide an overview of Sue's leadership style.

Leadership Style

Leadership Style: Visible, Available, and Accountable

Sue's superintendent, Bob, informed me that "Sue feels the need to be in the building whenever it is open for any event." Sue acknowledged her sense of responsibility to supervise and support students during and after the school day. Bob revealed, "I worry about her energy. How can she maintain this pace? Being a high school principal is a young person's job because of all the night activities. Sue doesn't miss any. Last year was the first year Sue attended a national administrators' conference even though we annually budget funds for her expenses. She needs to attend more conferences if for nothing else, just some rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. Sue says, 'I need to be here.' I'm working with her to get away occasionally." Bob's concern for Sue seemed genuine. As we concluded our discussion he looked at me and asked, "Is she burning out? What do you sense? Maybe you could talk to her about that in your exit interview."

When I later asked Sue about her feeling of "the need to be here," Sue added, "How do I justify a trip to New Orleans or Orlando in the dead of winter when the teachers are working? Why do I deserve a break when they need one, too? My dad always said, 'Don't expect of others what you

aren't willing to do yourself.'" I thought about that for a minute and said, "Sue, your dad's influence went beyond encouraging you to love math." Sue made the universal gesture for a question with her palms faced upward and elbows at her side. "Who else would have made me a workaholic and a talker? I have become my father, values and all." The little girl with the long, brunette ponytail who accompanied the hardworking dad on numerous farm errands, her "father's eldest son," had grown into a school leader who never expects others to do what she herself would not do.

Leadership Style: Conflict and Control

As I entered Sue's office one sunny Thursday morning, Sue greeted me at her door as if she had been waiting for my arrival and confessed, "I did something yesterday that I've never done before." I replied, "Wait a minute, Sue. If this is a good one, I've got to get it on tape. You'll talk too fast for me to write it all down." I sensed the seriousness of the incident, however, when Sue did not respond with her usual laugh or quick comeback. I left the tape recorder in my bag and picked up my notebook instead.

Sue began, "An elementary teacher was taking tickets at the volleyball game Tuesday night. A freshman boy walked by her, and when she confronted him, he responded, "I've already paid," and walked into the gym. The elementary teacher sent another student to find me. I joined her in

the ticket booth. She angrily informed me of the incident and all but rebuked me for the students mouthy behavior. I thanked her for informing me and told her I would handle it. I made the decision to deal with it the next day. I saw him at 8:00 yesterday and simply said, "I know you lied about paying last night at the volleyball game." He answered, "Yeah, I lied," and reached in his pocket and handed me \$2.00. I know this kid. He probably didn't have any money with him at the game but also wouldn't be mouthy. Kids are kids."

The elementary teacher reported the incident to Bob and complained that Sue had not supported her. Sue continued, "Bob, the teacher, and I met at 11:15 yesterday. When she pointed a finger at me and said, 'You didn't support me last night,' I wanted to bend her finger backward. But I controlled myself and said, 'You gave the problem to me. If you give away the problem, don't criticize how it was handled.' After the teacher left, I stayed in Bob's office and lost my temper. 'That really pissed me off, Bob. I resent having to justify my actions to anybody! I said I would handle it, and I did.' Bob looked pretty stunned, and I walked out door."

The office became very quiet, and I was uncertain what to say or ask next. Sue broke the silence. "I've never yelled at Bob or been disrespectful to him or hardly to anyone. Part of my anger stems from having elementary

teachers taking tickets with other elementary teachers. They really don't understand high school kids. We should be pairing a high school teacher with an elementary teacher for those duties. But I also get upset when people want me to take care of something and then find fault in what I did. If they have the great solution, let them deal with it and leave me out of it."

Later that day, Sue told me that 2 weeks earlier she had registered for a 1-day workshop, "How to Handle Emotions, Conflict, and Anger." She handed me the workshop brochure. "I've been to a few other workshops sponsored by this company. They aren't geared just for educators. Mostly business people attend. I enjoy getting a perspective beyond education. I was the only educator at the workshop on communication skills." Curiosity and concern prompted me to ask Sue what motivated her to register for the upcoming workshop and why she told me. "One of my many weaknesses is probably handling my emotions and others' anger, and always tactfully confronting conflict. Wanted you to know I am working on improving myself."

I learned two important aspects of Sue's leadership style as a result of a freshman's behavior at a volleyball game. First, when Sue receives a problem from someone else, she considers the problem as hers to deal with, and she takes action according to her best judgment. Those working

with Sue should either deal with a problem themselves or give it away entirely to Sue. Secondly, Sue reflects on her feelings and actions. She then takes measures to improve, change, and grow.

Leadership Style: Management Techniques

Sue meets with her faculty once a month. The meetings occur after school or during a 2-hour late start of the school day. Written agendas appear in each teacher's mailbox 2 days before the meeting. According to Gerald, the guidance counselor, "Sue clearly runs the meeting, standing in front of the teachers who sit in the students' seats in a large classroom. She has her own ideas of what should be accomplished. Sue knows the key people to call on first to provide support for her ideas. When we work in teams, she groups people according to who will be on task. Because she knows the teachers so well, she is able to create the right mix that will bring results. I would say that Sue is principle-centered with a clear belief in what is right or wrong. If she doesn't like something, she'll tell you directly. She cuts through the slush. We may not always like what she says or does, but she is consistent, and we always know where she stands."

Bob, Sue's superintendent, also described Sue as principle-centered and views Sue as an instructional leader. "Sue tries to help teachers get better at teaching, but, sadly, so many other problems get in the way for a

principal. Sue does an excellent job, and I tease her about being a bulldog. However, for her own sanity, she must learn to select only key issues to fight. Even if it violates her basic principles, some battles can't be won or aren't worth the battle. Nothing can burn out a principal faster than trying to fight too many battles. Sue and I discuss this often."

Sue fights many battles with students, teachers, and parents based on her principles. Over the last 5 years, Sue worked to strengthen the students' Good Conduct Code. The school's Good Conduct Code governs student eligibility in extra-curricular activities. Most of Sue's frustrations, battles, and controversies in the enforcement of the Good Conduct Code center on consumption of alcohol. According to Sue, "Rural Iowa is really into alcohol. Even with all the work we do on drug and alcohol awareness, the status of drinking has not changed one bit. The only thing that appears to have changed is that parents now accept it for their kids. They say, 'We would rather they drink than take drugs.' You can't believe the numbers of parents who serve alcohol at graduation open houses around here. So when we receive a report that an athlete was drinking or gets caught at a kegger, I often have to confront parents who support the strict policy until their child gets caught. But I maintain that 'Them who has the most to lose had better be the most careful and abide by the rules.' I've had a few

coaches get very upset with me when some of their star players have to sit out. I have to hold the line."

As an aside in the conversation on the acceptance of alcohol consumption in her community, Sue stopped and asked, "Do you drink alcohol in restaurants? I never do even when we eat at _____ here in town. Sure, I would like to have wine with dinner, but I just don't think it is appropriate. I would feel very uncomfortable if a student saw me drink. Is that hypocritical? But I know I am under scrutiny, and how can I expect to stand firm on alcohol issues when I drink myself?" I admitted that occasionally I do have a drink in public. Sue thought about that response and said, "You live in a much bigger community. Small town Iowa still watches every move the principal makes." Sue's belief that you should never expect of others what you are not willing to do yourself is revealed through her actions.

Another example of Sue's willingness to fight a battle and do what she expects others to do is exhibited in her self-assigned position: math teacher. Sue persuaded her school board and superintendent to allow her to teach math one period of the eight-period day. As I watched Sue teach a low-level math class to 20 freshmen on a Friday afternoon, I witnessed a striking similarity between Sue's leadership as a principal and her leadership as a classroom teacher. All students received a smile and a personal greeting from Sue as she stood outside the classroom door as the students

filed in before the bell rang. The minute the bell rang, Sue used the classroom computer to record attendance while telling the students to pass in their papers. Before giving the students a single-problem quiz, Sue announced, "I expect flawless work because I'm tired of crappy work." Students completed the quiz, and then Sue asked, "Who feels confident about your quiz problem today?" Volunteers went to the chalkboard and worked the problem for their peers. Sue reinforced effort, gently corrected mistakes, and shook the hands of the students who had successfully completed the problem. Each student was called upon by name throughout the class session.

In addition to the personal attention given each student, Sue used humor to emphasize a point or relieve tension. As Sue weaved her way up and down the rows, bending over to assist individual student work, she said to one student, "Will you add, subtract, divide, multiply, or cry?" They laughed together as Sue helped the student determine the solution. In another case, several students announced that they had forgotten their calculators. Sue put her hands on her hips, stomped her foot, and announced, "Gee, you didn't bring your calculator? That's like showing up for P.E. without wearing gym shorts!" The entire class laughed with Sue and the forgetful students. The students clearly knew that Sue expected them to bring a calculator to class and clearly knew all other expectations and classroom

procedures. Not one student prepared to leave before the bell rang. Sue guided and directed students throughout the period without sitting down. She never allowed a minute to pass without assisting a student or providing an energetic and helpful explanation to the entire group. As the bell rang, Sue reminded her students, "Bells don't dismiss students; teachers do." When the 20 freshmen left, they took with them an understanding of how to complete Monday's assignment.

Sue's availability and assistance to the students during the class period, her high energy level, humor, clearly-stated expectations, and respect for every student paralleled the approach she practices in leading her faculty and school. Likewise, just as she worked through each math problem that the students completed, Sue also works with the similar problems her teachers encounter as she assumes the role of teacher. Sue explained, "That one period of teaching each day provides me what I love to do, but, better yet, my suggestions to teachers now carry weight because I work with those kids. Not that I don't believe my faculty about kid difficulties; but now they know that I know. The Iowa State Education Association would like all administrators to teach. We need to remember just exactly what it is like in the classroom." Sue's superintendent, Bob, indicated that as a result of Sue's "pioneer break from

the administrator mold," he plans to teach a class during the 1997-98 school year.

Leadership Style: Thoughts From the Faculty

Both male and female faculty members used similar descriptors to convey their thoughts on Sue's leadership style. Words such as vocal, hardworking, caring, energetic, intelligent, fair, and assertive were used most often to describe Sue. Six of the 16 interviewed faculty members referred to Sue as the boss and indicated that she controlled the school. Some faculty members revealed their belief that Sue makes snap decisions, basing their assessment on her immediate responses. Three of the eight female faculty members expressed their belief that Sue tries too hard to compensate for being female. One female faculty member stated, "She uses her power too much." A male faculty member reported, "She does every bit as good as a man, if not better. She works too hard at her job." The teacher who had slapped the student while on bus duty commented, "Sometimes we need a man for the potential violence from boys."

Because of the close working relationship between Sue and her guidance counselor, Gerald, I asked him to provide me an overview of his perceptions of Sue's leadership style and the faculty's perceptions of her style. Gerald has worked with 14 principals in his 37 years at Sue's school. He contributed descriptions and insights that appeared to

synthesize the faculty's words and my observations. Gerald leaned forward over his paper-stacked desk as he slowly and quietly talked. "Sue tries to overcome the fact that she's a female. She works very hard to do all, be all, and know all. She isn't cautious or selective about the battles she will fight in the name of doing what is right. Even if she knows she'll lose in standing up for the underdog or the good of the school or kids, she'll take the outward crust every time. Sue's not afraid to confront or be assertive when needed but is very caring and compassionate in her efforts. For example, after she disciplines students, she makes sure I see them. Kind of a bad cop-good cop routine. My best word to describe her is 'stroft.' You remember that toilet paper commercial? Sue is both strong and soft." Gerald and I laughed together at his use of a toilet paper analogy to describe his principal.

Gerald expressed concern for Sue's future. "Deep down, she wants to be a classroom teacher. She relates well with students. I'm afraid she will get burned out over all the adult and family-related problems we see that impact students. Sue feels powerless to control the negative outside forces that get in the way of learning. She wants to fix things. I have encouraged her to earn a doctorate and teach administration at the college level. She's worn out dealing with dysfunctional adults. She never takes time for herself except for her church activities and occasional

visits to _____ University to see her son. School is her whole life. She seldom delegates responsibilities but believes she must be at everything and responsible for everything, too." Gerald paused to reflect on his message and then added, "She's the best principal I've worked with in 37 years. But she pays a big personal price in being so dedicated and driven. She's made a big difference here but at what cost to her?"

Leadership Style: Thoughts From Sue

Sue recognizes that her life centers around education. "I have little time to cultivate friendships because of all the school activities, meetings, and paperwork. I do have one friend, a retired teacher, but in a town this size, there are very few other professional women. Even if I have a little free time, I am too peopled-out to do anything except embroider or read. I jog regularly and do some of my best thinking while I run." Sue often formulates her church sermons while she jogs. She explained, "I preach about once a week at our church. I became a certified [denominational] lay minister about 4 years ago to fulfill my need to teach. Dan says my sermons are scholarly." They also reveal Sue's education and school-centered focus.

Sue related one of her sermons. "I was stuck on the thread to tie the sermon with the lectionary of the Ten Commandments. Then it struck me! The Ten Commandments are minimum competencies! And we can't have rules without the

boss, and we can't have a boss without the rules." Sue shrieked with laughter when I pointed out to her the close connection between her world as a teacher and principal and her spiritual world. Just as it is impossible to separate the dance from the dancer, it is impossible to separate Sue, the principal, from Sue, the individual.

An additional area of Sue's understanding of self and her leadership centers on relationships with female faculty members. "Our school has a history of gender-segregated faculty relations. Long before I came, the women congregated in the library and the men in the faculty lounge before and after school. I think this goes back to the domination of coaching and sports. They just self-select where they want to be." Jan, the 20-year veteran school librarian, acts as the school's social coordinator and provides lavish snacks in the library's workroom. During Sue's first year as principal, she noticed that Jan napped in the library, used school time to make long personal phone calls, watched soap operas in the workroom, closed the library for 2 weeks to decorate for Christmas, and often left school prior to dismissal.

Although Sue realized the influence Jan exerted with the women on the faculty, Sue did not allow these actions to continue. She related, "I called Jan in and confronted her with her actions and told her this was unacceptable. As she cried, I continued to hand her tissues, and I just kept

talking. Naturally, she was afraid of losing her job because, frankly, she's incompetent and doesn't even want kids in the library. I told her what I expected, and it will be this way. She's now frightened of me."

Sue asked and answered her own next question with emotion and a hint of anger. "Are women easier to work with than men? Hell no! You can confront a man, yell at each other, and they get over it. But you confront most women, and they'll resent it forever. They will backbite and eventually get even. They don't forget, and they recruit allies in their covert opposition. I get very impatient with this crap." When I asked Sue how this impacts her leadership, she replied, "Gradually, we are having a staff turnover, and some of the hardcore opponents have retired. We've come a long way in the last 6 years, and at least now they do what I ask them to do." Sue had realized the possible repercussions in confronting Jan, the librarian, but she defended her actions by saying, "What Jan was doing was wrong and needed to be corrected. We are running a school for kids, not a social happening for adults."

Leadership Style: The View From School Board Members

Although the two male school board members I interviewed might not be aware of the occasional gender struggles faced by Sue, they expressed a keen awareness of Sue's contributions to their school. The two board members affirmed what community members, faculty, and the

superintendent had described. John, the town's Postmaster, and Dave, a farmer, are each in their second term on the school board. According to John, the board's president, "Sue is on top of everything. She has great community support because she's strict but fair. We all know that she is a tireless worker. She's the first in the building and the last to leave. We gave her a big raise a few years ago to keep her." Dave added, "Kids respect her, and she gets right in there with our kids. She joined the kids in the after-prom party and put on that Sumo wrestler get-up and did it with the kids. She places great emphasis on classroom instruction, too. As far as I am concerned, it is better to have a woman as principal. She knows about kids, learning, and works hard." Both Dave and John revealed their hope that she stays in the district. John shook his head as he said, "We know she's good and will probably move on to a bigger school. But we are doing everything we can to keep her here."

Leadership Style: Future Career Path

Following my visit with the school board members, the time appeared right to ask Sue if she planned to stay in the community and remain a principal. "I miss the classroom and teaching. I have looked into positions in other towns and wouldn't rule it out. But the principal's job is too far-removed from the kids, especially the good ones! Right now, Dan likes my salary too much. Two years ago I received a

substantial raise. I love my job some of the time. But I can't make a career change back to teaching because of the pay cut. We have a son in college. I've looked into getting a doctorate in educational administration. So far I haven't found a program that suits me."

When asked if she would pursue a superintendency, Sue shook her head and answered, "I'm not sure if the superintendency is a goal or not. I'm not afraid of the gender imbalance; indeed, it often gets females interviews. Maybe I would like to teach administration in a university. I just don't know. Last year, when I had discreetly interviewed for a position in a larger school, I was very surprised that one faculty member knew that. How, I don't know. Anyway, when he checked out the last day, he quietly said, "Heard you thought about leaving us. I'm sure glad you didn't. I like working for you, and we need you." Now this came from a teacher I would never expect to say such a thing. His comment was one of the few rewards in this job and made me think that maybe I should stay. We'll see."

During my first visit to Sue's office, I noticed a quote typed in large letters on once white paper, yellowing with age and posted on the wall above the coffee pot. Sue pointed to that quote one morning and said, "That's my motto in life." Sue's "motto in life" is:

If you want to feel secure, do what you already know how to do. If you want to be a true professional and continue to grow, go to the cutting edge of your competencies which means a temporary loss of security.

So whenever you don't quite know what you're doing--
know you're growing.

Madeline Hunter, 1987

I asked Sue if she felt secure. Her answer came as no surprise. "I feel pretty secure in my position and my ability. I want to continue to grow, and I guess that means moving into something else." The person who "goes flat out all day" and feels like "she's wasted energy if not exhausted at the end of the day" also transferred that philosophy to her professional life in her desire to grow.

Saying Goodbye

As Sue and I stood at the door she had opened for me the morning of my first visit, we were unusually quiet as I prepared to leave for the final time. I gazed down at our feet clad in two-inch heels mirrored by the shiny tile floor. Sue reached out to shake my hand, but, instead, we hugged each other. I looked at Sue--"Hell on Heels," "The Bulldog," and "Devil With the Blue Dress On"--and saw a "stroft" instructional leader. She had provided a view of her experiences as a female high school principal that was as clear as the view of the farmland, parking lot, and nursing home seen out the spotless glass door. As I went through that exit for the last time, Sue held the door open for me. With her usual high-pitched laugh and wit, she said, "Don't know if we've broken any glass ceilings, but we sure walk through lots of glass doors."

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, DISCUSSION, AND SUMMARY

Currently, Iowa has few female high school principals. This study was undertaken to expand the body of research and literature on females in the role of high school principal in Iowa. The research is void in the identification of the barriers overcome, the experiences encountered, and the leadership style of Iowa female high school principals. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify and describe one female high school principal's career path to the principalship in an Iowa public high school.

As I conducted this study, I was driven by the following questions, which in turn suggested the conceptual frame for analyzing the data from my interviews and observations of one female high school principal:

1. What were the experiences which served as perceived barriers in the career path to the high school principalship for one Iowa female high school principal?

2. How does one Iowa female high school principal view her role, strengths, and limitations based on her experiences as a high school principal?

3. How does one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

4. How do those who work with one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

The creation of a complete picture of combined experiences and leadership style for one individual emerged as data was gathered, analyzed, and organized. Unlike many studies of female administrators that reveal the "average" female administrator, this study revealed an individual female in her own school based on her own perspective (Shakeshaft, 1987). As Rawlings (1942) wrote, "The man may learn a great deal of the general from studying the specific" (p. 359). This study shows how one Iowa female high school principal shaped her understanding and made sense of her experiences in her career path to the principalship. The female perspective in the construction of knowledge and the participant's explanation of her experiences fill a void that is documented by several scholars (Helle, 1991; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). The narrative process used in this study brings to light how a female educational administrator shapes her self-understanding and makes sense of her experiences (Chase, 1995).

The extensive interviews with the participant created a context for narration that differs interactionally and linguistically from that in which written narratives are often constructed. Unlike narratives publicized under one's own name such as autobiographies or oral histories, this interview process allowed public expression with the protection of pseudonyms and other forms of anonymity.

Under the protection of anonymity, the narrative produced during the interviews invited the participant and those with whom she works to speak freely (Chase, 1995).

As I interviewed the participant, it was easy for her to talk about barriers, experiences, and leadership and to share her stories. We both drew on taken-for-granted understanding of the principal's role, the culture of high schools, and educational jargon. Chase (1995) found this same ease of talk to be true in her interview-based narrative case study of female superintendents. Moreover, as a female superintendent herself, Chase was able to document the phenomena described as "ease of talk."

Because the purpose of this study was to identify and describe one Iowa female high school principal's career path, the use of her own words and descriptions seemed a particularly appropriate way to present her story. The participant was allowed to speak for herself rather than remain silent or become a subject spoken for by the researcher. Thus, a picture of one Iowa female high school principal was constructed drawing on her explanation and description of events, people, and conversations. The picture depicts barriers overcome, experiences encountered, and leadership style of one Iowa female on her career path to the high school principalship.

The method chosen in this case study for presentation of the data from the interviews with the participant was a

descriptive narrative. The interviews provided the feelings, thoughts, values, and perceptions of the participants (Owens, 1987). In addition, direct observations rendered a recording of events, behaviors, and surroundings in the participant's setting. The observations and interviews clarified meaning to provide credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, one basic task of data analysis is to generate empirical assertions that vary in scope and level of interpretation (Erickson, 1986).

Furthermore, the constructs of barriers, experiences, and leadership style enhanced the meaning of the findings in this study and provided a conceptual framework for understanding the data. The multi-faceted dimensions of barriers, experiences, and leadership style provide a framework to illuminate one Iowa female high school principal's career path to the principalship. This study provides a thick description of one female principal's experiences.

This concluding chapter is organized as follows: (a) assumptions and insights about the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of the participant juxtaposed with the research on barriers, experiences, and leadership styles of female administrators within each section; (b) empirical assertions regarding barriers to, experiences of, and leadership style of female educational administrators;

(c) major contributions of the study; (d) recommendations for further study; (e) a discussion of the results; and (f) a summary.

First, based on the review of literature about female educational administrators, I formulated several assumptions about how eight factors would be reflected in the participant's career path. The eight factors include: the barriers of gender bias and role models, mentors, sponsors, and support systems; the experiences of the female educational administrator's career path and view of mission; and leadership style in regard to its impact of gender, female characteristics, care of self, and female dilemma. Current research on female educational administrators describes such barriers, recounts similar experiences, and depicts leadership styles of females that are expected in a female's career path to the principalship. Barriers, experiences, and leadership style became the three major areas where insights were revealed.

Assumptions and Insights Regarding Barriers

Gender Bias

I assumed that because the high school principalship has been considered a male role, a female administrator would encounter barriers in her career path. One author framed the barriers as internal and external (Shakeshaft, 1989). I expected that a female currently serving as an administrator possessed high self-efficacy by her engagement

in a nontraditional female career and therefore had experienced few internal barriers (Nevill & Schlecker, 1988).

In addition, I anticipated that a female educational administrator would have experienced several, if not all, of the external barriers examined by researchers and discussed in the literature. These barriers include: home and family responsibilities (Hansot & Tyack, 1981), lack of encouragement and support (Edson, 1988), administrator preparation programs (Marshall, 1984), and hiring practices (Ryder, 1994). The barriers encountered would represent the existence of the glass ceiling as described by Restine (1993) and Morrison et al. (1992).

Participant's consistency with research. The following insights are consistent with the literature regarding gender bias:

Insight 1. Internal barriers seemed nonexistent for the participant. The participant's confidence and self-efficacy appeared to develop at a young age through her achievements and recognitions as an outstanding student in school and through parental reinforcement.

Insight 2. The participant's administrator preparation program provided external barriers. The participant identified as a disappointment in her leadership training the lack of rigorous courses. The course work also omitted gender issues needed to be understood by administrators in working with male and female faculty, neglected to focus on how to improve student learning, and failed to challenge the students. She often felt as if her comments were brushed off by her professors who were all male. Likewise, she felt isolated from the network that focused on athletic directors and from the informal job placement network that appeared to be directed by gate-keeping male professors.

Participant's inconsistency with research findings.

The following insights are inconsistent with the literature regarding gender bias:

Insight 1. The participant and her husband viewed her move into administration as beneficial to them as a couple. Home and family responsibilities presented no external barrier to the participant. The participant and her husband share equally the responsibilities of raising their son and maintaining a home.

Insight 2. The participant experienced no mobility problem in seeking her two principalships. Although most females have their own career interrupted or limited by their husband's career, the participant in this study initiated the couple's last two moves. The husband was the one to find a teaching position in a surrounding community or, as in their case, eventually the participant's school.

Role Models, Mentors, Sponsors, and Support Systems

During the participant's pursuit of a career in educational administration, I believed that she received encouragement from a significant other (Brown & Burt, 1990), had a female role model (Garland, 1991), and benefitted from a sponsor (Chase, 1995; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993). Once hired, I expected that the participant found it necessary to develop a support system both in and out of the school environment as reported by Hicks (1996). Even with the support systems in place, I anticipated that the participant experienced a feeling of isolation and loneliness as described by Hicks and documented by Shakeshaft (1989).

Participant's consistency with research findings. The following insights are consistent with the research on role models, mentors, sponsors, and support systems:

Insight 1. The participant received no support from her role model. The role model chose not to hire the participant because it would not look right for a district to have two female administrators in the district where the role model served as superintendent.

Insight 2. The participant obtained her two principalships without the benefit of a sponsor or network. She searched for her positions through newspaper want ads. Although she related no overt discriminatory questions asked during interviews, the participant knew she needed to be ready to answer the "discipline as a woman" question. She experienced disrespectful treatment by teachers during one interview visit and attributed the disrespect to her gender. Explanations such as "Maybe you're too good" or "You don't have enough experience" were given the participant when she failed to receive a job.

Insight 3. The participant was encouraged by female teacher colleagues in her decision to pursue educational administration. She had been recognized by her colleagues as an instructional leader.

Insight 4. The participant received support from her husband throughout her journey from teacher to high school principal. He assumed full responsibility for their young son while the participant attended two summer sessions away from home to obtain her degree.

Insight 5. The participant had dual role models and mentors. The female role model inspired the participant. Through her actions, the role model taught the participant what leaders should and should not do. The participant sought out a mentor, a principal, in a neighboring school district. She referred to this male mentor as her "godfather." Within her school, the participant received additional support from the school's guidance counselor who offered advice, encouragement, and a professional friendship based on trust, respect, and the mutual desire to do what is best for kids.

Participant's inconsistency with research findings.

The following insight is inconsistent with the literature

regarding role models, mentors, sponsors, and support systems:

Insight 1. The participant expressed little feeling of isolation or loneliness in her position. Although her guidance counselor conveyed his concern that the participant appeared to have only one female friend, the participant had indicated that she is too busy to experience loneliness or isolation.

Assumptions and Insights Regarding Experiences

Female Educational Administrator's Career Path

Regan and Brooks (1995) and Shakeshaft (1989) found that a female educational administrator's career path looks nothing like the male educational administrator's career path. I assumed that a female administrator would have served as a teacher for about 15 years (Shakeshaft). Edson (1988) and Hicks (1996) revealed that females usually enter administration based on their desire to grow professionally and to impact more students through their instructional leadership. I did not expect a female administrator to have planned to become a principal when she began her career in education (Hicks; Shakeshaft). As suggested by Edson, I did not envision that an increased salary or heightened prestige served as strong motivators for a female to assume an educational administration position. However, I did expect the salary issue would be wrapped in the female administrator's interpretation of her "good-enoughness" as described by Hicks (p. 38).

Participant's consistency with the research. The

following insight is consistent with the literature on the female educational administrator's career path:

Insight 1. The participant taught almost 15 years before becoming a principal and had not expected to become a principal when she entered the teaching profession. She was motivated by a desire to impact more kids through instructional leadership and to grow professionally in her decision to leave the classroom for an administrative position. The hunger for increased prestige and recognition seemed nonexistent in the participant's desire to become a principal.

Participant's inconsistency with research findings.

The following insight is inconsistent with the literature on the female educational administrator's career path:

Insight 1. The participant did not move into administration for the increased salary. Although the participant revealed that she received a substantial salary increase 2 years ago, she viewed the increase not so much from the message of "good-enoughness" but rather as an increased financial base to support their son who is currently a university student.

Female Administrator's View of Her Mission

Based on Gilligan (1982) and Shakeshaft (1989), I expected to find the female administrator's relationships with others to be central in all her actions. I assumed that she would be instrumental in instructional leadership, would exhibit great knowledge in teaching methods, and would create a positive school climate conducive to learning and community-building as conceptualized by Shakeshaft. In addition, I surmised from the research conducted by Devito et al. (1984) that the female administrator would approach her job as a service to the community and to society. I did

not anticipate a female administrator vying for power (Levine, 1989) but rather working to impact the organization and attempting to develop new skills (Brown & Burt, 1990). Overall, I assumed that the female administrator would always focus on what is best for kids in her decisions and actions (Hicks, 1996).

Participant's consistency with the research. The following insight is consistent with the literature on the female administrator's view of her mission:

Insight 1. The participant paid close attention to relationships as reflected by her interactions with others. Her major concern for her school focused on instruction and improvement of teaching. She worked hard to create a positive school climate for students and school employees. The participant appeared to act in ways that she believed would be best for kids.

Participant's inconsistencies with research findings. The following insight is inconsistent with the literature on the female administrator's view of her mission:

Insight 1. The participant's occasional use of power appears to stem from her desire to bring about change or impact learning, not from a desire to promote herself. The issue of power becomes wrapped in the efforts of the participant to accomplish what is best for kids. She does use her "power card" occasionally and is referred to as "boss" by many faculty members. The ongoing struggle with the librarian represents a struggle for power between the participant and many female faculty members allied with the librarian.

Assumptions and Insights Regarding Leadership Style

Impact of Gender

Edson (1988) told us about females' experiences in overcoming the widespread belief that females cannot be effective disciplinarians but that, in actuality, gender

aids them in managing disciplinary problems. Therefore, I supposed the female administrator to have gone through experiences that reflected the belief that she would be an ineffective disciplinarian. Likewise, I also expected that her disciplinary approach would be effective.

Edson (1988) also documented the close scrutiny that female educational administrators feel and their belief that they needed to be even more competent than a male. I anticipated that a female educational administrator would also express feelings of scrutiny and reveal efforts to be even more competent than a male. In addition to scrutiny and competence, based on Funk's (1994) findings, I envisioned a greater degree of support for the female administrator from the males on her faculty compared to support from females. In fact, I expected to find a "cold war" to exist between the female administrator and many of her female faculty members as identified by Will (1978) and Hicks (1996).

Participant's consistency with the research. The following insights are consistent with the literature on the impact of gender:

Insight 1. The participant believed it important to model the appropriate behavior expected from others. She held the line on proper behavior and viewed her efforts as part of her service to the school, community, and society.

Insight 2. The participant indicated that male faculty members will openly disagree with her but resolved differences. The female faculty members are much more covert in their conflicts with her. She experienced

struggles with male and female faculty in their reaction to working for a "female boss." According to her husband and faculty members, the participant works hard to compensate for being a female. She experienced a sense of intense scrutiny from the faculty and community, especially during her first year in her current position. Male faculty members appear to support the participant much more than female faculty members.

Participant's inconsistency with the research. There are no inconsistencies between the literature on the impact of gender and this participant's leadership style.

Female Characteristics

Based on the research of Adler et al. (1993), I assumed that the female administrator would pay attention to the image projected by her attire and would dress to earn respect and display authority. As Chapkis (1986) suggested, females know that how they look is often more important than what they do or how they do it. I also expected that the female administrator would be guided in her actions by what Gilligan (1982) described as an injunction of care. Shakeshaft (1989) stated that a female administrator would consider the role of principal as that of a master-teacher and would be viewed by her staff as an instructional leader. Therefore, I expected the female administrator to devote much time and attention to learning and instruction.

I also assumed, based on the literature, that the female administrator would exhibit expressive language, would listen carefully to her audience and remember what had been said, and would reflect a tentativeness in speech

(Spender, 1987; Tannen, 1990). As Shakeshaft (1987) found, I envisioned the female administrator would exhibit a wide range of speech, would show variations in loudness, and would change her rate of speaking. In addition, I expected the female administrator to smile often as Shakeshaft (1989) asserted and to use humor as indicated by Hicks (1996).

Participant's consistency with research findings. The following insights are consistent with the literature on female characteristics:

Insight 1. The participant is viewed as a master-teacher and instructional leader. She devotes much time in her efforts to improve instruction and expand learning opportunities.

Insight 2. The participant uses effective communication. During conversations with the participant, she correctly responds to what is said to her, reflecting careful listening. Most of the time the participant speaks rapidly but slows her rate of speech to emphasize an important message. She uses a range of speech patterns and varies the volume of her speech. Smiles are given frequently and freely to all whom she meets and greets. Likewise, the participant is known for her quick wit, her love of jokes, and her ability to laugh with enthusiasm and high-pitched shrieks.

Insight 3. The participant recognizes that professional appearance does influence the community's attitude toward the role of a female educational administrator. She wears a suit or dress and high heels to school every day. Even during non-school time, the participant dresses to honor the role of the principal and to show respect for the community she serves.

Participant's inconsistency with research findings.

The following insight is inconsistent with the literature regarding female characteristics:

Insight 1. The participant gives the appearance of not listening carefully to others when they speak to her.

She does remember exactly what has been said by those talking to her but seems inattentive. This appearance of inattention results from the participant's quick processing and instant response. She sometimes even begins her response before the speaker has finished speaking. Students, faculty, and the superintendent commented on the participant's failure to appear as though she listens carefully. Likewise, the participant reflects no tentativeness in her speech but, rather, rapidly emits a well-projected voice that communicates strong ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

Care of Self

According to Shakeshaft (1989), females feel the need to juggle all their tasks and to put the needs of others first. Hill and Ragland (1995) found that married females often have their careers interrupted or limited by their husband's career as they put the husband's needs first. As Edson (1988) concluded, females place great pressure on themselves to balance multiple roles. Hill and Ragland also asserted that female administrators work harder and longer hours than most males. Hicks (1996) identified a powerful guilt that exists for a female principal in that she is not able to be everything to everybody. Therefore, I expected the female administrator to display and recognize symptoms of what Hicks called the "Stress Trap." I doubted that the female administrator would allow time for herself or place her needs above the school's or her family's.

Participant's consistency with the research findings.

The following insight is consistent with the literature regarding care of self:

Insight 1. The participant places the school's needs above her own and feels guilt if she misses an event or

expects teachers to do that which she did not do. She works long hours and feels guilt that she is still not doing enough for the students and school. During the last year, the participant has sensed a growing anxiety and has displayed an uncharacteristic irritability toward her superintendent during one incident. The superintendent questions if the participant is beginning to experience burn-out. The participant takes little time for herself away from school and only last year, for the first time, attended a national convention.

Participant's inconsistencies with research findings.

The following insight is inconsistent with the literature regarding care of self:

Insight 1. The participant appears to recognize her newly manifested irritability as symptoms of burn-out. The participant views the irritability to be more a character flaw than symptomatic of burn-out or the so-called stress trap.

Female Dilemma

Wrapped in the literature of female and male leadership styles is the message that females should emulate male leadership styles to succeed (Restine, 1993). Porat (1991) predicted that it is highly probable that female administrators will imitate the leadership styles of males because that approach to leadership is acceptable to the public and attracts promotion and recognition. On the other hand, researchers such as Helgesen (1990), Jacobson (1985), and Rosener (1990) suggested that females may be succeeding in administration because they exhibit feminine characteristics such as caring for others, cooperation with others, and building relationships with others. Peters (1989) contended that management survival traits read like a

portfolio of females' inclinations and natural talents. Peters also predicted that male and female traits will intersect and impact organizations in startling new ways. Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990), Shakeshaft (1989), and Regan and Brooks (1995) have called for the blending of gender roles that would produce both the soft and hard skills necessary for effective leadership.

With an extensive review of literature that predicted the emulation of male leadership traits by female leaders, asserted the belief that females succeed in administration because of their female characteristics, or called for a blend of leadership traits associated with each gender, I was unsure of what I would find in the female administrator's leadership style. I anticipated that I would discover a female administrator who might display male characteristics, female characteristics, or a blend of both characteristics.

Participant's consistency with the research findings.

There are no consistencies between the literature on female dilemma and this participant's leadership style.

Participant's inconsistency with the research findings.

The following insight is inconsistent with the literature on female dilemma.

Insight 1. The participant does not display all male characteristics of leadership to be successful as recommended by some literature nor does she exhibit only the female characteristics also presented in the literature to be the key to successful school administration. She blends male and female strengths,

characteristics, and traditional skills. The participant's leadership style caused those around her to coin a new term to describe her style--"stroft." The term "stroft" is a combination of the words "strong" and "soft" and represents a blend of the soft and hard skills of leadership. The participant was also described as tough but caring.

The eight factors ascertained through a constant comparative analysis of the literature and research on female educational administrators and on-site observations of the participant provided 15 insights that are consistent with the literature on female educational administrators. In addition, the study provided 8 insights that are inconsistent with the literature on female educational administrators. Thus, an examination of these insights will be the basis for the empirical assertions of this study.

Empirical Assertions Regarding Barriers to Female Educational Administrators

External barriers exist for a female on a career path to educational administration, but internal barriers do not exist. The findings in this case study of one female Iowa high school principal appear to coincide with the majority of the research and literature on barriers to females in pursuit of educational administration positions. The existence of barriers as reported in the literature seem to be verified by the participant's account of her career path experiences. As with other female administrators, the participant had transcended the internal barrier identified as low self-efficacy. The findings on external barriers

verify most of the research reported in the literature. The participant received no support from her own role model and was questioned about her ability to manage men.

Educational administration preparation programs as described in the literature as an external barrier to females presented a potential impediment into administration for the participant in this study. She felt that her course work had little value. Similar to others in the literature, the participant's professors were all male. She felt brushed off and not a part of the network of the male athletic directors. The participant also experienced an isolation from the job placement network that appeared to be controlled by the male professors as documented in the literature.

During her search for a position in educational administration, the participant encountered barriers similar to those reported in the literature. The discipline question was asked the participant in every interview, and she was also given excuses for not being hired. As with other female administrators quoted by researchers, she was either told that she was too good or did not have enough experience.

Although the literature identifies home and family responsibilities as an external barrier, this study's participant did not find those responsibilities to hinder her career path. Even though the participant is a wife and

mother, she experienced none of the sacrifices or immobility often associated with the married female's barriers in career advancement. Most literature asserts that job mobility is a more weighty issue for married females than females who are not married. The participant of this study represents the small number of female administrators reported by Hill and Ragland (1995) who discovered a few females who had husbands who followed their wives to a new work location.

Empirical Assertions Regarding Experiences of
Female Educational Administrators

The participant experienced rejection along the career path more often from females than males. The literature is replete with experiences encountered by female educational administrators. The participant worked hard to compensate for her gender, felt scrutinized, emphasized learning, and established her credibility with male faculty members but still battled the cold war with female faculty members. Her experiences seem typical of what researchers have found true for other female administrators. However, the research has failed to uncover cases where the female administrator served as her husband's boss. The participant in this study has served as principal in two different schools where her husband served as a teacher. The added dimensions for a female in a nontraditional role dealing with the

nontraditional husband/wife relationship in the workplace appears nowhere in the literature.

In addition, although the literature presents the importance of role models, mentors, and sponsors for a female administrator, prior research lacks a complete exploration of the failure of female role models to sponsor other females. The literature provides brief explanations such as the Queen Bee Syndrome (Edson, 1988) or fear of jeopardizing her own position but lacks depth in fully exploring the ramifications, impact, and reasoning behind such behavior. This study's participant experienced the rejection of her role model by the role model's failure to sponsor her entry into administration. The literature also fails to explore what usually happens to female educational administration aspirants when they have no sponsor.

Empirical Assertions Regarding Leadership Style of Female Educational Administrators

The participant displayed a leadership style that caused colleagues, friend and foe, to view her as "stroft." The literature suggests the existence of differences between male and female leadership styles. Recent literature, based on the belief that leadership calls for more collaboration, a move from hierarchal structures to web-like structures, improved communication, and an emphasis on "soft" and "intangible" relationship skills, advances the notion that females possess the abilities and natural inclinations to

carry them into administration (Hammons & Keller, 1990; Peters, 1989; Weiler; 1988). Likewise, some literature calls for a blend of the male and female attributes that will create a new dimension of leadership. This study's participant appears to have accomplished this blend as the literature predicted would begin to happen. However, because the blend of male and female leadership traits is relatively a recent phenomena, the literature does not yet address the possible stress and tension caused when a leader, male or female, attempts to be both strong and soft.

Findings in this study are consistent with literature and reaffirm that a female high school principal's career path is directly related to barriers, experiences, and leadership style. The in-depth methods of study did provide additional insights and gave reinforcement to existing insights. More importantly, this study added to the knowledge base on female administrators with new terminology for description of leadership style, i.e. "stroft."

Discussion

This case study of one Iowa female high school principal's experience described the passages of an Iowa female secondary principal from her perspective. Although a singular voice, her portrayal of barriers, experiences, and leadership style provides, if not Gilligan's "a different voice," another voice for those interested in a female's career path to the high school principalship. Females who

are considering a move into educational administration should become aware of the challenges faced and strategies developed by another female in an administrative role. When I entered the high school principalship 4 years ago, I possessed little comprehension of what to expect in the role of a female high school principal. My transition from secondary teacher to secondary principal may have been easier with access to the type of information shared by Sue, the participant in this study. For example, the literature tells us the issue of school-wide discipline for female high school principals will be asked in job interviews. Sue's answer to the discipline question,

The time is long gone to discipline kids by physical means. Men have no advantage over women anyway. Furthermore, women have a distinct advantage over men. When dealing with girls, men dare not touch--I sometime can. And dealing with boys? When men discipline, their macho ego gets involved. The boys wonder, "Can I take him?" But when I deal with a boy he knows he can take me--so his ego is not involved. We can then deal with the problem.

could have provided me a prototype of an appropriate response. Other female aspirants could also benefit from this type of information provided by Sue.

In addition, according to the literature, females often feel alone and isolated in their role as a female educational administrator. The sense that they are the only ones who encounter certain experiences may cause a feeling of inadequacy and a questioning of their "good-enoughness" (Hicks, 1996). The shared experiences of another female

administrator may diffuse the impostor theory. Specifically, other female administrators' feelings that they are the only one who ever faced various challenges or problems, and therefore it is somehow their fault, may be alleviated. The need for mentors and a support system, a sense of being scrutinized, or feelings of frustration in the differing interactions with male and female faculty is not unique or indicative of incompetency. Although no experiences are identical, females aspiring to the principalship may gain strength in knowing other female administrators faced similar scenarios in their leadership role.

Likewise, the shared experiences of female administrators also enable others to anticipate potential problems, cope with frustrations, and develop strategies for effective leadership. I think of Anna Hicks, author of Speak Softly and Carry Your Own Gym Key, as she struggled alone for an entire year as a high school principal before seeking out a support system and mentor. Females, in their attempt to compensate for their gender and in their desire to prove themselves, may not be quite so hesitant to ask for help if they know that seeking a support system and mentors are accepted practice. The participant in this study verified the need, and in Sue's case, males served in the role of mentor as well as in her support system. Sue's experience may provide other female administrators the

understanding that males are willing to assist and should be looked upon as partners in the process of developing necessary skills and insights for effective leadership as principals.

Another critical area in the development of effective leadership for females as identified by Sue is the educational administration preparation program. This study may add helpful insight for those responsible for the creation and implementation of the curricula and essential networking. Most importantly, the insights may give focus to the need for considering gender in discussion of curricula and networking. As the literature documents, half the students in educational administration preparation programs are female. According to Sue and the review of literature, educational administration preparation courses need to address the specific needs of female students. The identification of Sue's experiences as a female high school principal and the missing components of Sue's preparation program are important understandings for professors. As they revise their educational administration programs, this information will enable professors to design programs based on the androgynous needs of their students.

This study should also be of interest to those outside the circle of administrators, aspirants, and educational administration professors. As reported by the literature, four widely held beliefs exist about females as high school

principals. These include: (a) females cannot discipline older students, (b) females are too emotional, (c) females are too weak physically, and (d) males resent working for females. Although Sue represents only one female high school principal, she clearly dispels each of the four widely held beliefs about females as high school principals. With the call for innovative leadership and a new systems approach, the public must receive additional information such as provided in this study about effective school leadership.

According to those interviewed, Sue is an extremely effective school leader. Sue's high school benefits directly from her effective leadership. She works well with her faculty, emphasizes quality instruction, maintains good communication, places the needs of students first, and models a dedication to education. Sue's high school also benefits indirectly from the people who influenced her. Sue's passage into the principalship, her experiences, and her leadership style were impacted by numerous people along the way. Although Sue, like most female high school principals, had not planned on being a principal, certain conditions existed that enabled her to succeed in a male-dominated role.

The 1991 AAUW study on girls and self-esteem reported the importance for girls to develop self-efficacy in school. Possibly because of the reinforcement given by teachers who

valued Sue's academic ability and her family's high regard for learning, Sue developed a confidence and belief in herself at an early age. Sue's high comfort level in dealing with males perhaps resulted from the exposure to the male world she received accompanying her father on numerous farm errands and during coffee shop visits with other farmers. Perceived internal barriers in her career path were practically nonexistent for Sue. I wonder, however, if only females, like Sue, who had developed a strong self-efficacy at an early age, will consider the principalship. Or, is the issue of passages into the principalship based on being truly encouraging to young girls and helping them become confident? If this confidence is nurtured, perhaps more young female high school teachers will indicate that their career path includes the principalship.

Sue indicated that she worked with a female school administrator who served as her role model. The literature discusses the importance of female role models for females in educational administration. Females need to see that females are capable leaders. Sue benefitted from being in a school district that had a female administrator. In addition, she also benefitted from female colleagues who recognized her leadership ability and encouraged her to pursue administration. If Sue had had no direct contact with an effective female educational administrator or had received no colleague encouragement, I wonder if she would

have considered leaving the classroom for the principal's office. Likewise, what might have been the impact on Sue's career path if her husband had opposed her decision to become a principal? Instead of presenting barriers, influential people in Sue's background usually presented encouragement and support.

Sue did encounter a major block and personal disappointment from the rejection of her role model. The role model would not hire Sue in her school district because she believed it would not look right to have two female administrators in one district. According to the research, administrators sponsor those who resemble them. Also according to the research, females often feel threatened by or jealous of other capable females. Sue had revealed that her role model was an outstanding administrator but did not dress to honor her position. Sue, on the other hand, places great value on proper and professional appearance. I wonder if something as seemingly insignificant as the difference in belief about attire could have been behind the role model's feeling that Sue did not resemble her and, therefore, did not support her. Or did the role model feel threatened by Sue's abilities? Sue had encountered, ironically, through her role model, the first indication that females may fail to take care of each other.

Anna Hicks, incidentally who has left the principalship and now teaches educational administration courses, and Sue

recounted the struggles they experienced with females that greatly resemble the research on gender relationships. They both had males who served as mentors and support systems as also described in the literature. I believe that females need to recognize the connections and partnerships males are willing to provide to females. Likewise, female administrators need to develop ways to minimize the cold war that so often alienates females from each other. As more females become aware of the lack of support given by females to other females and the negative impact their behavior has on aspiring females, maybe females will begin to provide networks, sponsorship, and support to other females. Females often cite the good ol' boy system for their minority status and frustrations in educational administration when, in fact, some females often present the obstacles and hardships for other females in administration.

This case study of one female high school principal provided a new term for describing a leadership trait, "stroft." "Stroft" is a blend of strong and soft leadership characteristics. The participant's guidance counselor used this term to describe Sue's leadership style. The counselor used the term without hesitation and acknowledged that it was a Madison Avenue term from the early 80s used in Charmin toilet tissue commercials. When challenged about using a term from the advertising world, the counselor suggested that "stroft" truly described his principal.

The literature confirms that soft skills focus on consideration for people and relationships and provide an ethic of care. Sue demonstrated an ethic of nurturing and caring in actions as simple as promoting good cafeteria food, choosing to tutor troubled students instead of expelling them, and eating grapefruit each morning with the guidance counselor. Strong skills represent the development of strategies for building a power base. Sue did have a power base that she used effectively. This power base was constructed not through intimidation or pulling rank but rather by paying attention to relationships, considering people, and demonstrating a genuine care for student learning and the school. Because of Sue's ability to blend strong and soft skills, she has earned the respect and trust of most of her faculty and community.

Sue's faculty and community also recognize the hard work and many hours Sue provides the district. However, I wonder about the personal cost to Sue for her dedication to the school. Sue indicated that she has little time to cultivate friendships or outside interests because she puts in long hours and is "peopled out" at the end of the day. She also feels guilt if she takes time away from school. Is this what it really takes for a female to be an effective high school principal, or has Sue become consumed by her position? Edson (1988), Hicks (1996), and Shakeshaft (1989) concurred that the female must learn to detach. Hicks had

to learn to detach to prevent the principalship from consuming her. Sue shows no signs of detachment from her role. I must ask the question, "Where is the line between dedication and efforts to be 'good enough' and loss of self?" Perhaps this represents a female dilemma yet to be addressed by research.

As I interviewed and observed Sue during this study, my own perspective as a female and a high school principal entered into our conversations and what I saw. Before I began my on-site visits, I wondered how much Sue and I would be alike. I believed that if I found characteristics similar to me in Sue, I would be validated and affirmed in my experiences and leadership style. What I discovered was a female high school principal who was authentic, confident, and comfortable with herself. The literature would label Sue self-actualized. What I discovered was not necessarily a validation or affirmation but rather another voice to provide me a backdrop for my own career path. As I observed Sue's stroft style, interviewed her colleagues, and examined artifacts from her experiences, I began to think differently about the role of a female high school principal. I began to feel more comfortable about my assumptions and more willing to challenge the existing role models that were part of the literature. In fact, I began searching for connections between what I knew from personal experiences and what I observed in Sue's experience. This

connectiveness provided a basis for reflection about the role of a female high school principal in the 90s.

Moreover, in the 70s Lortie (1974) suggested the need for teachers to observe other teachers in their classroom to gain new methods and strategies. High school principals, too, should observe other principals in their schools to learn new methods and strategies. However, high school principals seldom have an opportunity to grow professionally by spending a school day with their peers. Even though the purpose of this study was to identify and describe the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of a female high school principal, an unexpected lesson also emerged. Female secondary principals who take time to observe another female secondary principal during the school day benefitted greatly. So this is time then, perhaps, in the preparation programs for educational administration curricula to focus on more field experience as part of the preparation program. Coupled with this idea may be the groundwork for everyone in educational administration--female and male--to come to understand the barriers overcome, experiences encountered, and leadership style needed for an effective school principal in the 90s--female and male.

Through this case study of one female high school principal, I hope that I have provided both windows for all administrators to see their world as well as mirrors to see themselves. The journey from a high school teacher to a

high school principal for a female in Iowa had not been documented. Thus, this case study examined the barriers that Sue found. These barriers included: lack of network and sponsor; lack of a user-friendly educational administration preparation program, and no role model support. In addition, the case study described the experiences encountered in Sue's role as a secondary female principal. These experiences included: feelings of scrutiny and need to prove herself; differing battles with female and male faculty members; and the need to seek out mentors and support systems. And, the "stroft" trait that Sue brings to her leadership style provided a unique understanding of the skills necessary in a female's passage into the principalship. Today's school demands a connectiveness in reflecting and in thinking about the role of a secondary principal, especially if she happens to be female. This case study added that singular description to our understanding of one woman's passage to the principalship.

Major Contributions of the Study

The results from this study give a rich description of one person's experience as a female high school principal in the state of Iowa. A recognition of the necessity to use the case study methodology exists to illuminate the complexity of the barriers overcome, the experiences encountered, and the leadership style of one Iowa female high school principal. The career path of female

administrators has been neglected in theory and in research. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify and describe one Iowa female high school principal's career path to the principalship in an Iowa public high school.

The case study captured one Iowa female high school principal's story within a limited time frame. Although the study is not generalizable, it does examine the career path of a specific female high school principal in Iowa. The significance of the study is theoretical, substantive, and practical. From a theoretical perspective, the particulars of this study serve to illuminate larger issues and therefore is significant. Substantively, the documented singular voice of one Iowa female high school principal adds to the understanding of the unique role of female high school principals in a basically rural state where female high school principals are in the minority. Practically, the study provides needed data for females in Iowa who aspire to the principalship as well as for practicing female high school principals. Furthermore, the study gives us a new term for identifying a leadership trait heretofore identified as strong and soft traits. This term, "stroft," provides a new way of thinking of a leadership trait defined as strong and soft but conceptually understood as a blend of those characteristics that equals "stroft."

Recommendations

The findings of the study of one Iowa female high school principal indicate salient recommendations for further research. These recommendations include: (a) a longitudinal study of this participant, (b) research concerning reasons why administrative licensed females are not serving as principals in Iowa, (c) a study of the educational administration training available in the state of Iowa, and (d) research in the form of parallel case studies from varying male/female perspectives.

Longitudinal Study

During this study that described the barriers, experiences, and leadership style of one female high school principal in a limited time frame, the participant expressed uncertainty in her future career path. She has considered a pursuit of a doctorate in educational administration with the prospect of teaching educational administration at the university level. In addition, the possibilities of returning to the classroom as a high school math teacher or of entering the superintendency have also been expressed by the participant. Although she feels comfortable in her present position, she has interviewed for the principalship in larger districts. Therefore, a follow-up study of the participant to track her continued career path, explore new dimensions of barriers, experiences, and possible

modifications in her leadership style merits further investigation over the next 5- and then 10-year time period.

Reasons Why Administrative Licensed Females Are Not Serving as Principals

Presently, over 400 females in the state of Iowa are licensed as educational administrators but are not employed in an administrative position. A thorough investigation of the reasons why females pursue their licenses in the state of Iowa but then fail to serve in administrative positions needs to be examined. Investigations should include whether the females sought positions but failed to be hired or whether they decided not to pursue a career change into administration. Likewise, the investigation should examine whether the non-practicing licensed females have role models, mentors, or sponsors. The extent of their knowledge of the experiences other females encountered in educational administration should also be explored.

Educational Administration Training

The participant of this study reported an environment in educational administration preparation courses that failed to address the needs of females in the program. A comprehensive study of the three Iowa Regents institutions and one private university educational administration training programs needs to be undertaken. The examination of the educational administration training programs may determine if the skills needed by females are addressed in

the preparation programs. In addition, an analysis of the role of the professors as mentors and sponsors and of the curricula offered may provide insight into reasons for the low percentage of females serving as educational administrators in the state of Iowa.

Parallel Case Studies From Different Perspectives

The barriers, experiences, and leadership style were described by one Iowa female high school principal through her voice and were recounted to another female high school principal. The possibilities for an expanded study and comparison of gender issues exist in a multitude of variations. First, a male high school principal could conduct a similar study of a female high school principal. Secondly, a female high school principal could conduct a similar study of a male high school principal. Thirdly, a male could conduct a similar study of a male high school principal. The recounting of barriers, experiences, and leadership styles could then be the basis for a comparative study to determine if, indeed, gender impacts the career path of Iowa principals. Likewise, the possibilities for expanded understanding of the career path for female high school principals exists in conducting case studies of more than one Iowa female high school principal.

Summary

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to identify and describe one female high school principal's

career path to the principalship in an Iowa public school. Specifically, the study addressed the perceived barriers, experiences and leadership style of one Iowa female high school principal. The participant spoke for herself as she described her barriers overcome, her experiences encountered, and her leadership style. Descriptions of the participant's leadership style and my observations of the participant illuminated the participant's voice.

The participant displays a high degree of self-efficacy but experienced barriers in her career path to the principalship. Although she had a female role model, she lacked a sponsor who could have eased her way in the job search. During her educational administration preparation training, she received little support from the male professors and developed few skills she believed necessary to become an effective administrator. The hiring practices experienced by the participant also represented barriers hidden under the guise of the participant's lack of experience or of her being too good.

The experiences encountered and described by the participant as she assumed the role of principal reflected her belief that she had to work harder than a man, restore discipline, serve as an instructional leader, undergo scrutiny, establish her position with female and male faculty members, and be everything to everybody. She

expressed frustration over her perceived inability to impact learning and in her dealings with adults.

The participant's leadership style, as described by her and those with whom she works, and as observed by me, revealed a blend of male and female characteristics. The descriptor "stroft" used by the school's guidance counselor provided a unique understanding of the participant's tough but caring leadership style.

This study described the career path of a singular Iowa female high school principal and provided a better understanding of the specific experiences of one individual female administrator. From this thick description, one may find insights that will provide a basis for more in-depth reflection about and study of the career path of female secondary principals.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

I understand the purpose of the interview and observation is to provide a base for research on a female secondary principal. My participation is voluntary. The information I discuss will include my background, education, description of a typical day in the life of a female secondary principal, leadership philosophy, and barriers overcome in attaining my position. A tape recording of the interviews is acceptable as well as some videotaping. I understand the tapes will not be released from the interviewer's possession and used only for the purpose of this research project. The interviewer will provide me a copy of this study at the completion of the research project.

The interviewer is Vickie Robinson, Department of Teaching at the University of Northern Iowa. She can be contacted at 319-273-2064. Any questions regarding the research or your rights as a participant in this interview and observation process may be directed to the Human Subjects Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa (319-273-2748).

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

(Signature of subject or responsible agent)

(Date)

(Printed name of subject)

(Signature of investigator)

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the experiences which served as real or perceived barriers in the career path to the high school principalship for one Iowa female high school principal?
 - a. Describe your family background and educational background.
 - b. Describe what motivated you to become a teacher and, later, a principal.
 - c. Help me understand your major considerations when you thought about becoming a principal.
 - d. Describe reactions from your family, friends, and co-workers when you sought certification in educational administration.
 - f. Did any one person serve as a role model or sponsor to you as you pursued the principalship?
 - g. How did the first principalship job search go?
 - h. Tell me about your interviews for principalships.
 - i. If you had your career to do over again, what would you have done differently?
 - j. If a female teacher asked you for advice about becoming a high school principal, what would you tell her?

2. How does one Iowa female high school principal view her role, strengths, and limitations based on her experiences as a high school principal?
 - a. Tell me about three of the most positive experiences you have had as principal.
 - b. Describe a "normal" day's routine as high school principal.
 - c. How do you describe your relationship with the school board, superintendent, and faculty?
 - d. Is there any difference in working with female and male staff members?
 - e. What new projects, innovations, or changes have occurred at your school since you assumed the principalship?
 - f. How do you cope with job-related stress?
 - g. Terry Deal talks about sharing pits and berries stories. What are stories you have about being a principal?
 - h. What are three most memorable moments you have as principal?

3. How does one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

- a. What are three adjectives which describe you as a principal?
- b. How do you bring about change, deal with conflict between constituents, and communicate with your students and faculty?
- c. Tell me about your major strengths as a leader.
- d. What do you do when a faculty member is out of line?
- e. How do you make important decisions?
- f. Are you a hero or a hero maker as a principal?
- g. If you could change anything about yourself as principal, what would you change?

4. How do those who work with the one Iowa female high school principal describe her leadership style?

- a. What are three adjectives which describe your principal?
- b. Describe a recent problem you took to the principal and the outcome.
- c. How do decisions get made at your school?
- d. What are the principal's views on education and students which have been conveyed to you?
- e. Describe for me a vivid memory you have about your principal.
- f. If you could change anything about your principal, what would that be?