

University of Cincinnati

Date: 2/16/2012

I, Janet W Warren , hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Urban Educational Leadership.

It is entitled:

Merging Education With Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice

Student's name: **Janet W Warren**

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: James Koschoreck, PhD

Committee member: Michael Dantley, EdD

Committee member: Vanessa Allen-brown, PhD

Committee member: Lanthan Camblin, PhD



2284

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice

A dissertation submitted to the
Division of Research and Advanced Studies
of the University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

in the Department of Urban Educational Leadership
of the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services

2012

By

Janet W. Warren

B.A., Excelsior College, 1992

B.S., University of Cincinnati 2005

M. Ed., University of Cincinnati, 2007

Committee Chair: Dr. James Koschoreck, Ph.D

Abstract

According to Bennis (2003), “True leaders are not born, but made, and usually self-made” (p. 33). The purpose of this study was to identify and examine what factors influenced and limited the opportunities of African American females to obtain and maintain leadership roles in administrative positions at urban schools and the value of supporting diversity in leadership. This researcher believed that AA female leaders rely on their own personal-lived experiences to develop a leadership style that compliments how she handles the day-to-day protocols of her demanding and volatile job. Additionally, research and experiences about AA female leadership is scarce and in dire need of more attention (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Alston, 2005; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Dillard, 1995, Hill-Collins, 2000).

AA female leaders appear to be in a sphere of pressured situations based on social, economic, political, and moral concerns that collectively challenge the way she develops her educational environment in order to create a didactic environment that becomes an effective, successful, and high-achieving academic setting for the students, teachers, and staff.

This research study examined the leadership style of a small subset of three (3) AA female elementary principals, ranging from ages 35-43, in a large urban school district. This study utilized a qualitative approach and was situated in an epistemology of Black Feminist Theory and Transformational Leadership that investigated how gender, race, age, personal-lived experiences, mentors, culture, spirituality, and other social inequalities might affect their leadership decisions and influence their urban educational experiences.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my two wonderful daughters, Ebony Monique and Essence Monet Warren, and my lovely granddaughter, Ereyana Monet Kincaid. Without your love and support this would not have been possible. Whenever you want to be close to me, just pick this up and I will be there; because I put my heart and soul into this document.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can do all things in him who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

First, giving all honor and praises to God; my rock, my sword, and my shield for whom none of this would have been conceivable or possible.

A special and sincere thank you goes to my two daughters Ebony Monique and Essence Monet Warren who have supported me these past four years through this process. Without you, this would have been impossible. It was because of your love and belief in me that I was able to carry through until the end. I love you more than you will ever know.

Special recognition goes to my granddaughter, Ereyana Monet Kincaid, who gives me strength every time she calls me “Nina.” I love you and remember it was your love that guided Nina through this process.

A heartfelt thank you and special recognition goes to Dr. Lanthan Camblin, Professor Emeritus, who guided me through my doctoral process. Without your assistance and guidance I would not have made it. Your passion and dedication for my completion picked me up several times when you did not even know that I had stopped or was ready to give up. Your kind words (Janet, where are you?) and dedicated spirit, always knew what to say and when to say it to me. Words will never be able to express how I will always be grateful for your commitment to my progress and ultimately the completion of my dissertation; thank you, thank you, thank you!

Thank you to my committee members, Dr. James Koschoreck who always challenged me and was there when I needed him; to Dr. Vanessa Allen-Brown whose perspective was always direct and thought-provoking; and Dr. Michael Dantley whose praise and encouragement kept me on track. Words cannot express the appreciation I have for you all. Thank you for your time, guidance and belief in me.

A special recognition and thank you goes to one of the most important people in my life, I want to say thank you and I love you to my Mother, Daisy Lee Moore, who has supported me from birth. She never stopped believing in my ability to accomplish my goals. I love you, Mom.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the 2007 Urban Educational Leadership (UEL) Cohort; my colleagues, who made this journey enjoyable and tolerable. Without the support of many of you, I would not have made it through. Thank you all and May God Bless and Keep you All.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	<i>ii</i>
Copyright Notice	<i>iii</i>
Dedication.....	<i>iv</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>v</i>
Appendices	<i>viii</i>
List of Figures.....	<i>x</i>
 CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION/STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	1
Why African American Female Leadership	<i>1</i>
Statement of the Problem.....	<i>2</i>
Context	<i>2</i>
Historical Background of African-American Females in Education	<i>9</i>
Research Questions.....	<i>14</i>
Operational Definitions	<i>15</i>
 CHAPTER 2 –LITERATURE REVIEW	18
Theoretical Framework.....	<i>18</i>
Leadership Background	<i>18</i>
Transformational Leadership.....	<i>27</i>
Black Feminist Thought	<i>30</i>
Summary.....	<i>34</i>
Literature Review	<i>36</i>
Race and Gender.....	<i>37</i>
Communication and Feedback.....	<i>38</i>
Othermothering.....	<i>39</i>
Mentors.....	<i>41</i>
Leadership	<i>42</i>
Equity Concerns	<i>45</i>
Urban Principalships.....	<i>46</i>
Summary.....	<i>48</i>
 CHAPTER 3 -METHODOLOGY	51
Introduction	<i>51</i>
Purpose and Design of the Study.....	<i>51</i>
Research Methods.....	<i>54</i>
Setting and Participant.....	<i>54</i>
Gaining Entrée.....	<i>55</i>
Data Sources.....	<i>56</i>
Data Collection and Instruments.....	<i>57</i>
Observations	<i>58</i>
Interviews	<i>60</i>
Survey Research	<i>61</i>

Data Analysis Procedures.....	63
Validity-Reliability and Limitations.....	65
Ethical Considerations and the Protection of Human Subjects.....	67
Summary.....	68
CHAPTER 4 -RESULTS	69
Introduction	69
Participant Profiles	70
Principal Profiles	71
Principal Janice Thompson.....	71
Principal Dorothy Price	73
Principal Katherine March.....	75
Thematic Coding and Analysis.....	76
The School Environments.....	81
Schools	81
The Principal's Offices	83
Principal Overview	84
Leadership Development.....	86
Leadership Style	88
Race and Gender.....	92
Othermothering.....	94
Mentors.....	96
Communication and Feedback	100
Equity Concerns	101
Urban Principalships.....	103
Religion	104
Other Opportunities	107
Influences and Limitations	108
Summary.....	112
CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	115
Introduction	115
Summary of the Study	115
Discussion of the Findings.....	118
Race and Gender.....	118
Othermothering.....	120
Mentors.....	121
Communication and Feedback	123
Equity Concerns	124
Urban Principalships.....	125
Implications	126
Limitations of the Study	128
Future Research	129
Conclusion.....	130
References	135
Appendices	144
Appendix A – Interview Guide.....	145
Appendix B – Principal Observation Field Note Chart	151

Appendix C – Data Management Grid	152
Appendix D – Online Survey (Survey Monkey) Questionnaire	153
Appendix E – Adult Consent Form	158

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Brief History of Major Schools of Leadership.....	22
Figure 2 – Transformational Leadership Model	31
Figure 3 – Lomotey’s Conceptual Framework	43
Figure 4 – Emerging Themes Resulting from Observations, Interviews, and Surveys ...	78

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Why African American Female Leadership?

My interest in African American female leadership is simple: I am an African American female who has struggled with issues surrounding leadership since entering the workforce. Only rarely provided the opportunity to acquire a leadership role and never permanently placed into one, I was never properly trained to be a traditional leader. The few leadership sessions I was allowed to participate in did not give me the tools and techniques necessary to feel confident enough to assume the directorship of an organization.

Choosing to become an educator was a journey that took a while for me to realize and to initiate. However, from the beginning, I knew that I wanted a leadership role beyond the K-12 classroom. To me, good leaders are pivotal for the success of an organization. Leaders develop other leaders by choosing and modeling the dynamics needed to cultivate a successful and vibrant environment. Leaders advocate how the staff should deal with one another, the development of the culture in the work environment, and the pleasure to serve society by meeting the needs of its people. Leaders solve the problems that mystify and baffle our world. I know that leadership within the educational realm is where my passion lies.

According to Holmes (2004), “Overall, access to educational and employment opportunities for African Americans in general [have] increased steadily since the turbulent 1960’s; however, research indicates that disparity exists at various levels of the academic ladder when African Americans are compared to their White counterpart” (p. 22). As my journey in education proceeded, it was apparent that the African American female’s role in education was small, especially in central administration. Past research focused on African American students and the improvement of educational and career opportunities. However, research into the promotion and

retention of African American females in executive positions in education has been minimally addressed. Furthermore, the stories of African American female leaders who have ascended into the executive levels of educational management have only begun to be told. This is where my study began.

Statement of the Problem

Warren Bennis (2003) wrote, “But until you truly know yourself, strengths and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the word” (p. 32). Basically, leadership develops from within. Although African American (AA) females have worked in the pedagogical environment for many years, it has been primarily within the last few decades that AA females have successfully obtained jobs in the administrative realm as principals in urban city schools. It has been speculated that the challenge of overcoming obstacles led AA female leaders in urban settings to rely on their own personal experiences to develop unique leadership styles that determine how they handle the day-to-day experiences in their volatile job settings (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Tillman, 1998). However, nothing definitive has been found to substantiate this premise. Many researchers have agreed that research and experiences about AA females in leadership roles is scarce and in dire need of more attention (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Alston, 2005; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Hill-Collins, 2000; Dillard, 1995; Loder, 2005; Williams-Collins & Lightsey, 2001).

Context

As stated previously, research and the experiences relating to African American females in leadership roles is meager and in critical need of increased attention (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Alston, 2005; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Hill-Collins, 2000; Dillard, 1995; Loder, 2005; Williams-Collins & Lightsey, 2001; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009). Current research suggests

that there is a constructive relationship between the personal and professional acts that African American females use to develop their leadership (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Tillman, 1998). This leadership has been molded by “increasing racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and economic diversity of students in our schools and communities” (Dillard, 1995, p. 540). These factors contribute to the necessity of the AA female principal to develop a leadership style that is unique from traditional leadership styles.

Researchers such as Reed and Evans (2008) stated that factors such as, race, gender, and professional socialization determine how AA females shape their leadership styles. This leadership was molded by “increasing racial ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and economic diversity of students in our schools and communities” (Dillard, 1995, p. 540). These factors were thought to contribute to the necessity of the AA female principal to develop a leadership style that is unique from traditional leadership styles.

Other researchers such as Bryant (1988), Dantley (2003), and Tillman (2006) believed that this different approach to leadership is indicative of the “every day racisms” that urban communities are confronted with daily (e.g., economic, social, and cultural dogmas) that transform the way a leader in this environment must approach and manipulate the structural and routine situations that challenge them (Essed, 2002). These transformative educational leaders develop and implement new concepts and skills that reconstruct school cultures and communities from traditional modes characterized by the oppressive states incurred from race, gender, social, financial, cultural and economic injustices.

An example of this new approach is the concept of “spirituality” utilized to combat problems that present themselves during the school year (Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009). In one of the many urban schools where I was employed, we had to deal with the death of one of our 12-

year-old students. This student was hit by a 17-year-old female who did not have a valid driver's license. Utilizing the traditional venues of grief counseling, one-on-one with the psychologist, and peer group discussion were not enough for this AA female principal to handle this problem. She also called upon a moment of silence and "prayer" for the family and the fallen student. Additionally, in a staff meeting, again, she asked her staff members to "pray" for the financial problems that this district was incurring in order to stop the loss of jobs that could happen if something did not change. Dantley (2003) suggested that it is through spirituality that African Americans have built up the will to survive and overcome "overt demonstrations of hatred, prejudice, and oppression emanating from a hegemonically propagated xenophobia" (p. 7). In other words, "spirituality" has become the wall between injustice and continued existence for those who are socially oppressed by a hegemonic system.

Several studies (Ambrose, 1995; Dillard, 1995; Loder, 2005; Tillman, 1998) have suggested that the AA female leader appears to undergo a special journey that deviates from the norm and embarks on a trek within to seek the answers she would need in order to lead a successful urban institution. Ambrose (1995) stated, "Your journey inward [will] explore how your life experiences and resulting personal choices may be linked to [your] leadership" (p. 8). Using one's lived experiences to meet the challenge of the urban schooling situations is said to provide one of the tools that AA females commandeer to assist them with the decisions they make during their journey as urban principals (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Edson, 1988; Loder, 2005). One thing is clear, the urban principal's job is a juggling act that deals with financial, cultural, social, and political problems that create a unique set of circumstances that make her job more demanding and stressful than suburban administrators (Portin, 2000).

In order to understand the diverse circumstances surrounding the AA female's principalship, one must better understand the normal demands of this position. According to Sergiovanni (2005), the tasks and functions of the principal's job include:

. . . tasks and roles have given way to lists of competencies and proficiencies as the favored way for mapping out the territory of educational administration [This list includes] leadership behavior, communication skills, group processes, curriculum and instruction, enlisting the expertise of staff for improving instruction, assessment, organizational management, fiscal management, and political management. (pp. 5-6)

The principal's job requires a total commitment on the part of the person who decides to accept the responsibilities of this employment. Other researchers concur with Sergiovanni (2005) in his description of the traditional role and responsibilities of the principalship and have documented the over demanding challenges that are apparent (Barth, 1990; Dillard, 1995; Fullan, 2001; Hoy & Hoy, 2006; Kelley & Peterson, 2002).

The traditional role of the principalship has been expressed for males by Shakeshaft (1995). She suggested that the traditional principal role has been researched to include only the behaviors that are indicative of White males. Thus making the White male's actions the norm and thereby causing anyone who does not fit into this category to have to change their behavior to emulate him. Females and people of color are coerced to perform their duties like White males if they want to be accepted without the threat of loss of job or the humiliation of not being able to perform the duties of this office.

However, within this situation come other concerns that are encountered by females; especially African-American females. These include race, gender, sex, age, and other social identities, such as 'othermothering,' that mold their leadership roles and change the trajectory of

their leadership styles significantly from the traditional role of the principalship (Reed & Evans, 2008). As Dantley (2003) surmised, “A deep-seated moralism engages the abuse of power, the marginalising of difference, and the propagation of cultural forms that continue to maintain race, class, and gender differentials in schools” and this exemplifies the ideals of the African American female as a transformative leader within the urban institution (p. 10). Her challenge is to identify, to confront, and to rid the organization that she leads from the oppressive states that uphold and nurture inequality and social injustice for her students and their community (Dantley, 2003).

Additionally, leadership styles are affected by other problems that are not considered the norm for the traditional leader. These areas of focus, such as poverty, homelessness, drug and alcohol usage, and so forth, are societal in nature and attributed to community life that is developed through systemic controls based on political, social, historical, and cultural choices (Brown, 2005; Reed & Evans, 2008). Today’s urban administrator is plagued with social-service oriented problems and barriers that encompass drugs and drug dependency, gang violence, generational poverty, teen pregnancy, the inability to get parents involved with their child’s education, the development of racial identity and self-esteem issues, and disciplinary challenges; just to name a few (Collins & Lightsey, 2001; Loder, 2005; Reed & Evans, 2008). Each of these issues represents a demoralizing and challenging situation that cannot be disregarded or treated lightly.

At one of the educational institutions at which I was employed, we had two eighth-grade students who were pregnant. These girls had to deal with gossip from classmates, health, financial, and social issues, while trying to figure out how to become a parent when they were only children themselves. As the pregnancies progressed, their behavior displayed such traits as anger, discontentment, timorousness, and distancing themselves from classmates, teachers and staff members.

One AA female principal shared with me some of the execrable conditions that both of the girls were experiencing in their homes to assist me in dealing with their educational needs. For example, one of the students had a mother who was believed to be using illegal substances. The other student shared with me that she was depending on an older sister, who did not graduate from high school, to assist her in the financial, mental, and physical raising of her child. The principal was involved with connecting both students with social services that could assist them with their problems.

Researchers found that these challenging and diverse situations have caused many of the AA principals to develop “other” leadership qualities that are not acknowledged in traditional leadership literature (Lomotey, 1989a; Tillman, 2006; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009). Three of these qualities included:

1) concern for the education of their students, 2) a ‘caring’ and concern for the students, their parents, and the environments that they live, and 3) a belief in the ability of all their children to learn the curriculum that is established within their school. (Lomotey, 1989, p. 131)

These three “other” qualities promote a different and vibrant type of leadership that addresses the need to go beyond the traditional criterion utilized by the traditional educational leader. This initiative was conceptualized by Horton:

[It] contributes to what Paulo Freire calls the process of ‘conscientization.’ . . . it refers to the kind of learning process which involves the perception on the part of the oppressed people of certain cultural, social, economic, and political realities affecting their lives. It refers to their capacity to transform those realities and to make action against the elements which oppress them. (as cited in Jacobs, 2003,

p. 240)

Regardless of the seemingly insurmountable challenges they will have to face, AA females have taken the leadership roles in urban schools, and according to some researchers, without the assistance of mentors or training that takes into account the complete set of barriers they will contend with during their careers (Dillard, 1995; Loder, 2005; Reed & Evans, 2008). As transformative leaders, African American females must understand, perhaps, more so than for other groups, how race, class, gender, and other social and systemic inequalities must be challenged and changed within our society before democracy is actually captured and embraced (Dantley, 2003).

Based on the challenges discussed above, the purpose of this research was to examine the leadership style of a small subset of African American female elementary principals in a large urban school district. This study used a qualitative approach and was housed in an epistemology of Culturally Sensitive Research to explore how gender, race, age, lived experiences, mentors, culture, spirituality and other social inequalities have impacted their leadership decisions and have influenced their urban educational experiences. Additionally, this study included questions that asked these AA females why they were not seeking positions in the upper level administrative realm, such as the superintendency.

The qualitative research method was selected for a variety of reasons. This type of research adds rich description while capturing the voices and feelings of multiple voices on the same perspective (Klenke, 2008). The use of qualitative research techniques allows the researcher to observe their subjects in their natural settings; allowing for researchers to experience the lives of those they are studying (Glicken, 2003). Researchers doing qualitative research acquire an “insider’s point of view” due to the time and attention given during the meetings (Glicken, 2003, p. 153). This methodology is more flexible to assist the researcher in obtaining the information

needed. More facts and information are utilized to get the full picture of the subject and their story, (e.g., pictures, letters, notes, newspaper clippings, awards, etc.). The researcher is able to “report the subjective interactions of people, which permits a more inductive approach to data collection” (Glicken, 2003, p. 153).

This is an opportunity to explore how African American female elementary principals in a large urban school district think their leadership roles and careers have evolved based on the many challenges one faces in an elementary urban educational institution. Furthermore, it adds to the paucity of information available on AA female principals working in urban schools while giving voice back to a class of individuals who have been ignored in the research, the African American female (Loder, 2005).

Historical Background of African-American Females in Education

To begin a discussion of African American female leadership, one must consider the historical significance of the African American female in education. For instance, Black female educators, such as, Mary McLeod Bethune, Fanny Jackson Coppin, and Charlotte Hawkins Brown are only a few African American women who refused to let African American children become victims of their slave pasts.

No matter how marginalized African Americans felt; they were not ready to give up their hopes and dreams. They fought for a better life than their ancestors that had lived before them. It is during this period that the African American female took a decisive stand concerning the education or the “miseducation” of her people. The struggle to educate the adult black masses, as well as their children, became a challenge that black women engaged in all across America. “Thousands of Black women, through service in churches, service organizations, and women’s clubs, acted as the

stabilizing forces of educational movements, and without them, those movements could not have been sustained” (Murtadha, K. & Watts, D. 2005, pp. 592 - 593).

As indicated by Collier-Thomas (1982), most African American women, after slavery, did not have reason to pursue a degree. Women of all races had a prescribed position in society, including the African American female, that included her duties as a wife and mother; another as the role of domestic laborer (Glenn, 1991). “It was only in the last decade of the nineteenth century that black women became a major force in the segregated educational system of the South” (Collier-Thomas, 1982, p. 175). It was then that the need for education became paramount to her vocational pursuits.

After the turn of the century, as school jobs became more abundant for the African American female this caused her to obtain more education. No longer having to compete with the African American male for teaching positions, African American females began to seek educational careers in elementary schools, colleges, industrial training schools, and most notably, establishing their own schools (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Edson, 1988).

However, from 1865 to 1900, again factors such as race and sex limited and influenced where African American females could teach or lead. Furthermore, if African American women were to ascertain employment in a rural school, they were paid far less than their White counterparts (male and female) and African American males who were doing the same jobs (Collier-Thomas, 1982). However, this disparity in wages and the lack of jobs did not stop the AA female from seeking greater opportunity under oppressive and patriarchal conditions. The AA female’s challenge to financial and social injustices have not changed since they began working in the educational field. Due to the impact of racism, sexism, and genderism, one hundred years have passed and the AA female is still confronting the same social injustices that her predecessors faced.

Before 1950, teachers only needed a high school diploma to teach school (Collier-Thomas, 1982). Nevertheless, Black women began to acquire higher degrees. By 1920, three colleges had been established exclusively for Black women, Spelman, Scotia Academy, and Bennett (Collier-Thomas, 1982).

During the past century, the African American female's interest in the teaching field and education has grown exponentially; indicating that the AA female understands her obligation and responsibility for educating the students in the African American community. She seems to understand that within these students lay the hopes, dreams, visions and aspirations that their community needs in order to survive.

Although the positions held by the AA female in the administration field are limited and mostly dominated in elementary and secondary schools, further research is essential to understand and translate the racial and sexual inequalities occurring within the position of the African American female principal. As indicated by Lorde (1970):

Certainly there are real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions that result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation. (as cited in Guy-Sheftall, 1995, p. 285)

Therefore, Collier-Thomas (1982) concluded that research which delves into the impact of the African American female in education must center on who they were, the issues that influenced them and the accomplishments and contributions they made during their lifetimes. Following the history of the AA female in education brings perspicacity of her wit, ingenuity, and the passion that she has maintained for this profession.

From a letter published in 1957 by playwright, Lorraine Hansberry to the newspaper *The Ladder* in which she expresses the need for research that explores female epistemologies. She stated:

I think it is about time that equipped women began to take on some of the ethical questions which a male-dominated culture has produced and *dissect and analyze them quite to pieces in a serious fashion*. It is time that ‘half the human race’ had something to say about the nature of its existence. Otherwise – without revised basic thinking – the woman intellectual is likely to find herself trying to draw conclusions *-moral conclusions* -based on acceptance of a social moral superstructure which has never admitted to the quality of women and is therefore immoral itself. (as cited in Hull, Scott & Smith, 1982, p. xxiii)

Brown (2005) concurred with the historical ramifications of underrepresentation of the African American in administrative positions. According to Brown (2005), “The shortage of African American leaders can be directly linked to several factors . . .shortages of African American teachers . . .lack of mentoring . . .recruitment and retention of African Americans in preparation programs . . .and the appointment of African American leaders” (pp. 586-587). This paper includes many of the factors that are limiting the opportunities that African American females can obtain in the educational realm. These factors are found within the issues of the many questions that must be asked and researched for clarity, understanding, and to create social justice within our society.

These questions should include: (1) is the African American female being placed in a position in which she is meant to fail? (2) Can the African American female leader create change and become effective and successful in an urban school environment plagued with many

challenging problems? (3) Why do African American females accept these positions in the first place? (4) Do African American females have to modify and change their leadership styles in order to complete their assignments? (5) Does religion play a part in their decision-making? (6) If so, how do they maintain their position in academia knowing the challenges of keeping state and religion separate? To add to the complications experienced in urban schools, Bloom and Erlandson (2003) made this statement:

Urban schools are mirages, imaginary places where poor, minority children go ostensibly to receive an education. However, on closer observation and intensive inspection, too often the findings cause the observer to question if the school really exists as a place where adequate and sufficient learning opportunities occur. (p. 342)

Thus, one should question if the lack of investment in the education of our nation's children supports the concept of the development of 'imaginary schools' that have no purpose other than to maintain the status quo of our nation? (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). If the above statement is true, how would this insight affect the development of leadership in urban cultures, especially for the African American female?

This view is reiterated by Anyon (2005) who purported that the problem with urban schools is built in the macroeconomic system that our country has purposely developed. She alleged that our economy policy supports developing lower skilled waged jobs; simplified, this causes problems in an economy that has an educated workforce. Therefore, the changes within the educational venue begin to reflect the need of the economy. Since we only have lower skilled jobs, we only need low to moderately educated individuals.

This ideology promotes the perceptions originated in the “dumbing down” of urban school reform and educational achievement standards for our students (Iserbyt, 1999). As stated by Sarah Leslie (1999), “The dumbing down of a nation inevitably leads to the death of a culture” (as cited in Iserbyt, 1999, p. xxvi). Thereby, the African American female’s role in the urban school becomes a conundrum among educational, economic, social, and cultural policies that mandate how she will respond in a leadership capacity.

Since research about African American females in principalships is practically nonexistent, how she would respond in a given situation is hard to predict. As corroborated by Loder (2005), “Yet this contingent of urban school leaders remains under researched, limiting scholars’ and policy-makers’ knowledge of their unique leadership dilemmas” (p. 299). After the completion of my final project involving the oral histories of African American female principals, it is my belief that my research will add vigor to the literature that is available substantiating the necessity for more research to be conducted on the transformative leadership qualities displayed by the African American female in principalships.

Research Questions

The purpose of my study was to provide insight into the questions surrounding the AA female elementary school principal’s leadership style by studying two questions: 1) what factors influence and limit the opportunities of AA females to obtain and maintain leadership and administrative positions in urban elementary schools and 2) to determine the significance of supporting diversity in leadership in this venue. To determine the answers to these questions, other interview questions must be asked of the elementary principals and responses ascertained.

- (1) How would you characterize your leadership?
- (2) What factors contributed to your developing this kind of leadership style?

- (3) What factors have supported your development as a leader?
- (4) What factors have impeded your development as a leader?
- (5) What personal characteristics are revealed in your leadership?
- (6) What elements in your leadership have been influenced by your life experiences?
- (7) Did you have a mentor? What benefit(s) does one receive from having a mentor?
- (8) What resources does your school have? Are they enough for you to do your job?
- (9) Why do you think AA female's seek and accept positions in urban schools?
- (10) Why do you think there are not more AA females in Central Office positions?

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of clarity and to address any ambiguity within this document, the following terms are defined:

African American People: refers to all people born, raised, and living in America who are descendants of African slaves used synonymously with the term Black (Lomotey, 1989a, Appendix A).

Black Culture: refers to values, systems of logic, and world-views, and one where most Black people agree, on all levels of consciousness and in their overt actions, on what standards of the culture are (Tillman, 2006, p. 266).

Black Feminist Thought: a theory that refers to the fostering of both Black women's empowerment and conditions of social justice (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. x).

Deep-Seated Moralism: illustrates how African Americans judge the practices of persons and institutions in society by a rather strict coding of what is right and wrong (Dantley, 2003, p. 10).

Ethno-Humanist Role Identity: demonstrates a commitment to the education of all students; confidence in the ability of all students to do well; and compassion for, and understanding of, all students and the communities in which they live (Lomotey, 1989a, p. 396).

Everyday racisms: identifies a term coined by Philomena Essed (1991) that “characterizes the intersecting and pervasive oppressions that Blacks face in society. These racisms connect structural forces with routine situations in everyday life” (Essed, 2002, p. 177).

Gender: refers to the physical characteristics of an individual and was used synonymously with the term sex type.

Oppression: Describes any unjust situation where, systemically and over a long period of time, one group denies another group access to the resources of society. Race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, age, and ethnicity among others constitute major forms of oppression (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 4).

Othermothering: Stems from the tradition of matrilineal care giving associated within African American communities (Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2008).

Racism: refers to a system of unequal power and privilege where humans are divided into groups or “races” with social rewards unevenly distributed to groups based on their racial classification. Variations of racism include institutionalized racism, scientific racism, and everyday racism. In the United States, racial segregation constitutes a fundamental principle of how racism is organized (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 300).

Stereotype: refers to the fixed, narrow pictures in our head, generally resistant to easy change (Scott & Marshall, 2009).

Self-efficacy: refers to the ability to achieve desired results. Perceived self-efficacy includes beliefs about one’s ability or competence to bring about intended results. (Colman, 2009).

Self-esteem: refers to “the individuals positive or negative attitude toward the self as a totality”

(Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenback, and Rosenberg, 1995, as cited in Collins and Lightsey, 2001, p. 274).

Transformational Leadership: Involves an engagement between leaders and followers bound by common purpose, where “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, 2002, p.95).

Voice: refers to a metaphor that denotes a person’s point of view (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldgerger, & Tarule, 1997).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This section describes and discusses theories that assisted the researcher in investigating, explaining, and understanding how African American females in educational leadership positions in primary urban settings developed their leadership skills, handled unforeseen societal problems, and undertook educational challenges that emasculated the learning community within her didactic environment. Although a lengthy examination of leadership between 1900 and 2011 is given to understand the history of leadership, this study identified and discussed three main theoretical foundations associated with leadership and education in order to identify the themes that emerged from prior research. The two theoretical foundations examined were Transformational Leadership and Black Feminist Thought. Each theory is discussed in length to bring about as much understanding as to how it can be used to comprehend the decisions and actions of the African American female in administrative positions.

Leadership Background

Although leadership research has existed for more than 100 years with many paradigm shifts occurring along the way, very little leadership research has been directly linked to the special circumstances in which the African American female utilized her leadership skills in order to tackle the unique circumstances that she faced in her urban environment. (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004). Being one of the most paradoxical theories to be studied in the past, it is now becoming clearer to researchers the nature of leadership, its background, and its cost to all human beings, including the African American female (Antonakis, et al., 2004).

From the voluminous amount of research done with leadership many different schools or thoughts of leadership have developed and with it several definitions for leadership (See Figure 1).

To begin to identify with the African American's choices, one must understand the nature and background of leadership theory. The preeminent definition is stated by Antonakis et al. (2004), "Thus, leadership is required to direct and guide organizational and human resources toward the strategic objectives of the organization and ensure that organizational functions are aligned with the external environment" (p. 5). This definition can be utilized to explain how African American female principals in urban schools have changed their environments and cultures from being learning environments into social networks that must address the issues that our facing her students within their communities and home environments.

Through continuous research developed many schools of thought. Researchers identified seven schools of thought; trait school, behavioral school, contingency school, relational school, skeptics school, information-processing school, and the new leadership (neocharismatic/transformational/visionary) school (Antonakis, et al., 2004).

Each school emerged during a certain time in history to address issues that were domineering in that particular era (Antonakis, et al., 2004). Many individuals (House & Aditya, 1997; Van Seters & Field, 1990) have investigated the historical literature surrounding these seven schools of thought in order to set a timeline to these schools of thought and be able to define their concepts.

The Trait School of Leadership, known as the first scientific school of leadership thought, began in the early 20th century. Its main premise focused on "The "great man" perspective, which saw history as being shaped by exceptional individuals" (Antonakis, et al., 2004, p. 6). During this time, leaders were seen as being born, instead of being made. Therefore, research centered on trying to identify the characteristics that separated the leaders from the followers. At that time, it was thought that two specific traits distinguished leaders from non-leaders; intelligence and

dominance (Antonakis, et al., 2004). However, critical reviews of the studies that supported this theory caused this research to fold. According to Antonakis et al., “It took almost 30 years for this line of research to reemerge, following Lord, De Vader, and Alliger’s (1986) reanalysis of Mann’s data, which found intelligence to be strongly correlated with leadership” (p. 6). The trait theory has re-emerged in the 2000s and has found a new group of individuals who are following and utilizing its premises in order to define “The Big Five” characteristics of a leader. “The Big Five” characteristics include openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Quirk & Fandt, 2000).

It is my opinion that the trait theory is unsound because as Bennis (2003) stated, “Leaders are made; not born” (p. 33). Therefore, this theory was etched in the need for egos to be stroked and the total disregarded for anyone other than the White male. It promoted the ideology that women and minorities were not mentally or emotionally capable of developing or understanding an intellectual thought. This school of thought took racism, genderism, sexism, and classism to a new level. I believe that it embraced a world that was made only for one type of person – the White male. Furthermore, it made one think that leaders could not be born of any other race than the White race and they could be of no other sex other than male. A theory, such as this one, would make it impossible for an AA female to seek to become a principal or take on any job in which leadership was necessary. Based on this theory, an African American female could not get out of bed in the morning without implicit instructions and someone to assist her.

The 1950s saw a new leadership dimension unfold; behavioral leadership. The literature and research for this new theory focused on “. . . the behaviors that leaders enacted and how they treated followers” (Antonakis, et al., 2004, p. 7). The research focused on two dimensions of thought; “...consideration (i.e., employee-oriented leadership and initiating structure and

production-oriented leadership)” (Antonakis, et al., 2004, p. 7). Conflicting findings in behavioral leadership theory resulted in another calamity for the leadership movement. Behavioral theory has not rebound from this cataclysm, nevertheless, many of the principle concepts have been assimilated into other theories. I believe that this theory is better suited for leadership because it addresses the way one acts and reacts to the people within their environment. However, I can see how confusing this would get because no two people actually act in the same manner even when they may be dealing with a problem of the same magnitude. This theory does not seem to be entrenched in any of the “isms” although knowing the time frame it was situated, there was not much thought of women or minorities when the development of this theory ensued. However, AA females are said to be “caring” and nurturing, some of the elements in this theory may be used to explain some of the behaviors that the AA female uses in order to thwart problems that are not taught in the textbook.

After the behavioral movement, Fiedler (1967, 1971) developed the contingency theory that purported “. . . that leader-member relations, the task structure, and the position power of a leader would determine the effectiveness of the type of leadership exercised” (as cited in Antonakis, et al., 2004, pp. 7-8). This theory expanded into several other theories, such as, the “substitutes-for-leadership” theory in which the focus is shifted from the leader and placed on the followers and their capacity to undertake the task based on their knowledge and capabilities (Antonakis, et al., 2004).

The contingency theory could be imperative to AA female leaders who would find it necessary to rely on their staff members to assist her in carrying out the daily tasks to ensure that her environment is safe, productive, and successful. Due to her financial constraints, the AA female principal would not have the financial help needed to bring on the personnel necessary

Figure 1. Brief History of Major Schools of Leadership

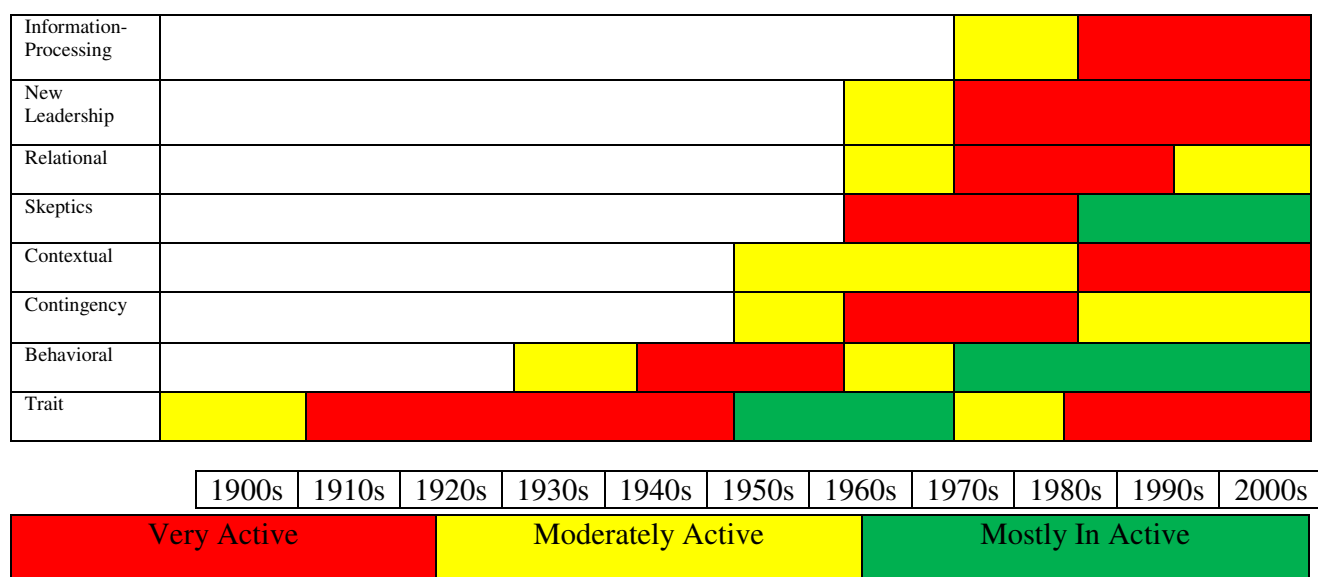


Figure 1. The different times in history that each school of leadership emerged and was utilized from 1900's to the present. From "The Nature of Leadership," by J. Antonakis, A. Cianciolo, and R.J. Sternberg, 2004, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Copyright 2004 by the Sage Publications Inc., Books. Reprinted with permission.

to ensure success in her school. Therefore, she would place her followers in positions that would otherwise be funded if the money were there. For instance, an AA female principal at one of the schools I worked expressed that she was unwilling to hire an assistant principal. She expressed that the money she would use to hire one assistant principal is actually financing two master teachers and a paraprofessional staff member. Therefore, she decided that having another member on her team to assist her in lighting the load of her responsibilities is not as important as having the physical bodies of three more teachers to ensure the academic success of her students.

The relational school of leadership was based on the vertical dyad linkage theory that changed into the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory that explains the interactions between the leaders and followers (Antonakis, et al., 2004). The research has determined that high quality relations (in-group) that is based on trust and mutual respect generate better leadership outcomes than low quality relations (out-group) which is based on contractual and satisfaction obligations (Antonakis, et al., 2004). In other words, a successful leader is skillful and knowledgeable enough to persuade her staff to want to do the work because they enjoy what they do instead of how much they are getting paid or the bonuses that are attached to the finished product. Building mutual trust, honesty, respect, and keeping open lines of communication would give the AA female leader the ability to empower her staff to perform based on need rather than contractual agreements. The contingency theory incorporates this type of thinking and could assist with the occurrence of this experience being incorporated within the urban school setting.

Conversely, the relational school of leadership would assist more in explaining how the AA female works within her environment because it deals with the interactions of a leader and her followers. Although the LMX theory is outdated, it is the backbone of what most leaders understand in today's workplace; one must develop respect and trust between them and their co-

workers if they are to have a successful team. Additionally, this theory maintains that money is not necessarily the number one motivator to get the job done. Having passion, commitment, and dedication from your team members could possibly get a better quality and quantity of work done.

Between the 1970s and 1980s leadership theories were in a predicament. Conflicting research and the validity of questionnaires for leaders resulted in many questioning the relevancy of leadership information. This school of skeptics posed many questions including the necessity of leadership research and its relevance to organizational growth (Antonakis, et al., 2004). The skeptic's point of view is waning; however, it did offer some benefits to leadership research. According to Antonakis et al., "[The school of skeptics caused] (a) the use of more rigorous methodologies, (b) differentiating top-level leadership from supervisory leadership, and (c) focusing on followers and how they perceive reality" (p. 9). The school of skeptics forced researchers and scientists to formulate epistemologies and theories that determined the value of researching leadership qualities and characteristics.

The school of skeptics had the greatest impact on leadership research because it made researchers define the necessity of addressing leadership skills. The school of skeptics is a forerunner to engaging in the study of AA female leadership skills. The same reasons we would want to analyze and interpret information pertaining to traditional leadership qualities are the same reasons we need to look into the leadership skills of minorities in order to make predictions and study outcomes about their leadership qualities.

The information processing school of leadership was credited to three individuals, Lord, Foti, and De Vader in 1984. Their work synthesized why a leader's characteristics could be legitimized based solely on the expectations of their followers (Antonakis, et al., 2004). "The information-processing perspective was extended to better understand how cognition is related to

the enactment of various behaviors (Antonakis, et al., 2004, p. 9). The information processing school took its cue from the followers and based on how your workers responded to your work determined if you were considered a good, bad or mediocre leader. I think that this theory is not true. I have worked for many leaders who were hated by several of their employees. Their type of leadership skills ran a department that was efficient by any ones standards, and would be considered successful. I do not think that the hard work that the employees put in was due to anything that was said or done by their leader. I feel that many were grateful to have a job; they enjoyed the pay, and many of the other perks that came along with the job. They were not willing to trade their job in because they did not like the boss. Therefore, even a terrible boss can come out looking great if other factors are good enough motivators to get the job done.

The new leadership (neocharmismatic/transformational/visionary) school of thought came about when leadership seemed to be facing another bout of skepticism and doubt. Bass, his associates, and many others developed the charismatic leader and visionary theories (Antonakis, et al., 2004). These theories added another level of perception regarding leadership research. From Bass's (1985) research he was ready to argue that:

. . . a different form of leadership was required to account for follower outcomes centered on a sense of purpose and idealized mission. He referred to this type of leadership as transformational leadership, in which idealized (i.e., charismatic) visionary, and inspiring leader behaviors induced followers to transcend their interests for the greater good. (as cited in Antonakis, et al., 2004, pp. 9-10)

Bernard Bass's (1998) theory of transformational leadership addressed how leaders related to their followers and how they got their followers to relate to them; therefore, indicating that synergy could occur and the best results would be discovered and utilized within the task they performed. This

theory best translates into understanding the leadership style that is utilized by the African American female principal in order to confront and solve the special concerns that is a part of her culture and cannot be ignored because these societal problems are interwoven into the community in which she works.

Many AA females take positions in urban areas knowing that their students are on the brink of academic, financial, political, and social disaster. The AA female principal may have to be astute, cunning, and shrewd to develop a community that is being torn apart by the oppressions of a society. She is expected to get them to come together for the common good of the neighborhood and the success of the students. She must rally together her staff, the parents, the business community, the churches, the board members, city officials, state officials, federal government employees and the list goes on, to give herself the best opportunity to make a successful run at her school. Although we are able to see other talents that these students may have, only academics count on the report card that is issued by the state in which they live.

Accountability is the new catch word since “*No Child Left Behind*” was signed into law by President Bush. This accountability of teachers and administration has made the task of the AA principal even more grueling and strenuous. However, it is her passion that makes her go back to her community and offer the children there the opportunities that would not be given to them in any other school. It is this passion that drives her to sleepless nights, and in some instances, considerable weight gain, loss of a personal life (i.e., broken engagements, divorce, postponement of children) and becoming totally obsessed with her need to give all that she has in order to feel that every child has gotten the best education that is provided under her watch. Truly embracing the transformational leadership style allows her the freedom to utilize every tool that she can imagine in order to give her students their best chance at a successful career and a thriving livelihood.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership developed from transactional leadership; a concept that stressed the bartering that takes place among all members of an organization from the top of the organization to the bottom man on the chart (Bass, 1998). This theory is closely related to how the African American female must deal with her community. Dealing with social ills such as drug usage, teenage pregnancy, hunger, and mental or physical abuse, forces her to develop leadership qualities that require her to barter for services that are not normally dealt with by the traditional principal. For instance, a principal became aware that some of her students were eating candy, potato chips, and drinking pop for breakfast. Although the school offered free and reduced lunches, she found a grant for fruits and vegetables to assist in supplementing their breakfast in the hopes that they would begin to eat more nutritiously which would aid in the students being mentally and physically prepared for school.

In transactional leadership, the organization's department head, through verbal communication, sets the terms of the required responsibilities, including the rewards and consequences the employees would receive for fulfilling the requirements set forth by them (Bass, 1998). Transformational leadership goes one step further by involving their colleagues in the goal setting as well as setting the achievements and rewards of the mission. This is the component of transformational leadership that defines how the African American female principal becomes effective and successful in her environment; by utilizing the talent and intelligence of those colleagues around her to develop unique solutions to solve problems that are not financed or she is not trained to handle in her urban surroundings, (i.e., teen pregnancy, fighting with weapons, attack of a teacher by a student, drug use in the bathroom, rape of a student by her parent, etc.).

The word transformation comes from the root transform, derived from the “Latin word *transformare* which means to change the nature, function, or condition of, to convert” (Hacker & Roberts, 2003, p. 1). Using this concept to guide and define the meaning of transformational leadership, Hacker and Roberts (2003) stated, “Transformational leadership is *the comprehensive and integrated leadership capacities required of individuals, groups, or organizations to produce transformation as evidenced by step-functional improvement*” (p. 3) (See Figure 2).

Bass (1998) identified four components of transformational leadership:

(1) Leadership is charismatic such that the follower seeks to identify with the leaders and emulate them. (2) The leadership inspires the followers with challenge and persuasion providing a meaning and understanding. (3) The leadership is intellectually stimulating, expanding the follower’s use of their abilities. (4) Finally, the leadership is individually considerate, providing the follower with support, mentoring, and coaching. (p. 5)

Each one of these elements is a vital step in the African American female principal’s plan of action. She must work toward getting her staff and colleagues to do what Burns (1978) indicated as “transcendent goals” and working past self- interests toward the greater good for their school because the use of contingent rewards, rewarding those for the completion of a task, is not usually an option that agrees with her budget.

However, the theories behind transformational and transactional leadership could equip the African American female principal with a set of tools that could ultimately lead to determining the success or failure of her urban school environment. As stated by Dantley (2003), “These . . . kinds of changes . . . would afford all persons in every learning community the opportunity to have their intellectual curiosity satisfied, to contribute to the construction of knowledge, and to participate in a

democratic learning environment” (p. 4). Research in this area focusing specifically on the African American female principal is necessary to gain insight on the special techniques she utilizes in order to keep children educated and communities thriving in a society in which access and opportunity is not extended evenly or justly to all its members.

Success will not always be judged by the grades given on a state report card; it will be judged on the percentage of crime in a community; the ability to access a job and pay one’s bills on time; and the ability to have children and provide for them mentally, physically, emotionally, and financially. The ability to open a business and leave a legacy in your community for other people as well as the generations in your family that is to come. Success is feeling safe when you are in your home, walking to the store or going to a friend’s house. Success can be measured in the number of hugs you receive before the students leave going home for the day. Developing and becoming a master transformational leader provides the AA female principal with the ability to mold and shape a community; to make it a better place for those who are living there. It is sacrificing herself for the greater good that her presence will provide for that community.

Furthermore, the presence of the AA female principal assists in dispelling the myths surrounding her position in the school and community. Myths include such inclinations that there are not many AA females who have the certifications and qualifications to do the job. Shakeshaft (1995) dispelled this myth by finding in her research that the numbers of AA female candidates that are qualified are overwhelming. The AA female is not ordinarily chosen for an administrative role (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003).

Another myth surrounding the notion why AA females are kept from attaining administrative positions are characterized by the concept that an ideal leader in educational leadership position should be a White male (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). However, as discussed

previously, we know that these types of myths are embraced and supported by the majority culture to maintain and control the morally satisfying and better paying positions.

As suggested by Bloom and Erlandson (2003), most AA females are given a chance at a leadership position when they are used as “scapegoats” or treated as the “messiah” in order to save a school or to head one that no one else will go to work.

Black Feminist Thought

The paucity of information contiguous to African American females can be counteracted in the works of Black Feminist Thought (BFT) advocated by Patricia Hill-Collins (2000). Being understood, acknowledged, and researched are all premises that characterize the need for the African American female to be observed under the guise of Black Feminist Thought. This theory uses her own [the Black female’s] experiences and ideas to illuminate her behavior (Hill-Collins, 2000). Hill-Collins (2000) specifically chose to use many theoretical backgrounds (i.e., “Afrocentric philosophy, feminist theory, Marxist social thought, the sociology of knowledge, critical theory, and modernism”) within Black Feminist Thought to explain the diverse characteristics, the unique features, and the distinct personalities that reflect the roles of the African American female (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. vii).

Black Feminist Thought developed out of the need to understand the collective thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences of African American women who are systemically oppressed and negated within the historical context of American literature and research. According to Hill-Collins (2000), “Suppressing the knowledge produced by any oppressed group makes it easier for dominant groups to rule because the seeming absence of dissent suggests that subordinate groups willing collaborate in their own victimization” (p. 3). This invisible state translates into injustice,

Figure 2: Transformational Leadership Model

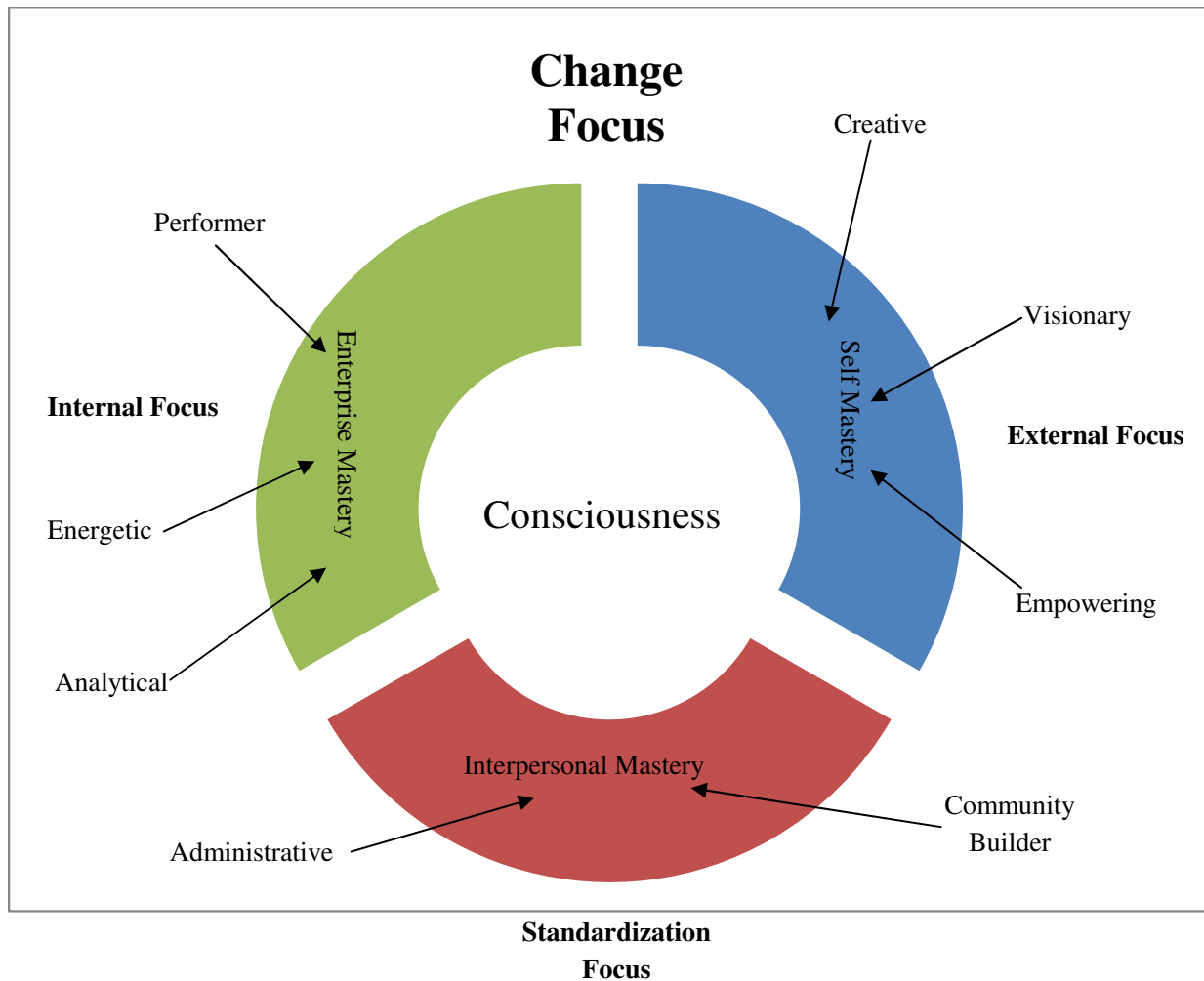


Figure 2. Reproduced by permission of Stephen Hacker and Tammy Roberts, Transformational Leadership: Creating Organizations of Meaning (Milwaukee: ASQ Quality Press, 2004).

inequality, and a permanent state of being treated like you are ignorant, if you are in the group that is subjected to this type of behavior (Hill-Collins, 2000).

Social theories assisted Hill-Collins (2000) in explaining the plight of the African American female and other oppressed groups “. . . aim to find ways to escape from, survive in, and/or oppose prevailing social and economic injustice” (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 9). The socialist point of view assisted in connecting the experiences of the AA female with all the types of oppressions (i.e., sex, gender, religion, race, and class) that control and manipulate her livelihood (Hill-Collins, 2000). Additionally, Hill-Collins (2000) utilized critical social theory that imbues researching the main concerns that challenge African American women collectively, as well as, other oppressed groups.

The four core principles of Black Feminist Thought are centered in its “thematic content, interpretive frameworks, its epistemological approaches, and its significance for empowerment” that aspire to demonstrate the range and depth of intellectual thought that is prevalent within the African American female’s lived experiences (Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 17). The central focus of the black feminist viewpoint is to bring empowerment to a group of individuals who, through her lived experiences, was stripped of all her power, (i.e., intellectual, physical, economic, political, and social), to be dominated and manipulated for the dominant group.

Utilizing the black feminist theory in order to understand and research the different leadership styles is crucial to acknowledging the African American female principal’s worth, that her spirit and actions bring to our society as a whole. As Walker (1983) poignantly expressed, “she must be her own model as well as the artist attending, creating, learning from, realizing the model, which is to say, herself” (as cited in Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 19).

Black Feminist Thought is another theory that I used to assist my participants in expressing themselves and acknowledging their intelligence through their lived experiences. Hill-Collins

(2000) ability to develop a theory that connects the AA female's thoughts with her feelings and the environment that she is made to live in challenges the status quo of our society and questions the need for justice and change not only for the AA female, but for every individual who is being treated unfairly due to not being a member of the majority culture.

Again, I must speak of the silence that surrounds the AA female in this country. It is expressed when one is asked to name African American females who have achieved billionaire status and there is only one; Oprah Winfrey in the top 100. Dealing with the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon and living, as a frustrated AA female who has for the last 44 years went to school to accomplish my goals but to only get to my dream and be told that the rules of the employment game have changed again! I either need more education, more certification, or more experience; which of course is not true, because the degrees and experience must be coupled with opportunity. I do not get the opportunities to get the jobs that will give me the experience I need to realize and live my dream. It is a constant merry-go-round in which I keep wondering when I will be let off. Black feminist theory gives me the tools and the opportunity to express these feelings without me feeling that my words count for nothing. It allows me to read the words of other AA females who are experiencing the same frustration with life and the opportunities being withheld for one reason or another.

I used the epistemological tools in Black feminist theory to analyze and interpret the data that I collected from my participants. Their responses were based on criteria that have been established such as the core themes associated in work, family, oppression, controlling images, (i.e., mummies), self-definition, sexual politics of womanhood, love relationships, motherhood, and activism (Hill-Collins, 2000).

Summary

Although there is an abundance of theories that one could utilize for a topic such as this; I chose these three because I found these themes recurring in most of the literature and documents that I encountered while reading about my topic. I conducted a qualitative study with a constructivist approach that involved the principles, epistemologies, and theories based on Black Feminist Thought and Transformational Leadership; since it appeared that the AA female was battling injustices that she finds while trying to become an administrator or once she becomes an administrator. This study allowed her to express her views and gave voice to her leadership style and decisions.

Most qualitative studies involved interviewing participants and interpreting the information through oral histories or storytelling techniques. The Black Feminist Thought opened up the door of opportunity by giving her a chance to speak what she feels, how she thinks, and how she has lived in the past, the present, and what opportunities will present themselves to her in the future. BFT coupled with Transformational Leadership accounts for a scenario that has presented itself within AA female run schools. Although not taught, not demanded, nor paid for, the system has developed an environment that constantly keeps the AA female as a “mothering” figure that is constantly trying to find ways to protect her young.

Traditional Leadership is a fundamental example that supports the concept that racism is systemic and the norm (Bell, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987). If you truly begin looking at the dynamics surrounding traditional leadership it is easy to surmise that this supposition was born and bred in a racist mold. Traditional leadership is based on opportunity. Who gives opportunity? Only those who are in the majority and positions of authority can hire and fire, therefore, are the only ones who can open (or close) the doors of opportunity. Consequently, the traditional leadership role lets AA

females and other minorities know not to expect too much since White males are in power. It was interesting to see how my participants responded to these issues as they were used to unmask any factors that were limiting the choices and opportunities of the AA female in principalships; thus creating collaboration with other qualitative studies that preceded my project.

Transformational leadership and Black Feminist Thought are the two theories that assisted this researcher in exploring and documenting the leadership style developed and utilized by AA females in leadership roles in America's public school districts. Each theory was connected to her need to use many different styles of leadership to solve difficult situations that she undertakes daily. These two theories guided my research and the writing of the questions that I asked the principals during the interviews in order to add substance to the scarcity of research that has attempted to explain the leadership style of the AA female principal in urban schools.

Literature Review

African American females in principalships are facing many unique situations that are not necessarily addressed during their professional training seminars. Factors such as, poverty, drug abuse, gang violence, homelessness, hunger, and teenage pregnancy impact the day-to-day operations, their careers, and the communities in which they work. This researcher sought to understand how their experiences, coupled with professional training, and level of education, has constructed their leadership styles and what factors have influenced and limited opportunities for them. Although the literature addressing these issues is inadequate and limited, research in this field has unlimited potential and opportunities for continuous and future examination in order to aid in understanding the plight of urban schools, and possibly finding the answers needed to ensure that no child is really left behind .

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the impact of African American females in educational leadership role in primary urban settings and to determine what factors, if any, influenced and limited the opportunities they must face in order to obtain and maintain a leadership role in urban elementary schools. I described and discussed some of the areas that were considered vital to influencing and limiting opportunities for the AA female principal. These areas included race and gender, communication and feedback, othermothering, mentors, leadership, equity concerns, and urban principalships. My hypothesis was that the AA female principal uses her own personal lived experiences to contribute to the development of a unique and personal leadership style that is necessary for the development of a fair and equitable society. I explored my topic by conducting in-depth qualitative interviews and shadowing AA female principals working in urban elementary school settings.

According to Fullan (2001), “Leadership, then, is not mobilizing others to solve problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed” (p. 3). Many African American female leaders work in urban school environments in which they have to confront issues such as crime, drugs, teenage pregnancy, and physical and mental abuse. These are challenges that the traditional leader does not necessarily have to address; at least not publicly. However, urban schools are constantly fraught with these problems in a public forum in which no one answer will cure these problems. Nevertheless, they cannot be ignored and must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Race and Gender

Ambiguity surrounds the notion of race and gender as being obstacles for promotions and leadership appointments. Allen, Jacobsen, and Lomotey (1995) stated, “Although the subjects [African American women school administrators] perceived race as a major obstacle to promotion, they did not view gender (sex) as a serious barrier” (p. 409). Other research stressed that race and gender are two factors that do impact how leadership roles are developed by African American females who work in urban schools (Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Mertz & Neeley, 1998; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008; Sernak, 2001; Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinson, 1986). Previous research has ascertained the link between gender, race, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Essentially, the research has touted that the African American’s socialization into the White culture has resulted in the reduction of an African American identity (Collins & Lightsey, 2001).

Based on the research cited by Case (1997), Dillard (1995), and Reed and Evans (2008), I agree with these researchers that race and gender are two of the most important factors influencing and limiting the opportunities for AA females (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). Mostly, since gender and race are two factors that cannot be hidden or changed for the individuals included in this group.

The color of her skin and her gender are easily determined, thereby, contributing to the passing of judgment by the dominant culture before one has the opportunity to speak. Although, it is acceptable to note race and gender, it is unacceptable to make assumptions based on these characteristics. Already stereotyped, the AA female chances are reduced based on appearances (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). Understanding this concept requires the ‘voices’ of the AA female to be researched and printed so that those who limit her pursuits understand how it is done. Goldberger explained, “how knowledge, knowing, class, race, gender, and culture all intersect and shape one another:”

When a person’s ways of knowing are at odds with the dominant culture, he or she may experience a sense of coercion over “the right way to know” or may feel called on to silence or give up ways of knowing that are devalued. (as cited in Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 344)

This supports the assumption that many minorities do whatever it takes to become a part of the status quo, even though, it could mean giving up one’s culture, losing their self-identity, and rejection from their own community. However, their choice is congruent with survival.

Communication and Feedback

Another major factor suggested in the literature that appears to limit and influence the AA female leadership style and opportunities dealt with how their subordinates respond to them. According to studies conducted by Lomotey (1986), leadership styles for African Americans and Whites differ mainly because “They [African American leaders] are more inclined, as a group, to involve parents and other community members in school activities and, to a degree, in decision making” (p. 177). Additionally, Lomotey (1986) considered core values, goals, and viewpoints as key to connecting academic achievement and molding leadership styles.

Portin (2000) expressed the need for the principal to be able to communicate the needs of her school effectively and expertly to those who do not understand the extraordinary circumstances in which the urban principal has to function. “Principals, especially urban principals, will need to develop expertise in communicating the unique characteristics of their school that suffer when schools are ranked and compared against criteria that fail to account for the unique challenges of their community” (Portin, 2000, p. 503). Exceptional communication skills could mean the difference between the success or failure of a school.

Gooden (2005) maintained the need for the principal to have effective and efficient communication skills, especially with staff members, in order to sustain success within the pedagogical environment. According to Gooden (2005), “This is vitally important if a leader is to be successful in an urban environment . . . managing through teams’ greatly facilitated communication” (p. 639). In the investigation Gooden (2005) conducted with an urban principal, he was able to observe how this principal maintained communication with his staff by executing discussions in the hallways to ensure that everyone was being included in the process and everyone felt as though their opinion mattered. This communication technique assisted the principal in the development of the culture that he was establishing, giving him the opportunity to include those teachers who did not attend meetings and strengthened his leadership skills.

Othermothering

The concept of “othermothering” is discussed in the research and distinguished between the roles of the traditional leader and the African American female as a leader (Case, 1997; Hill-Collins, 2000; Foster, 1993; Guiffrida, 2005; Loder, 2005). Othermothering involves a woman with no biological connection to a child becoming or sharing in the responsibility of raising a child (Hill-Collins, 2000). AA female principals are described as having a “caring” or nurturing nature that

becomes transparent throughout the course of their career (Case, 1997; Loder, 2005). This concept takes on a life of its own.

The concept of othermothering has evolved from the African American community and can be traced back to slavery. It has evolved due to “the kin unit tends to be woman-centered [and] the centrality of mothers is not predicated on male powerlessness” (Tanner, 1974, as cited in Hill-Collins, 2000, p. 178). As stated by Hill-Collins (2000), “Moreover, these understandings of woman-centered kin networks become critical in understanding broader African American understandings of community” (p. 183). Understandably, this is where the African American female principal’s role as the mother of her students comes into play (Lomotey, 1989). Since the AA female principal is there to lead in many nontraditional roles, (i.e., assisting in drug related issues, mental and physical abuse, teen age pregnancy, and hunger), her role takes on the characteristics of a nurturing and caring mother who will remedy most of their concerns.

Case (1997) wrote about the evolution of othermothering, its history, and foundation in the African American community. Ostensibly, it was a survival tool used by the slaves to continue family values and to educate the children (Case, 1997). As indicated by Case (1997), “Currently, an othermothering tradition exists within the urban elementary-school context, and African American female educators play an integral role in fulfilling the psychoeducational needs of the urban child” (p. 25). The African American female principal is forced into this role based on cultural and historical needs of the community in which she serves.

Loder (2005) suggested that those who became administrators, after the Civil Rights Movement and in the face of socioeconomic decline, had to bear the responsibility of nurturing, inspiring, and cultivating the urban poor. This resulted in African American principals roles being viewed as ‘community othermothers’ “who were obligated to rebuild schools and communities

through nurturance, teaching and leading” (Loder, 2005, p. 301). AA female principals became surrogates for the children whom they led. Thereby, they developed a unique leadership role that embraced the basic requirements of the community.

Loder’s (2005) research focused on the challenges that African American female principals faced through their lived experiences in the face of social change. Through her research she was able to establish that “African-American school leaders would confront tensions between performing formal and informal, symbolic functions in the school and find themselves caught in struggles between the institutions they are responsible for managing and the local African American community” (Loder, 2005, p. 317). Loder’s (2005) research challenged others to begin focusing on the urban school community and the plight of African American women who are leading, defining, and establishing new cultures within the educational realm.

Mentors

Johnson (1998) described mentoring as “A term to describe persons who counsel, advise, support, and generally act as role models to others, often referred to as protégés” (p. 49). She further described the need for mentoring in order to increase the number of African American females serving in administrative and senior level positions. Due to the low numbers of African American females who have obtained these positions, they must participate in the “paying it forward” philosophy. This would be the only way to ensure that other African American women will get the opportunity to advance in the face of adversity.

Mentoring is necessary for many reasons involving crossing boundaries, building academic awareness and bringing about the appreciation, knowledge, and the diversity of other cultures to assist in diffusing conflicts in tumultuous situations (Johnson, 1998). As stated by Johnson (1998), “By sharing their experiences, African American women administrators empower protégés of the

non-dominant culture—who, like them, must understand and, in some instances, adopt the behavior of the dominant culture – to navigate effectively within a dominant-culture organization” (p. 49).

Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) concluded that having a mentor is vital for the success of aspiring African American administrators and the possible reason why there are such low numbers are due to the low numbers of mentors available in the field. This lack of mentorship and sponsorship affect promotional opportunities for the African American administrator. Furthermore:

Coursen, et al., for example, note that when older administrators select prospective protégés for “grooming as leaders, they seek to replicate themselves. Thus, because school administrators are predominantly White and male, African American women confront a “double bind” or race and gender bias as they seek mentors and sponsors from among the traditional ‘old-boy’ network. (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995, p. 411)

Leadership

One of the foremost authorities on African American principal leadership and their effects on African American student achievement is Kofi Lomotey (1989a). Lomotey did a study that examined the key variables that define successful and effective leadership in urban schools. Lomotey (1989a) observed four qualities in principal leadership: (1) goal development, (2) energy harnessing, (3) two-way communication, (4) instructional management (See Figure 3).

Lomotey’s (1989a & b) analysis and comparison of African American principals with White principal leadership and the questioning of principal leadership theory to African American principals resulted in his data supporting the notion that effective leadership did not follow any one set of rules or abided by any set of qualities. Essentially, “The qualities of a given leader in one more effective school may be very different from those of a leader in another more effective

Figure 3: Principal Leadership:

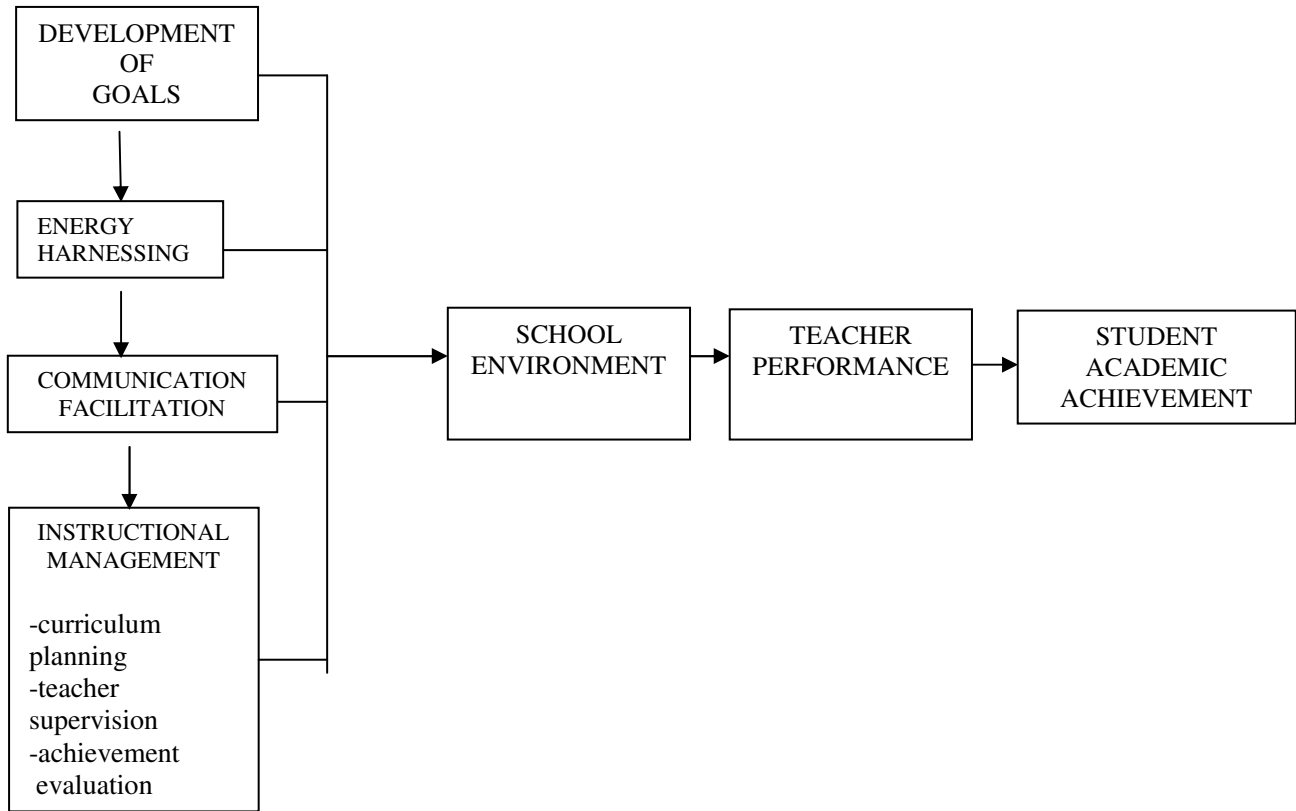


Figure 3. Lomotey's Conceptual Framework. From "African-American principals: School leadership and success" (p. 31), by K. Lomotey, 1989a, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Inc.

Copyright 1989 by Kofi Lomotey. Reproduced with permission of ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, CA.

school” (Lomotey, 1989a, p. 73). Lomotey’s point became clear as his research indicated that the investigation he conducted on three effective African American principals, two seem to follow the traditional route of principals and the traditional lines of study. However, one effective African American principal did not abide by any of the literature concerning leadership style and qualities.

Nevertheless, Lomotey (1989a) was able to determine some qualities that all three of these African American principals did have in common and displayed while he observed them. They were “. . . a commitment to the education of African American children, a compassion for, and understanding of, their students and of the communities in which they work, and a confidence in the ability of all African American children to learn” (p. 130). Although no significant findings could be determined by this study, Lomotey (1989a) suggested that more research was necessary in this area to determine the worth of having the qualities exhibited by the African American principals.

Lomotey’s study was significant to the AA female principal because it promotes the idea that it is essential that she be true to herself, the environment in which she works, and the people around her. It promotes trying new strategies; even those not taught in professional training classes or in addressed in the literature. I think that Lomotey’s study offers AA female principals the opportunity to think outside of the proverbial box; to allow their personal lived experiences to be incorporated in the way their leadership forms. It tells them to trust who they are, what they have learned in life, and integrate these ideas with the educational instruction they have received to develop a leadership style that will meet the needs of the students they are trying to teach.

Equity Concerns

Research and theory from the past has precluded the notion that some groups control and have more access to resources than other groups of people, thereby, affecting outcomes (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinson, 1986). Furthermore, these theorists declared:

. . . why some groups are underrepresented and others are not; why certain influences prevail and others do not. The possession of goods and resources, power, and social control in anything other than equal amounts by various persons or groups . . . [they] fail to explain. (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinson, 1986, p. 115)

The result of this exclusion rests on the premise that previous theory supports the reaffirmation of the status quo. Those, such as African American females in leadership, are not observed and information about their leadership styles is not included in the dialogue of what effective leadership is and how it is represented by this group of individuals. This keeps certain groups and individuals ‘in their place’ maintaining the pyramidal power structure that exists in most American organizations today (Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinson, 1986).

Grogan (1999) stressed her concerns with equity based on information concerning the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA) of 1975 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments passed in 1972 that was supposed to support female equity by opening access and resources in corporate America and the educational arenas. Moreover, “Women and minority groups are becoming certified as school administrators at a rate that is not reflected in the number of administrative positions that they actually hold” (Grogan, 1999, p. 519).

In 1980, after President Reagan earmarked education by emphasizing excellence and quality over equity, Marshall (1993) counteracted his remarks by stressing how, “This perspective is

informed by a heightened awareness of how policies serve or fail to serve the interests of those, whose lived experiences are shaped by gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, and their intersections” (as cited in Grogan, 1999, p. 519). This inequity of access and resources may still plague the African American female in education administration today by assisting in limiting her ability to achieve higher wages and attain the more challenging administrative positions available in the educational sphere.

As a result, research conducted on the disparities of White women and women of color suggested that, “. . . women in educational leadership positions . . . tend to be problem solvers, task oriented, and have high expectations of self and others” (Grogan, 2002, p. 523). Additionally, further examination in this area indicated that many other extraordinary characteristics are associated with passionate and powerful women; (i.e., “strong instructional backgrounds, a focus on curriculum, and a focus on student growth and achievement) . . . [they] are collaborative, caring, courageous, and reflective” (Grogan, 1999, p. 523).

Urban Principalships

Although research is diminutive in this area, some individuals have been forerunners in trying to determine the differences that exist in leadership styles and characteristics between urban, rural, and suburban principals (Alston, 2005; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Carlin, 1992; Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Dillard, 1995; Edson, 1988; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Lomotey, 1989; Marshall, 1989; Murtadha & Watts, 2000; Portin, 2000). These studies set out to examine and name the qualities and characteristics that exist within the urban principal. The consensus stated that most of the urban principals have a different style of leadership that is a mixture of traditional and nontraditional leadership styles (Alston, 2005; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Carlin, 1992; Cistone & Stevenson, 2000; Dillard, 1995; Edson, 1988; Gupton & Slick, 1996; Lomotey, 1989b; Marshall,

1989; Murtadha & Watts, 2000; Portin, 2000). These different styles are contingent upon the different types of problems that are flanked within their urban environment.

As a result of their findings, Cistone and Stevenson (2000) concluded that “the urban school principal is characterized by considerable uncertainty and complexity” (p. 441). The consequences involve greater amount of pressures for the urban principal to overcome (Cistone & Stevenson, 2000). Therefore, the need for balancing and heightening collaboration between all stakeholders become essential if the AA female urban principal is to become and remain effective and successful (Cistone & Stevenson, 2000).

In order to strengthen the role of the principal she must develop a participatory management style that would include, “teacher empowerment, shared decision making, site-based management and any or the similar proposals that give teachers responsibility for what goes on not only in the classroom but in the entire school” (Carlin, 1992, p. 47). By cultivating the right vision and purpose and developing strong tools to perpetuate the success of the school culture an urban principal can achieve success in an environment that is plagued with major trepidations.

Portin (2000) pointed out the challenges that make urban schools different than their counterparts. These are the challenges that make urban principals completely change the way they handle their day-to-day operations. The urban principal must morph into a leadership style that takes on such concerns as poverty, hunger, crime, physical abuse, lack of manners, lack of morals and other elements that contribute to the social ills of a society in dismay (Portin, 2000).

Furthermore, these economic and social ills accumulate upon a group of individuals [in this case, the African-American] who do not have access or opportunity and do not partake in the resources of their country. These differences include, “higher bureaucratic districts, higher per pupil expenditures, less local revenue, and higher percentages of students at risk for school failure,

living in poverty, and with limited English proficiency” (Portin, 2000, pp. 495-496). An increase in job pressure occurs when the urban principal tries to handle and curtail all the situations that act out in the hallways and classrooms of their school environments.

Portin (2000) stated that the success of urban principals will rest on their ability to handle money shortages, communicating effectively and efficiently, understanding the needs of the community in which they work, to change their school environment into a social network that supports many major social ills of the community, and to maintain a curriculum that challenges the children to high achieving educational goals in order to become and remain successful in an urban environment that is of federal, state, and local support.

Although this section reports on the progress, concerns, and situations that affect urban principals, this section became necessary to understand the plight of the African American female principal who normally works in the urban school district. These articles targeted the specific areas and characteristics that limit and influence the leadership styles, opportunities and challenges that may daily confront the African American female.

Summary

African American female leaders are placed in uncertain environments when they decide to develop and lead an urban school. According to Camblin and Steger (2000), “...in an organizational context, development means targeted enhancement of an individual or a collective set of individuals to serve better the mission of the organization” (p. 1). African American female leaders are in a sphere of pressured situations based on social, economic, political, and moral concerns that collectively challenge the way she must develop her staff, relate to her stakeholders, educate her students, address the parents, and communicate with the community in order to create a

didactic environment that proves to become an effective, successful, and high-achieving academic environment for all.

One way to give voice and understanding to a study, such as mine, was explained by Tillman (2006). Tillman developed a theoretical framework known as Culturally Sensitive Research Framework (CSRF) that focused on the cultural viewpoint of the researcher and the participant in order to develop, design, implement, collect and analyze data that acknowledged their cultural, race and ethnical ties to their society. “Culturally sensitive research approaches have the power to help researchers to capture more fully the successes and struggles of African Americans – that is, the totality of their experiences” (Tillman, 2006, p. 266).

This study prompted Tillman to review the questions that she posed to her participants. She realized that her questions were based on traditional literature that pertained to mentoring of novice teachers. What the principals said gave ‘voice’ to the way African American principals approached this concept. My research focused on writing questions that gave ‘voice’ to the principals who participated in my project. I considered culture, lived experiences, and ethnicity to determine how her responses reflected the lives of the AA female principals in my study.

CSRF was an exceptional methodology that was utilized to explain and capture the lived experiences of the AA female elementary principals in my study. This theory allowed the researcher to embrace how she feels, what she thinks and how she explains her choices. CSRF granted the researcher the freedom to allow her participants to express themselves using their language, choosing her own stories to substantiate her claims, and allowing her to feel that her experiences mattered and are necessary for the success of our society.

The African American female principal’s success or failure is construed by many of the elements mentioned above, (i.e., equity, race, gender, communication, etc.), and these factors will

assist in determining whether or not opportunities will increase or remain stagnant in the future.

Additional research in this area is needed to assist her in determining the best alternatives to formulate when working in an urban environment.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this section, I reviewed the specific methodology of my study and included the purpose and design of the study, sampling, data collection and instruments, data analysis procedures, validity-reliability limitations of my study, the ethical considerations and the protection of human subjects within the research project.

Purpose and Design of the Study

During the research of this document the scarcity of research and the minimal experimentation conducted for the African American female in principalships was consistently mentioned. The purpose of my study was to provide insight into the leadership style of the AA female elementary principal by studying two questions: 1) what factors promoted, influenced, and limited the opportunities of AA females to obtain and maintain leadership and administrative positions in urban elementary schools and 2) to bring further understanding of the significance of supporting diversity in leadership.

I chose to use qualitative research that involved purposive or theoretical sampling that allowed the researcher to use hand-chosen participants to incorporate an in-depth discussion of personal situations (Klenke, 2008). Qualitative research examines the specific methods necessary to illustrate an information-rich understanding of the situation under study that incorporates such techniques as questionnaires, interviews, and shadowing; all research techniques that are instrumental in qualitative research projects for documenting the experiences of the African American female principal (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Dillard, 2000; Edson, 1988; Gooden, 2005; Lomotey, 1989a; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Portin, 2000; Tillman, 1998; Yow, 2005).

However, the design of this study needed to capture the prospective of my participants, their beliefs, and values as defined by their environment and lived experiences. Although the study was qualitative in nature, it included the following ethnographic methodology: in-person interviews with my subjects, direct observations, and an online follow-up survey that allowed the researcher to participate and share her own experiences in order to gain insight into the topic of leadership (Glicken, 2003). This type of research required that I go into the field and collect data from the subjects. The doctrines of qualitative research require that I study people “in their natural environments as they go about their daily lives” (Glicken, 2003, p. 154).

Empirical studies that utilized AA female principals in their research are intermittently found in the leadership literature. Therefore, my objective was to conduct a qualitative study that incorporated Culturally Sensitive Research Framework as the methodology to provide AA females an opportunity to bring their voices into the debate on leadership roles.

The qualitative method of study nestled in Culturally Sensitive Research Framework with a constructivist design was selected so that I would not be constrained by inflexible theories; thereby, affording me the opportunity to incorporate many different types of strategies and methods to explore my topic (Klenke, 2008). There were many reasons that I chose qualitative research instead of quantitative research. For instance, qualitative research is based on inductive reasoning that is more open-ended in nature and addresses specific observations that develop some general conclusions about a topic that was conducted in the natural setting of the participant (Klenke, 2008). Inductive reasoning allowed the researcher to look at specific observations and symmetries to detect common patterns and regularities in order to postulate theories that can be explored and developed into a qualitative study.

However, this does not drive the research as it does in quantitative research (Klenke, 2008). Qualitative research listens to the voice of the participant. It is derived from the participant's point of view and lived experiences (Klenke, 2008). Qualitative research is flexible by nature and molded to fit the situation as it becomes more apparent to the researcher (Klenke, 2008). Finally, the role of the qualitative researcher is significantly different from the quantitative researcher. In a qualitative research study, the participant is allowed to justify their answers based on their lived experiences (Klenke, 2008).

First, based on the reasons given above, qualitative research allowed me to observe the AA female principal's behavior on an everyday basis without incorporating experimental conditions designed and facilitated by the researcher, thereby giving the principals the freedom to describe their leadership styles using their own words. Second, the data were gathered from many different methods and sources collected by the principals during their careers ranging from newspaper clippings, awards, letters, interviews, and direct observations (Klenke, 2008). Third, according to Klenke (2008), "the focus of a qualitative study is usually a single setting or group on a relatively small scale" (p. 36). As a result, studies do not have to be performed on a grand scale in order to bring meaning to a subject. This gave these few AA females an opportunity to allow their voices to be heard and validated. Fourth, the analysis of data conducted in qualitative research was based on understanding of the actions of the AA principals and clarified using verbal transcriptions and interpretations; thereby, finally giving the AA principal her voice on leadership issues.

Due to the paucity of research in this area, it is necessary to authenticate the epistemologies (ways of knowing) and the axiologies (nature, values, and beliefs) utilized by the AA female principal within her educational settings in order to document and validate her experiences as a leader. This type of research assisted in laying the foundation and writing the literature that will

hold the knowledge and insight that future AA females who are thinking of pursuing leadership roles as principals, or administrative positions in urban school settings, would access in order to be successful in their endeavors.

Research Methods

Setting and participant.

The research study was conducted in a large urban school district whose official start dates back over one hundred and fifty years ago. The AA residents in this community successfully started their own separate public school nine years before the Civil War. In 1852, an urban school was created for the Black male students in the district. The school was financed by proceeds from taxes on Black-owned property. The AA citizens within this urban district elected the school board that ran its school system. In 1914, a prominent female, an AA teacher, persuaded the Board to allow her to organize a segregated school for black students. Today, this urban school district has 57 schools, of which 42 are elementary schools, encompassed in a 90 square mile district. It is the third largest district within its state. It serves around 34,000 students ranging from preschool through 12th grade in which 68.8% of its student body is African American. This large urban school district has received two Effective ratings for their 2009-2010 and 2010 – 2011 school years.

The location of the project and the observations were conducted at the schools of the participants and the interviews were conducted within the principal offices that these three (3) AA female elementary principals worked. Each principal decided this as their preference for conducting their interview session. The researcher accommodated the participants as much as possible in hopes that the participants felt comfortable and relaxed enough to discuss their lived experiences with her.

The participants consisted of three (3) African American females, 1) Janice Thompson, 2) Dorothy Price, and 3) Katherine March, whom all currently hold an elementary principalship within this large urban school district. I chose elementary principals since the literature reflected that elementary principalships are the last positions considered for administrative and Central Office promotions (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Lomotey, 1989a). Although these principals face the same issues and have to be just as creative in maintaining their schools as secondary principals, they are not as readily promoted into upper level administrative positions.

The participants were recruited by gaining entrée through the research department of the large urban school district. Once acquired, the study participants were identified by pseudonyms to protect their anonymity and to offer them the freedom to speak without hesitation or fear of retribution from their current employers.

Gaining Entrée.

I submitted a proposal to the large urban school district's research department in the winter of 2011. This involved an application process, fee, and permission to begin conducting research with their employees. Although I submitted a request that listed ten participants from a group of sixteen schools that were participating in a pilot program to raise state testing scores, the research board, using a qualitative approach that was supported in ethnographic methods, approached three participants and requested their participation in the study. Upon approval, I was told the names of the three AA female elementary principals who had agreed to participate in the study; Janice Thompson, Dorothy Price, and Katherine March (each individual and their prospective schools were assigned pseudonyms).

While gaining permission from the large urban school district, I was also in the process of gaining approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) at my university for my project. Once

approved by the IRB, this study incorporated several pieces of written and emailed correspondence. The first correspondence was an email sent to the three (3) AA female principals thanking them for agreeing to participate in the study, outlined the purpose of the project, and requested the date and time for the initial observation and interview. Again, the selection of the three (3) female participants was determined by the large urban school district's research department.

Data sources.

The research implemented the procedures and instruments that supported a qualitative research study reinforced in an methodology of Culturally Sensitive Research Framework. The research was conducted in the 2010 -2011 school year. The researcher utilized observations, in-person interviews, and an online follow-up survey (Appendix D) as the specific methods for data collection. After the selection of the participants, the researcher contacted each of the individuals through email to set up a time for the half-day observation and interview session. The observation was conducted before the interview in order to strengthen the validation of the data by having the researcher observe and document the principal's leadership qualities prior to being influenced by the participant's perception of their own leadership style. During the data analysis phase, I triangulated the information from the observations, interviews, and follow-up surveys of the principal's responses to strengthen the conclusions.

During the interview, I gathered information to compare family backgrounds, educational background, lived experiences, professional training and religious affiliations. This information assisted me in reinforcing the outcomes of my research based on the data collected. Furthermore, during the interview, the researcher asked for historical information from the participants, such as age, city of birth, marital status, number of children, previous jobs, what they perceived as career advancements and limitations, information about mentors, their definition of "othermothering,"

their educational vision and goals, and future career goals. The questions and the protocol utilized for the in-person interviews was fully detailed and outlined in my IRB proposal. The final data collection occurred using an online follow-up survey with each AA female principal who participated in the observation and interviewing stages of my project. Furthermore, the efficiency and effectiveness of the principals was determined by their state testing scores.

Data Collection and Instruments

After gaining entrée, I gathered the data for my study from three sources: observations, interviews, and an online follow-up survey with the African American females who were currently working as principals in an urban elementary school setting. I used Culturally Sensitive Research Framework (CSRF) as the method to collect my data (Tillman, 2006). CSRF methods were utilized to explain a member's behavior in a certain culture by allowing them to define their existence based on their interpretation of their culture and the world around them using their own words (Tillman, 2006). CSRF as a method allowed the researcher to participate in the school environment in which I interviewed my participants. "Culturally sensitive research approaches have the power to help researchers to capture more fully the successes and struggles of African Americans – that is, the totality of their experiences" (Tillman, 2006, p. 266). CSRF was chosen because it encouraged the exchange of ideas and information between the researcher and its participants in order to develop a positive relationship with those being studied in order to extrapolate and distinguish leadership qualities amongst the principals.

The interviewees were asked to supplement their interviews with newspaper articles, awards, training certificates, and other documents that would support their personal lived experiences in leadership. Each principal was sent an email that acknowledged her participation in the study. I also attached an Adult Consent Form to the email for her to read that included all the

information pertaining to the study (Appendix E). Each participant was asked to read over the consent form carefully and thoroughly before she would sign it. This form would solidify her participation in the project.

Additionally, through email, they were asked to give a date and time in which they would like for me to conduct their observation and interview. They were told that the observation and interview could happen separately or on the same day. All participants were informed that they would be signing their Adult Consent Forms on the first day that we conducted their observation. Their signatures would indicate that they had read the document, understood their part in the project, and agreed to be a participant in the research project.

From the data collected and coded, the researcher sought any information that contributed to the leadership qualities utilized by the African American females during their daily routines, especially their personal perspectives and lived experiences that assisted in the molding of their leadership decisions to assist in supporting the initial question on how their lived experiences affected their leadership skills.

Observations.

Each principal was observed for four (4) hours at her perspective school. I chose to conduct the observations first. I believed that conducting the observation first would assist me in validating and strengthening my data by allowing me to interpret the leadership skills of the principals before I was influenced by how they perceived and interpreted their own leadership skills. Two of the participants agreed to do the observation and interview on the same day. One participant did the observation on one day and I returned a week later to conduct her interview.

I arrived in their offices on the days and the times chosen by the participant. All the principals asked to be observed between 7:30 am and 11:30 am on their designated days. We

introduced ourselves and then they were asked if they had any questions pertaining to the Adult Consent Forms. No one asked any additional questions; therefore, they were asked to sign their Adult Consent Forms before the observations began.

The researcher provided a brief overview pertaining to purpose of the study which was to explore how the lived experiences of the AA females actually influenced their leadership qualities before the shadowing of my participant began. I utilized the Principal Observation Field Note Chart and I followed them around documenting my thoughts and observations of their behaviors (Appendix B). I wrote down important phrases, examples, and experiences that I observed. I annotated the dates and times for the sessions I was observing. I compared my observation notes with their interview transcripts to determine if we viewed their leadership abilities the same or differently.

Data collection involved spending a half-day shadowing and observing the principals and taking field notes before the actual interviews occurred to determine if the interviewee interpreted their duties the same as the researcher during direct observation. I observed them in their natural settings and documented their day-to-day activities to get a better understanding of their environment and the pressures they dealt with concerning their urban school's environment. This information was used in triangulation with the interviews and the follow-up online survey to determine if common themes were expressed or annotated by the participants during the study. The follow-up online survey, conducted on Survey Monkey, involved each participant receiving an email that requested them to log on to an embedded link inside of the email to answer ten questions pertaining to leadership (Appendix D). The survey offered multiple choice answers, as well as an option box for each question that would allow them time for reflection and to add any information that may have been omitted from the interview.

Finally, information pertaining to the school was taken from each of the school's website that involved demographic information about the students, such as, age, race, percentage on free lunch, staff members, before and after school events, report card information, and the culture of the school. This served as an introduction to the school's environment prior to my actual observation. It gave the researcher insight to the type of environment and the area in which the schools were located, the academic level of the students, and an indication of some of the challenges the individual principal may have to face during her work day.

Interviews.

One method utilized for data collection was an in-person qualitative interview. An Interview Guide was used to elicit an authentic account of the AA female's lived experiences (Appendix A). It was the intention of the researcher to engage the African American female principal and provide her with a vehicle for her to share her own story while documenting their similarities and differences.

This study allowed her to have her story documented without the fear of retribution or alienation from the organization in which she works. This forum gave her the chance to address what she thought influenced and limited the opportunities her choice of career had given her. It was her time to tell her story, her way, in her time. Each principal was given the opportunity to conduct the interview at her school or in a setting that was fitting and beneficial for her. The researcher wanted the principals to be comfortable and relaxed enough to share their feelings about the topics under discussion. Each principal decided to have her interview in their office at their school.

The in-person interviews were tape recorded for approximately two hours to ensure that the interviews were adequate enough to generate enough information to assist in the triangulation of information in the results section. Written field notes were taken during the interview to assist in

adding more depth and value to the analysis. The Field Notes were written in tablets and contained natural observations and anecdotes including mapping that provided a visual-spatial view of the principal's office and a calendar that showcased her daily activities, meetings, and trainings that she was involved. The researcher transcribed the interviews. Needless to say, interviews have their advantages and disadvantages that could limit the comparability of responses within my subject group.

Survey research.

Documented as being the most commonly used methodology in social science research, survey research refers to the collection method of data gathered in a systemic manner utilizing such forms as questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and observations. These surveys could assist the researcher in the generation of information within a qualitative investigation to further understand and identify common themes that emerge within a study (Given, 2008). The information gathered from surveys can be conjoined with the observations and interviews to triangulate the responses obtained from the participants, thereby, strengthening the validation of the data.

The wording of the survey questions are challenging and must entail language that is appropriate, specific, and clear to all of the participants in order to obtain valid research data (Givens, 2008). According to Givens (2008), "Questions should use language that is meaningful to respondents, with an emphasis on simple, direct, jargon-free language" (p. 846). During the design of my survey, questions were extrapolated from information that had been gathered during the observation and interview sessions. The survey was embedded inside of an email that identified the title of the survey, the sponsor, requested cooperation to complete, and utilized the confidentiality of its contents to establish the legitimacy of its purpose (Givens, 2008).

The researcher designed the survey to appeal to the participants by concentrating on the length of the questionnaire, the font, and background color. The length of the survey was ten questions. This length was chosen due to appease the time constraint that was mentioned throughout the observation and interview sessions of the participants. Therefore, the researcher sought to design a survey that was direct and would either substantiate or refute information that was gathered during the observation and interview stages. The text of the questionnaire was written using an Arial font. The background colors were peach sherbet for the survey complimented with a maroon and orange title bars. The survey was designed to be attractive, comforting, and create a positive first impression which would encourage the participant to complete.

Using an online survey expedited the collection of answers, analysis of results, and made the design of the survey unproblematic. Choosing an online survey was a feasible choice since all three participants have digital access through tabletop, as well as, laptop computers. Furthermore, “Analysis of data gathered from online survey may be greatly facilitated by moving electronic responses into analysis software” (Givens, 2008, p. 848).

The validity and reliability of the survey concerned the researcher the most. Being that there were internal and external aspects of validity. This study focused on internal validity that is achieved through the design of questions and answers that accurately measure or reflect the topic that the researcher is studying (Givens, 2008). Reliability looks at the questions in regards to wording to ensure that the questions are asking for the information the researcher is trying to ascertain in the best possible way (Givens, 2008). “Reliability can be improved . . . by following up to check on similarity of response in an interview” (Givens, 2008, p. 848). The survey utilized by the researcher was triangulated with direct observations and interviews to ascertain the reliability of the results of the study.

Surveys are flexible, and open to qualitative research method approaches (Givens, 2008). However, its uses can initiate and strengthen the validation and reliability process of any research project. However, surveys do come with limitations that must be considered. Inexperience and carelessness could cause the data gathered from being trustworthy and inaccurate. However, surveys are tools that can reach many demographics, is cost effective, and could collect vital data that can be utilized to find answers too many questions that researchers are posing.

Data Analysis Procedures

After transcribing the interviews, the data were organized by topics and themes and coded into categories using content analysis procedures as the process “to determine the presence of certain concepts within texts” (Klenke, 2008, p. 89). Through the use of Culturally Sensitive Research Framework, developed by Tillman (2006) that allows a researcher to focus on the cultural viewpoint of the researcher and the participants in order to facilitate a study that acknowledges and implements the diverse cultural ties of the individuals during the entire study, I coded and compared the written and verbatim answers of my participants and pinpointed any emerging themes from the AA female principals (Klenke, 2008, p. 186).

The process of analyzing the data in CSRF was based upon three types of coding: open, axial, and selective coding (Klenke, 2008). Open coding looks at the concepts to develop a coding pattern; the next step called axial coding involves making a correlation between major and subcategories (Klenke, 2008). The final coding, selective coding, requires using the prior categories (open and axial) to integrate and form an initial theoretical framework (Klenke, 2008). “In the next phase of the analysis, the researcher returns to data collection or re-analyzes the data to identify several categories that relate to the core category” using memoing (the researcher writing

theoretical memos to herself) to assist with the detection of emergent theories and themes (Klenke, 2008, p. 190). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990):

Since the analyst cannot readily keep track of all the categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolve from the analytic process, there must be a system for doing so. The use of memos constitutes such a system. Memos are not merely “ideas.” They are involved in the formulation and revision of theory during the research process. (p. 6)

Klenke (2008) described three types of memos; code memos that relate to “open coding and focus on conceptual labeling . . . theoretical memos relate to axial and selective coding and focus on paradigm features . . . while operational memos keep track of the research process” (p. 191).

Through the use of memos the researcher is able to display the relationships found between different concepts using inductive analysis and reasoning (Klenke, 2008).

Through the use of the CSRF approach the researcher was able to detect emerging themes and theories from empirical data. The theory was deduced from the recurring patterns found within the empirical data and not from preconceived ideas (Klenke, 2008). By using many different data collection techniques such as interviews, direct observations, and follow-up surveys allowed the researcher to compare emerging theories and themes that occurred.

The constant comparison method integral to CSRF is presented as a step-by-step qualitative data analysis: inductive category coding based on “units of meaning” of textual (or visual) data, refinement of categories, exploration of patterns and relationships across categories leading to an integration of data or “sense-making.” (Klenke, 2008, p. 198)

Validity-Reliability and Limitations

Conducting observational research of individuals has advantages and limitations that need to be addressed for validity and reliability concerns. The observational research design study could be questioned due to its lack of “guiding philosophical assumptions, do not denote the researcher’s paradigmatic position, fail to distinguish method and methodology, or make explicit the approach to quality and rigor, and identify the researcher’s analytic lens” (Klenke, 2008, p. 84). Other concerns involve time constraints and resources that can be tied into a specific place, thereby questioning the transferability of the results to other environments, observer bias, and the skills of novice researchers that can question the feasibility of the results ascertained during this type of research (Givens, 2008).

However, this type of research is advantageous when the process allows the researcher to draw conclusions based upon the specific setting and circumstances described by the individual being interviewed. The rich and full descriptions that the researcher generates during the observation “is particularly powerful when combined with other methods such as interviewing” (Givens, 2008, p. 575). Observational research develops trustworthy data that are well suited for the discovery of new information and the validation of existing theory (Givens, 2008).

The use of the in-person, semi-structured interviews has its limitations surrounding its practice. The researcher should make clear that the disadvantages of this method involves the skill level of the interviewer and their ability to structure questions during the interview session to ascertain the information they are seeking; as well as having a respondent who has the ability to answer the question appropriately (Klenke, 2008). This method is not very reliable; can be expensive and time-consuming, hard to analyze, and lack validity (Klenke, 2008).

However, using in-person, in-depth interviews has the advantage of allowing the participants to describe their most meaningful and personal information in full descriptive metaphors using their own words and without restriction or pre-scripted texts (Klenke, 2008). Coupled with triangulation, the verifying of facts using many different methods of data collection, addresses the issue of internal validity by using more than one method of data collection that assist in bolstering the validity and reliability of the researchers data. Another method of validity is having the interviewer to share their interpretation of the information with the interviewee in order to give them an opportunity to refute or corroborate their interpretation of the researcher's account of the detail (Klenke, 2008).

Surveys have their strengths and weaknesses that researchers must be attentive and concerned with during their study. This researcher chose to use online survey software known as Survey Monkey to incorporate the follow-up survey within the data analysis that would be triangulated with my observations and interview sessions.

The advantages of utilizing an online survey are many with the most important aspect are the costs. These were no e-mail and no transmission costs for these tests. Electronic surveys were easily created and sent to the users with little to no expense. According to Portin (2004), "The only downside is that valid e-mail addresses are necessary for the entire sample, and the researcher must be fairly certain that the e-mail addresses are being checked on a regular basis" (p. 94).

Surveys utilized open and close end questions to ascertain the information they are trying to receive. One can retrieve a wealth of rich and rewarding information through surveys (Portin, 2004). The Survey Monkey was easy to use and offered built in tools that assisted in the analysis of the data that were received. "While errors do occur during processing, the software currently

available is quite sophisticated . . .” (Portin, 2004, p. 96). With all information having to be input into the computer electronically, this cut down on trying to read handwriting (Portin, 2004).

Web surveys appeared to have the lowest costs and garnered the best results for researchers. This researcher e-mailed the survey to all three participants. The e-mails had an invitation attached to them inviting the participants to click on a link which would take them to the ten question survey that was developed to substantiate information taken from the observations and interviews (Appendix D). Considering the busy schedules that our participants engaged, the electronic surveys cut down on time, and gave the participants the ability to take the survey at their leisure.

Ethical Considerations and Protection of Human Subjects

As with any research project, ethical consideration must be given priority during the research phase. According to Klenke (2008), “the most important ethical principles, the qualitative researcher must adhere to are informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, protection from harm, and maintenance of the well-being of the participants” (p. 50). Klenke (2008) devised a table of ethical guiding principles in qualitative research:

- Respect for human dignity
- Respect for voluntary participation
- Respect for confidentiality and privacy
- Respect for justice and inclusiveness
- Balancing harm and benefits
- Minimizing harm
- Maximizing benefits (p. 51).

Furthermore, the researcher should offer the interviewee something in turn for their time and the sharing of their experiences. Usually a copy of the final project, if offered, should be sent to the interviewee that results in reciprocity – a final thank you (Klenke, 2008).

Summary

According to Dr. Patricia Hill-Collins (2000), “Black women’s exclusion from positions of power within mainstream institutions has led to the elevation of elite White male ideas and interests and the corresponding suppression of Black women’s ideas and interests in traditional scholarship” (p. 5). This statement validates the need for research to occur using African American females who have been excluded from the research and whose voices have been silenced due to the domination of the White male in the leadership field. This researcher chose to address race, gender, equity, othermothering, mentoring, communication and feedback, and urban principalship questions to ascertain if these issues have affected the leadership development utilized by the African American female principal within her own educational environment. This study allowed her to tell her stories and substantiate her leadership choices and abilities in her own way, using her own examples. These three women identified their lived experiences as a crucial element to the development and facilitation of their leadership capabilities.

This study was based on a qualitative approach that used observations and interviews that assisted in substantiating the principal’s leadership abilities and generated conversation relating to the diverse issues supporting the need for research to occur amongst this group of individuals. Validation and reliability was strengthened through the use of triangulated data and the coded research within this study. The results of data collected and the various methods utilized during the project are analyzed and discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine the issues affecting the development of the AA female elementary school principal's leadership style by studying two questions: 1) what factors influence and limit the opportunities of AA females to obtain and maintain leadership and administrative positions in urban elementary schools and 2) to determine the significance of supporting diversity in leadership in this venue. The study utilized three African American females who worked as elementary principals to address these questions. This study used a qualitative approach that focused on direct observation, in-person interviews, and a follow-up survey for data collection and analysis to support the overarching theme that African American females utilize their personal-lived experiences in order to shape their leadership style.

This chapter featured data that were collected during this project. The interviews consisted of questions that dealt with personal lived experiences, demographics (social and economic), educational data, and a four hour shadowing experience that documented the leadership style that was observed by the researcher. These core situations provided insight into the themes and patterns that developed to explain the leadership style of these three African American female principals.

The researcher analyzed these data to determine and explore the themes that emerged. The questions were designed around the overarching theme of leadership. Leadership was broken down into six subcategories that were utilized and supported using the personal lived experiences of the principals: 1) race and gender: definitions and experiences; 2) othermothering: its impact on leadership; 3) mentors: the importance of bonding with others in the field; 4) communication and feedback: how they are used; 5) equity concerns: how finances affect leadership growth and development; and 6) urban principalships: how do AA females get assigned to urban schools?

Each one of these subcategories had questions that were designed to give insight to how AA females in leadership positions feel their actions have developed and shaped their leadership qualities and account for their personal careers.

This research does not claim to represent the collective experiences of all African American females who serve as elementary principals in urban schools. This was a research study that sought to explore the personal lived experiences of three African American female principals who were willing to share their stories and reveal their own perspective of what leadership consists of in their environment and through their own point of views.

This type of research assisted in laying the foundation and producing the literature that describes the knowledge and insight needed for future AA females who are thinking of pursuing leadership roles as principals in urban school settings while providing them a prospective on how to be successful in their endeavors. This research studied the educational leadership styles of three African American females who worked in an elementary environment and shared their voices to counteract the paucity of information pertaining to African American females and the role of leadership in their lives. This researcher sought to discover what themes would emerge and could be connected to their personal lived experiences, education, and training they have received in their professional careers.

Participant Profiles

This section presented a profile of each of the principals who participated in the project. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, each participant's name, name of school, location, and any other factors that could give away her identity, was coded and changed and does not appear in any document. The actual identity of the principal is known only to the researcher. The

following pseudonyms were used throughout this document for the participant's protection: Janice Thompson, Dorothy Price, and Katherine March.

These three leaders told their stories with passion and concern for the children and the communities in which they worked. Janice Thompson was the eldest of the three, forty-three years old and a principal since 2004. Katherine March, age thirty-nine (39), had excelled in her position and was known as a lead principal. This meant that she mentored and led a team of several other principals in her district. Unbeknownst to Ms. March, one of the other principals I interviewed, Dorothy Price, age thirty-five (35), was on her team and she was mentioned by Ms. Price during her interview.

It was the end of the 2010 – 2011 school year that I conducted my observations and interviews. All three of the principals reiterated that during this time of the year, with AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) being completed, it was time to focus on culture building among the students, within the school, and throughout the community. All the principals were firming up summer school plans, coordinating graduation programs, or setting up year-end celebrations for their schools. The researcher observed each of these women ending her school year with the tenacity of a first day of school. Each participant welcomed me, made me feel comfortable, and gave me the sense that I needed to be there for them; to observe, explore, and document their stories. Instead of feeling like I was intruding into their professional lives, they made this experience seem like “Where have you been? We have been waiting for you!”

Principal profiles.

Principal Janice Thompson

Janice Thompson was born in 1968 in Nuremberg, Germany but, since the age of two (2), she was raised in this large Midwestern urban city along with seven other brothers and sisters. Her

mother had a high school diploma, while her father obtained an associate's degree. She is forty-three years old, married, and raising four children of her own; two (2) stepchildren and two (2) biological children. Her children ranged from a first grader to a freshman in college. She mentioned during her interview that having children with such a broad range of ages has kept her focused about her job and strengthens the commitment that she makes to the children in her school. Ms. Thompson stated, "How I determine what I want for these kids; I think about what I would want for my children if they were going to this school. Then, I set my goals and objectives based on those expectations."

Ms. Thompson attended elementary, middle, and secondary high school in this large urban school district in which she now is employed. She earned her Bachelors of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1990 and her Master's Degree in Education in 1995 at two private colleges in her hometown. Janice worked outside of the education field while she was in college. However, since obtaining her bachelor's degree, she has only worked in the field of education. She started out as a teacher instructing in the intermediate grades from third-grade plus up to eighth-grade. Third grade plus was a grade that had children that had been retained at least two years and were actually fifth grade age students. She currently serves as principal of Stanton Elementary/Middle School (name changed). This school houses grades from Pre-School to 8th grade and were designated high poverty on their state school report card.

Stanton Elementary/Middle School's designation was Academic Emergency during the 2009-2010 school year. The school's current enrollment was slightly over three hundred students of whom 86.1% are Black. At least 92% of the children were listed as economically disadvantaged and 22.3% of them were designated as students with disabilities. Pertaining to the educational levels of the staff at Stanton, 100% of the teachers have Bachelor degrees and 71% have Master

degrees. At Stanton, 100% of the teachers were designated as certified teachers. Per pupil expenditure for the 2008 – 2009 school year was listed around \$10,500.00. Stanton Elementary School is located in a low-income neighborhood that is plagued with the problems that are adverse to any society; drugs, gangs, teenage pregnancy, and crime. However, Principal Thompson declared that this is where she belongs. “This is home”.

Principal Dorothy Price

Dorothy Price was born in 1976 and raised in this large Midwestern urban city and a by-product of the school system in which she now a principal. The youngest of the three principals whom I interviewed, she was thirty-five years old. Principal Price is married with two children. Her fourteen-year-old child is adopted and her biological child is seventeen. Her seventeen-year-old daughter was diagnosed with ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) as a child. She has endured many medical challenges that had an impact on the educational career of her daughter. This experience has guided her through her professional career, especially dealing with students on 504 plans (Americans with Disabilities Act) or individual evaluation programs (IEPs).

Principal Price’s mother had an associate degree and was an optician and her father had received a tenth-grade education. Principal Price has lived through much adversity in her young life. Two of her brothers were murdered and her mother past away at the age of fifty-five (55) from lung cancer. Growing up, this principal did not stay in public education and attended private schools from 9th through 12th grade. Dorothy obtained her undergraduate in Elementary Education in 1998 and her graduate degree in Elementary Administration in 2001 from a private college inside the city she grew up.

Dorothy Price worked for the Army Corps of Engineering during her college years as a legal clerk. However, since obtaining her degrees, she has worked inside the education field. She began

her career as a teacher by replacing one of the principals in our study who was being promoted into her first assistant principal position. She worked as a teacher for three years before interviewing and receiving her first assistant principal position in another school in this district. She currently is Principal of Scottsdale Elementary/Middle School (name changed). Scottsdale currently houses students from grades Pre-School to 8th grade and was listed as high poverty on their school's state report card.

Scottsdale Elementary/Middle School had a bad reputation when Dorothy came six years ago to lead the school. She told me that even the police referred to it as "ScottsHell" and this was the reputation that she knew she had to change if the children were going to be given a fair opportunity to succeed in life. The Report Card designation for this school in the 2009 –2010 school year was Continuous Improvement. The school housed around 400 students of whom 92.3% are Black, 91% were listed as economically disadvantaged, and 28.4% were students with disabilities. This school was designated as high poverty, which means that this school was ranked in the top percentile of schools with a high number of economically disadvantaged students (Ohio Department of Education website). Scottsdale is located in a low-income community that is plagued with high crime, drugs, and violence. However, Principal Price has changed the face of Scottsdale:

We actually have a school based health center, whereas, most other schools only have a nurse's office, we have a doctor that comes once a week, a full time nurse practitioner, and a medical assistant that are all in that office; oh excuse me, and a psychiatric school social worker and one's that's there half-time. We have these services offered to our children on a daily basis. Shots, physicals, if they don't have a medical doctor they can come and get their needs met here. This is my calling. This is where I am supposed to be.

Principal Katherine March

Principal Katherine March was born and raised in this large Midwestern urban school district. She attended elementary, middle, and secondary school within this district. Her parents were both well-educated. Her mother was a teacher for this same urban school district in which she presently works. Until his death, her father was an engineer at a prestigious corporation, within the city in which she lived. She completed her undergraduate degree at an HBCU, Historically Black College and University and her graduate degree in Education Administration at an urban college in her hometown. She is currently working on her doctoral degree in Urban Educational Leadership and expects to complete within the next few years. She is currently principal of Madison Elementary School (name changed) in an upper-middle-class urban district. This school houses grades K – 6th and was listed as low poverty on the state's school report card.

Madison Elementary School was rated Excellent with Distinction for the past two school years. This school was a low poverty school that had a little over 600 students attending and a long waiting list of students whose parents would like for their children to attend this school. This school had a 20.7% Black student population, a 65.2% Caucasian student population, 12.1% Hispanic student population, and 2% Asian or Pacific Islander, of whom 10.4% were students with disabilities. Only 16.7% of the student population has been designated as economically disadvantaged. Madison's website vaunted that 100% of their teachers have Bachelor degrees and 79.4% have Master degrees or their equivalent. All of her teachers (100%) were designated as highly qualified teachers by the *No Child Left Behind* standards set by the federal government.

When asked if her school was easier to lead since it was not plagued with financial resource problems she stated, "With this area, the set of problems are different. No, I may not have problems with finances, but I run into problems with parents due to academics and teacher

complaints.” However, she enjoys being at this school and dealing with the challenges that she has faced while there.

The interviews of these three AA female principals set the tone for the themes that began to develop during this project. The overarching theme for this study was leadership. From this theme, I studied these six subcategories: race and gender, communication and feedback, othermothering, equity concerns, mentors, and urban principalships. I used these subcategories to explore their leadership development and to begin giving voice to their leadership choices.

Thematic Coding and Analysis

In a chapter entitled, *Finding Your Leadership Voice*, James H. Kouzes (1999) and his colleague stated that, “*credibility is the foundation of leadership*. People don’t follow your technique. They follow you – your message and your embodiment of that message” (p. 39). This statement embraces the essence of leadership and how the researcher characterized its meaning to embody and explore the characteristics of the three principals she observed.

The thematic coding and analysis of my data were “segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts with[in] the data set” (Givens, 2008, p. 867). An analysis of my subcategories focused on the observations and interviews that were conducted with these principals that supported the fundamental theme of leadership and maintained the researcher’s belief that leadership for AA females is supplemented through her personal lived experiences due to the lack of mentors, support groups, and training that she may have received prior to and during her principalship. Furthermore, although her leadership style encapsulates many of the qualities projected by Whites and males, the AA female’s variations are transmitted through the emerging themes that surfaced during this study.

Using open coding, I determined dominant foundational themes for my project under the umbrella of leadership characteristics. From this category, the researcher's study was guided to answer questions pertaining to areas used by other researchers who listed them as important issues relating to leadership development, abilities, and qualities (Case, 1997; Dillard, 1995; Mertz & Neeley, 1998; Pollard, 1997; Reed & Evans, 2008; Sernak, 2001; Yeakey, Johnston, & Adkinson, 1986).

Utilizing open coding to analyze the raw data assisted in the identification and labeling of six categories that would answer questions pertaining to leadership development. These categories were: (a) race and gender, (b) othermothering, (c) mentors, (d) communication and feedback, (e) equity concerns, and (f) urban principalships. After analyzing the transcripts, the data were reassembled to identify other relationships that occurred within the data (axial coding).

From the observation notes, interview transcripts, and the online follow-up surveys of these three AA female principals, similar subthemes such as life experiences, training, religion, business communities, and culture appeared. Other themes such as honest, fair, nurturing, independence, and religion began to emerge from the discussion surrounding issues dealing with academics, poverty, discipline problems, and lack of parental support. These central themes and subthemes surfaced to dictate many of the actions and decisions that were noticed and documented by the researcher during her observations, interviews, and the online survey taken (See figure 4). Ultimately, other subthemes emerged such as, physical, mental, and drug abuse issues, as well as, having adequate school resources.

Figure 4: Emerging Themes Resulting from Observations, Interviews, and Online Survey of Participants

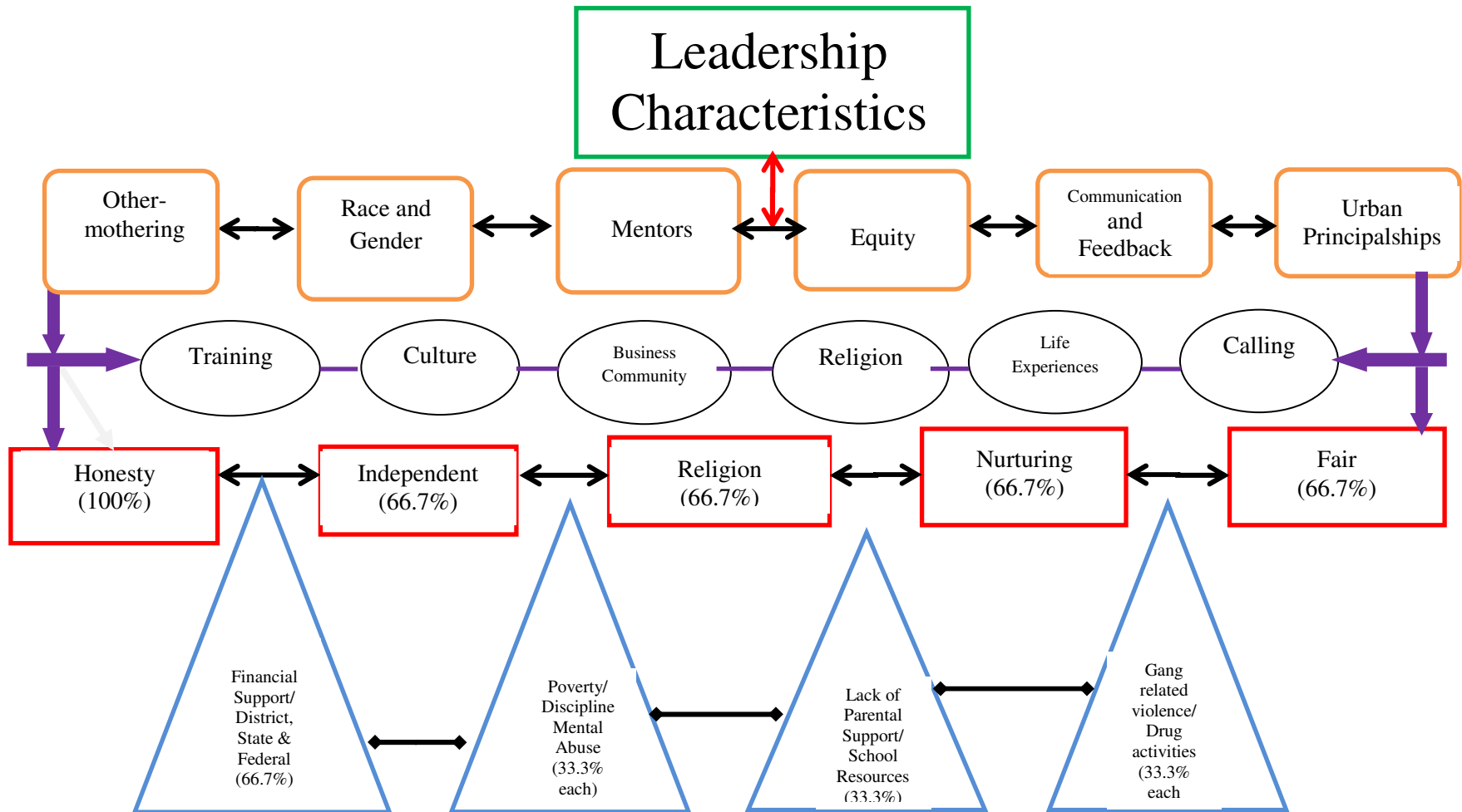


Figure 4. Data display of emerging themes after open, axial, and selective coding of observation notes and interviews (Klenke, 2008). Percentage results taken from follow-up online survey.

The themes and subthemes supported the main topic of leadership and gave credence to the voices, style, and development of leadership qualities of the principals in the study. The researcher listened several times to each one of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed to make it easier to work with and analyze the data. To answer my research question, the researcher utilized a unit of analysis based on answering the question of how leadership styles are developed by African American Elementary Principals. A second copy of the interview was made that could be written on and cut up.

First, the researcher chose to go through the interviews and isolate any statements by marking the beginning and end of the excerpt that encapsulated the unit of analysis. After locating an excerpt, the segment was given a term or phrase that explained what the researcher was seeing. Each double spaced page was coded with naïveté as much as possible while staying consistent with the researcher's expectation that AA female principals in urban settings must rely on their owned personal lived experiences to develop unique leadership styles that can handle their daily routines (Foss & Waters, 2007).

After the coding was completed, the researcher cut out each of the excerpts and placed them into piles based on their codes. If an excerpt was given more than one code, then a copy was made to place in all the categories it was coded. One-by-one, the researcher placed each excerpt into the pile it was marked. The piles were then placed in envelopes and marked with an appropriate category (Foss & Waters, 2007). A summative list of the foundational themes was extrapolated through this meticulous coding process and assisted by the participant's rich description that included (a) leadership characteristics, (b) race and gender, (c) othermothering, (d) mentors, (e) communication and feedback, (f) equity concerns, and (g) urban principalships.

Next, the researcher typed the headings, utilizing a larger font size (26), from each of the envelopes into a Word document. Afterward each label inside the envelope was typed on a separate line, using the larger font, leaving a space between each excerpt. Once typed into the program each was printed and cut apart. The idea here was to begin an explanatory schema to report my findings (Foss & Waters, 2007). According to Foss and Water's (2007), "An explanatory schema is an explanation for what you see across piles of coded data (p. 196).

At this point, the labels were utilized to find relationships among the excerpts. I laid the labels out several times in order to find connections and cause-and-effect relationships that existed between the labels (Foss & Waters, 2007). For instance, for the first layout included the seven themes listed above; leadership characteristics, race and gender, othermothering, mentors, equity concerns, communication and feedback, and urban principalships. During the second layout my explanatory schema included sticky notes labeled, life-experiences, and religion, training, culture, calling, and business community. Then each label was marked in each pile was given a similar mark that connected it with this pile. life experiences was a 1; religion was a 2; training a 3; culture a 4; calling a 5; and business community a 6, therefore, I could reconstruct them at a later time, if deemed necessary.

During the third layout the researcher stripped the piles of all their titles, disassembled the labels to put them in different piles to try extrapolating other relationships that existed within and between the excerpts. This layout resulted in sticky notes labeled honest, fair, nurturing, independent, community poverty, discipline problems, lack of support from parents, lack of financial support, lack of school resources, gang-related violence, drug-related activities, physical and mental issues. The ideology behind this task is to force the researcher to look

beyond the obvious to find relationships that develop my explanatory schema (Foss & Waters, 2007).

The themes and subthemes supported the main topic and gave credence to the voices of the principals in the study. The researcher listened several times to each one of the interview sessions and segmented and reconstructed field notes to ensure that these three AA female principals' interpretation of their leadership qualities were captured and followed the essence of their beliefs.

The researcher decided to include a topic as a theme based on the amount of time it appeared in the observation notes, interview document, or online survey. The observation notes were written on the Principal Observation Field Note Chart (Appendix B). The notes were written during the four hour observation time prior to the interview. During this session, the researcher asked very few questions and mostly observed and annotated the behaviors of the participants during their day and in their meetings when possible.

This section discussed the results of the interviews conducted in this research beginning with an overview of the school environments, and a synopsis of the principal offices. Verbiage from the principals was added to substantiate the results that were given.

The School Environments

Schools.

Stanton Elementary/Middle School and Scottsdale Elementary/Middle Schools were located in poverty stricken areas of the city and were indicated as such on their state report card. Ms. Thompson said that she felt that her biggest challenge was poverty; not academics.

I face poverty . . . the challenges of poverty. The challenges of economically disadvantaged families who have a lack of drive and a lack of motivation for

education and they don't see the importance of education to the extent that I see it.

These areas are plagued with gang violence, drug wars, rape, gunshots, child molestation, mental and physical abuse, however, two of these principals show up every day to deliver hope, talk about perseverance, and to challenge everything that these students are seeing and living every day.

Although these two schools may sit in chaos, Scottsdale is only five-years-old and Stanton is moving into a new facility the next school year. This large urban school district closed many of its old schools and built new, state of the art schools for the students in these areas. As stated previously, this urban school district received its first Excellent report card rating in the 2009–2010 school year and the superintendent has alluded to the new edifices as the turning point in meeting these children's educational goals.

The schools offer a new feeling and perception of what life could be for these children. This comes from building culture. When I first walked into Scottsdale the first thing I noticed was calm. Although it was the last day of school, the students were walking peacefully through the hallways, no running, and the teachers were laughing and joking with the students. There was a sense of sadness that it was time for the school year to end. As stated by Principal Price:

I love the schools, I love being able to interact with the parents and kids, and the community. As a matter-of-fact, we just won an award last week for being (large urban school district's) most parent and community friendly schools. Yeah, that's big, especially for the area that were in and the population that we serve, that was big for us.

Madison Elementary School houses only Kindergarten through sixth-grade and is situated within a middle-class urban environment. The school is new and in its second year of being utilized although the school has been a stable force in this community for nearly 90 years. Principal March has been with this school for the last eight years and believes that this school was her calling:

I was in competition with another assistant principal to become principal of another school. Needless to say, he got the other school which sent me back to my old school. A few weeks passed when I got a call that they were looking for a principal for this school. I interviewed and got the job. I have been right here since then.

Principal March has enjoyed great academic success with her school and has active and strong parent support for the school. The business community is just as involved as the parental sector. Financially, the school does not struggle at all. The school is secluded and surrounded by a quiet and quaint neighborhood. There are no gangs hanging outside its doors, there are no drug dealers, as a matter of fact, as I pulled up to the school, many moms were out running while pushing their babies in strollers. This describes the environment surrounding Madisonville Elementary School.

The Principals' Offices.

Each of the principals had large offices staffed with secretaries, administrative assistants, and office personnel to support and maintain their schools. All the principals had female secretaries and support staff. One of the three principals had an AA female as their secretary; the other two principals' female secretaries were White. All of the offices were maintained with a certain decorum that demanded respect; although, the atmospheres were very friendly and

invited employees and visitors to feel welcomed. I was amazed at how much the offices looked alike. Meaning, they all had several cases of books, many stacks of papers, and a very large desk; needed for someone who was going to be spending a lot of time there and making a lot of important decisions.

Principal Overview

The principals all ranged in ages from 35 to 43. I am using the following pseudonyms to identify the participants throughout the study: Janice Thompson, Dorothy Price, and Katherine March. Two of the participants were married and one was engaged to be married this summer. Two had biological children and all three participants had either adopted or stepchildren they were caring for at the time of the study. One was adamant to speak about her daughter with ADHD because she had seen her through many difficulties and she was now a college student. All these women had attended public schooling growing up, although one had transferred to a private school by her 9th grade year. One attended a Historically Black Colleges and Universities for her undergraduate degree; the other two went to private institutions within the city they lived. Two completed their graduate degrees from a large urban college while one completed at a private institution. All three participants received undergraduate degrees in elementary education and graduate degrees in Education Administration. Only one is currently pursuing a doctoral degree.

All three principals began their careers by acquiring their teacher certification and teaching in elementary schools. Each said that they were happy teaching when they were sought out by administration to seek administrative positions. Two had only been teachers for three years when encouraged to become assistant principals. Two of these young females had been hand-picked by the superintendent to begin their administrative positions. Ms. Thompson said,

“She recruited me to go into the intern program to get more intensive training to become a principal. I felt it was a compliment to me because I was sought out based on the talent that they saw in me”. The other’s mentor was a deputy superintendent who asked her to begin her administrative career after three years in the classroom.

They were all commanding of their environments, although not demanding. The principals all seem to be very busy moving from telephone calls, to meetings, to dealing with unexpected drop-ins, to disciplining students, although it was done with an assured ease. My presence and observations did not appear to them defensive, uneasy, or pressured. As one of the principals told me, “It is just one more thing of many that I have to contend with today”.

As with many African Americans, these three women all expressed their feelings with the use of their hands. One actually had a small paddle in her office that she kept hitting her hands with in order to remind the two kids who were in her office, due to adverse behavior, that she was very unhappy with their behavior and the choices they had made. This was an example of her personal-lived experiences taking place in her leadership. She was quick to remind the kids that in her day, the teachers had the authority to use a little paddling if necessary to keep her on the right path. (Here she paused and thanked God). Then after school, she had to contend with her parents who would reinforce what the school had dished out by adding their own form of punishment to compliment the school’s punishment. This was said as she was contemplating how she was going to handle reprimanding these two students.

After completing the observations and interviews, I felt honored; as all these principals made me feel by the time we were departing. Although they all have entertained acquiring positions in Central Office, they were content with their current positions and the schools they were serving.

Leadership Development

All the principals had been through intensive training before and during their acceptance into the principalship role. However, the similarity occurred when all three females attributed their main leadership characteristics came from their mothers and their home training. Ms. Price called her mother phenomenal. Ms. March stated,

My mother taught me to be firm and to stand for what I believed in no matter what the costs. Therefore, how I approach a problem comes from the way I watched my mom and dad handle situations that came up in the home. My parents did not believe in letting something get out of hand. They believed in finding out the facts and then making a decision based on the facts. I use this tactic a lot in my personal and professional life.

Additionally, they were all content with the leadership development training they had experienced prior to gaining their principalships. They all agreed that leadership was an evolutionary process that continues with time. According to Janice Thompson:

But what helped me was the rich training that I had in way of support. Because at the time I was coming into the principalship the district had multiple avenues of training and professional development going on that they don't have now. As I look back now; I see the benefit to me and a lack of benefits to others who are coming into it now. Back then I went through what was called the Assessment Center. Before you were chosen to become a principal you had to go through this Assessment Center and you had to pass all those different challenges; you had to score within a certain range before they considered you, and I think that was the toughest challenge that I had prior to coming into the principalship.

Dependent on their training, and the implementation of their personal lived experiences into their work day, shaped, and developed the leadership characteristics that these three principals now used to lead their organizations. Dorothy Price spoke of her experiences that assisted her in the way she leads her organization.

The way I react to the children and the community. I had two brothers who were murdered and then my mom died at the age of 55 due to lung cancer and so throughout the course of my six years here every year we have had some type of tragedy. A student playing Russian Roulette and blew his brains out in front of her kids or parents or just mothers . . . I have had more mothers who died over the past five years from different diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure, just dropping dead at the ages of 36 and 38. So, with me experiencing my own lost and then having both of my brothers murdered; I can tell my story; they see me as human. They don't see me as this person who is up on this pedestal that hasn't experienced life. I have experienced life. You know I grew up in the hood as they would say. I have walked their walk. So, when so and so's dad was murdered I could console that child and say it's not going to be easy, but it will get better. So, they respect that, my parents respect that, and even with my own children, you know that with my own daughter who is ADHD, I tie that into a lot of when I am talking with parents to let them understand if you don't want to take this route there are alternative routes, but you have to be willing to make those sacrifices, so, everything is personal to me . . . everything!

Ms. March not only boasted of her own training and development in leadership, but how she contributes to great leadership with the development of other leaders.

I also have a stake in developing my staff. I feel that I am a leader if I have developed others to lead. For, instance, I have one teacher who is constantly asking my opinion when I put her in charge of a project. How do I correct that behavior? I simply ask her what do you think?"

All of these principals cherished the training camps and the simulations, however, it was reality and what they have lived through that actually defined their leadership qualities and gave them the ability to communicate to the parents, teachers, students, and the community at large.

Leadership Style

All the principals were asked to characterize their leadership style. During the interview, the principals used terminology that was associated with transformational leadership. One deemed her leadership as collaborative, another democratic, and the last one transformational.

Dorothy Price describing her democratic leadership style stated:

I use more of a democratic leadership style to where I truly believe that most decisions, not all, should be made by the people who are going to be greatly impacted by them. So, while some decisions I make on my own, I do rely heavily on what my staff thinks and how they feel because they are the ones that are actually impacted by those decisions; so I do try to include them in on almost everything that I can.

I observed this behavior during her observation. I wrote down her collaborative, charismatic, and independent style of leadership. I witnessed an employee who took the initiative to change the lunch schedule to accommodate the activities of the day; then she knocked on Principal Price's door and informed her that she had changed the schedule. Principal Price gave her the thumbs up and complimented her on her initiative. Additionally, on the follow-up survey she

characterized herself as honest, fair, independent, religious, and nurturing; many qualities associated with a democratic leader.

Ms. March described her leadership style as transformational:

Well, I am more of a transformational leader. I try to motivate my people by allowing them to make decisions concerning our organization. I develop leaders.

I put my employees into leadership roles by asking each one of them to take the lead in at least one project a year. Additionally, I lead a very democratic system.

I believe in the majority rules in situations that don't require a definitive decision from me. I want my people to buy into our school and the culture we've made here. I have been told by others that I am very charismatic, open, honest, fair, and easy to approach. My goal is to make leaders. When I walk away, I like knowing that I leave capable and strong people behind to carry on the duties of the school.

When I observed Ms. March she was getting ready for her graduation ceremony and a school carnival. I watched her motivate people to take a lead role in solving problems that were occurring in their projects. The way she communicated with her staff proved her to be charismatic, fair, and independent in her leadership.

For instance, a new teacher who was chosen to chair the carnival event appeared to be having trouble with another member on the committee. She came to Ms. March upset and ready to resign as chair of the committee. Later on, I found out that it was the first time she had chaired an event like this one and this veteran teacher was usurping the authority of the new teacher. Therefore, Ms. March invested extra time with this teacher, listening to her complaints, asking her how she had handled the situation up to this point, and then asking her what other

strategies could she utilize to thwart the problem(s) that were occurring. I observed Katherine using her leadership qualities to develop this teacher into a potential leader.

On the follow-up survey, Ms. March described her leadership qualities as independent, charismatic, nurturing, religious, and honest which concurred with what the researcher observed and was conveyed during the interview.

Furthermore, Ms. Price prides herself on how her leadership style has developed over the years:

First year, oh my goodness, I did everything. I trusted no one. I was new. I was trying to learn the staff and it was like hmmm . . . no, I'll do it, I'll do it. I had to do everything because I pride myself in what comes out of our school and if its not right; then it's problematic. My second year, I learn to delegate real fast, because I knew who my key people were. Talk about having those right people in the right seats. So, now I have key people who I can go to, to do the things I need to have done.

Ms. Thompson had many words to describe her leadership style:

I am a collaborative leader; I am an intense driven leader; I am a result driven leader; I look for results from my leadership. Sensitivity, ownership, pride in what I do, a sense of understanding that there has to be sincere relationships with the people I work with in order for my leadership to be effective. I can't just look at them as a professional and ride them to give me their best when I am not looking at the other side, the personal side, of that person or that whole person. I think that one of the things that make me who I am, is looking at my ability to look at the person, the whole person and not just staff or student. As well as

understanding that it is my job to cater to the whole person and not just one side of that person, not just the professional side; not just the personal side; understanding how to keep a line drawn and how to know the difference between professional decisions and personal decisions.

Ms. Thompson listed dedicated, assertive, integrity, honest, and fair on her survey as her five strong leadership characteristics. On my observation field notes, I listed her leadership style as strong, independent, caring, dedicated, and nurturing. I observed her in a meeting with several teachers concerning their eighth-grade graduates and who would be allowed to participate in the program. Conversely, there was a problem.

One student had broken many of the rules and was at times disruptive. However, one teacher came to the committee and asked them to allow him to participate in the ceremony. This teacher spoke about his special circumstances with a mother who was an alcoholic and a sister who was deemed as special needs. This teacher thought that some consideration and leniency should be given since this young man lived in a challenging environment and was practically raising himself and his sister on his own.

Nevertheless, the other teachers did not think he should be allowed to participate. They felt he knew from the beginning of the year the rules associated with participation in graduation. The committee cited the fact that the sister with special needs was always in uniform and that this young man would wear uniform if he wanted to participate in a special school event. I observed Principal Thompson permitting her staff members to handle this problem within the committee. Her only input was that a decision had to be made by the end of that school day. This meeting was being held at 8:00 am. She told the committee to make a decision by then or she would. Janice displayed honest, but fair leadership qualities.

No matter how they each described their leadership styles they all agreed that it had changed since they first started their principalship and they all agreed that they were constantly trying to find new ways to improve upon what they have already developed.

Race and Gender

When asked how they defined race one principal answered using one word: stereotyping. The other two principals gave short, but simple definitions such as, hatred towards another race. When asked if they felt racism was a factor in their careers they all seem to have a story or two to tell concerning their race or gender. The researcher must admit that she was not prepared to hear the comments associated with race and gender that she heard from these women. For example, Katherine March said:

Race did not affect my rise to the principalship. Actually, I would said that it may have assisted in my getting here. When I was asked to participate in the program there were hardly any females, black or White, I was an anomaly; young, female and black. These factors made the district anxious to see me succeed and they gave me everything I needed to make that happen, especially opportunity.

Racism did not seem to become a factor until after I became a principal. I have experienced racism with some of my parents; especially when I first got this job, but not so much as time goes on and I proved that I have what it takes to lead this organization and make our children academically successful.

This statement coincided with her survey response in which she marked, no – I have never experienced racial or gender biasness, that validates her belief that racism and her gender has not been an obstacle to her career.

Out of the three, Ms. Thompson expressed that she may have experienced racism during her career. However, she never communicated a concrete example of the racism that she experienced. When asked if racism had been a factor for her and had she experienced it her comments were:

Just to a certain extent. When I say that I mean that I understand and there cannot just be anybody who waltzes off the street with a certificate to teach or that can teach any child. So, I feel like, and it don't necessarily have to be just White, black . . . it could be rich, poor . . . it could be, you know, male or female . . . so, it could be adolescent, primary, because I feel that in order to cater and be able to teach our children, you have to be able to understand them. And I don't think that everybody understands every type of child and if you don't understand that child it could be a racial problem.

However, on her survey, Ms. Thompson marked maybe – I think I have faced race and gender biasness but they may not have thought so. The researcher realized after listening to the audiotapes several times that further probing should have occurred with Ms. Thompson concerning the experience(s) that precipitated her response on the survey and what the statement “Just to a certain extent” that was said in the interview actually meant.

Ms. Price talked about experiencing racism from her own race. After defining racism as “A hatred towards another race,” then she proceeded to explain her comment:

Now, I say that because the first interview I had was with an African American male principal and he was new and I was going to be new and he was hesitant to hire me because he did not know how the community or how the people would take a young black male and a young black female both running the school. That

was probably the best thing that happened to me because that team of Caucasian people, who were all old enough to be my parents, took me in and never once questioned my ability to be an administrator. So, that's where I started.

Ms. Price answered yes – I have experienced race and gender biasness at least once on her survey. Based on her example and the survey response one could deduce that she has been discriminated against during her career, although, it would be considered reverse discrimination.

None of the principals saw gender as being a factor in their career path leading to the principalship. They all shrugged their shoulders when approached with this topic as though it had no bearing whatsoever on their lives. Considering leadership is the White male's domain I found this strikingly odd; however, something to contemplate in future research.

Othermothering

Only one of the three principals had heard of the term "othermothering" before I explained it to them. This term was defined by Patricia Hill-Collins (2000) as, "Women who assisted bloodmothers by sharing mothering responsibilities" (p. 178). However, once the researcher defined the term for them the other two made comments like, "So, that's what they call what I do?" Dorothy Price commended her role as an 'othermother' by stating:

Yes! Oh yes! Me and my staff yes! Because I am very tied to the children here
And I tell my staff, you know, these children did not choose us, we chose them.
We made the choice to come and work here. And because of this sometimes, I
don't fault the children for some of their actions. For example, I had a little boy
whose mother died two years ago of diabetes and he's just gone downhill. I
understand his mom and dad were married for eighteen years and they had eight
children together and he was the youngest. He was in fourth grade when his mom

died. So, I'm a little more, I don't want to say lenient, but more patient with my children who I know are dealing with various issues and sometimes do not always respond in the administrative way that some staff would like me too. Because I believe in child stupidity, but I don't believe in adult stupidity.

I observed Ms. Price's othermothering skills. The day I arrived at her school there were two students who were waiting outside her office due to an incident that occurred. Once I got into her office, I was told that the two boys were there to see her because they were caught using an illegal substance in the bathroom the previous week while Ms. Price was out of town with her eighth-grade students.

During this confrontation, I viewed Dorothy having a small paddle in her hand and she referred to giving them the type of treatment she would have gotten when she was a child. She conveyed to them how her principal would have "whipped her behind" and after going home she got whipped again by her parents out of love and concern. This personal lived experience was utilized to let the students know how much she cared about what they had done and how it was going to affect their lives. Ms. Price stated on the follow-up survey that she participated in some othermothering activities.

During the interview, Ms. March was adamant about her role as an othermother. Katherine confirmed on her follow-up survey that she did some othermothering. Although she did not feel that she participated in this activity as much as other principals based on the economic climate of her community, she did acknowledge that her leadership style incorporated othermothering skills. As we walked down the halls of her school, I observed Katherine's interaction with her students. She paused to acknowledge them by name, she wrapped her arm

around their shoulders as they spoke, she was attentive to their behavior, and corrected them when necessary. She stated:

Of course, in my position I have stepped into this role on occasion. But, I don't think that I have dealt with othermothering enough to feel that it has changed or affected the way that I lead one way or another. On occasion, I've had to refer a student's parents to facilities to get their child the services they needed. But, I don't go this on a regular basis; well not as much as it happens in other urban schools. However, for me, I am caring and passionate about my work. I do believe in hugging my students. My mom hugged me and it seemed to change my world when I was growing up. That's what I remember. So, I include this behavior in the way I approach my students and even my staff members. Sometimes, a kind work and a gentle spirit is all that one needs to change their day.

All the principals were eager to discuss their 'othermothering' experiences, as indicated in the survey, with all three of the participants agreeing that they participated in some type of othermothering skills and believed that this concept should be included in any discussion of leadership. These AA female principals were all willing to give others kudos for sharing in this phenomenon; especially White females. However, one of the principals spoke of males that did the same thing with students and she branded the term "otherfathering" to distinguish the male role in assisting with the childrearing of other people's children.

Mentors

Of the three principals, only one spoke of having mentoring relationships in her life that assisted her through the decision making process from the beginning of her educational career.

Even with those relationships in place she ran into some obstacles with her mentors due to age and time factors that made some of the problems she faced an unknown to them. Principal March felt fortunate; mainly due to the mentoring relationships that had been developed even before she had decided to select this career:

For me it was a little different. You see, my mom was a teacher. So, I was raised in an educational environment. My mother's friends were teachers and administrators who worked in central office. I always had that connection to education. Once I chose my educational path, mentors came out of the woodwork to answer any questions that I had. I was truly blessed.

These mentors had years of experience under their belts and they knew the educational system inside and out. They collaborated with each other on my behalf. If one didn't know the answer to one of my questions, then several of them got together to figure the situation out. Their advice and wisdom was priceless.

However, Katherine felt that as she moved through the process, many of her mentors from the beginning could no longer assist her with her job because they did not face the same challenges as she had. They began telling her to use her knowledge and her gut to come up with answers to those questions that they did not seem to have for her.

The other two principals felt just as adamant about the need for mentors to be effective and successful at their jobs. Dorothy Price felt that her mentoring experience had been very minimal:

You know what . . . because a mentor is someone you can call upon when you need them; I was always the person everybody else called upon (laughs). So, I

did not have a mentor per se, but there is an administrator in this district (name deleted) that was my high school teacher. Since I have been an administrator, and even when I was a teacher, she always been there along the way, just to send me kudos. I wouldn't necessarily consider her a mentor, but just somebody I looked up too. You are not going to learn everything in those books. Because we do mock situations in school, know that it is nothing like that. The real world, is the real world. There are going to be some things that you are just going to mess up on. When I was hired as an assistant principal, these were the words that a district administrator told me (name deleted), he said, (name deleted), I am not going to have the time to train you to be an administrator. So you are just going to have to get out there and do it on your own and if you mess up . . . blame me! (laughs). So thank goodness I didn't mess up. So as an assistant principal my administrator was phenomenal. I could go to him and whatever his weaknesses, we complimented each other. So, If I had a mentor it would be him. To this day, that is who I call.

Principal Thompson's mentoring experience was different than the other two because she had been assigned a mentor as a condition to her training program.

No, they assigned me a mentor. That was part of the program that they had then and they don't have now. In the internship program I was assigned to work with a veteran principal and the principal at the time was assigned to several schools and was a part of what was called the instructional team; and I was assigned to that team. But I worked with a veteran principal and we traveled around; we were assigned to a certain group of schools and this principal mentored other principals

as well as me; but I shadowed her and I stayed with her as she went around to mentor other principals and to make sure that they had whatever they needed instructionally to make sure their schools were running the way they were suppose to be run and to monitor them. Interviewer: Was your mentor helpful with assisting you with the challenge of being an urban principal? No, this sort of evolved. Let me put it this way, the mentor that I had didn't really work in an urban school . . . well it was an urban school but it was a magnet school; and to there environment is a little different, so, when I was with her did it prepare me for what I was walking into? No! Did it give me some idea? Yes!

Mentoring was considered by all three principals as a crucial element for becoming and remaining an effective and successful principal. All three principals gave credit to their assistant deputy superintendent of whom they all spoke highly of her supportive, and effective mentoring program that was being shared with sixteen of the schools in this large urban district in order to get the schools into Continuous Improvement or above on their state report card. Her work with these schools has been “phenomenal” and this is the word they used to describe her leadership skills.

However, it became apparent that mentoring is not absolutely necessary to complete the job and become successful doing it. These principals expressed how having mentors would make the job more manageable and easier to handle the day-to-day operations; but, their leadership skills have developed to accept the conditions in which they work, this they credited to their personal lived-experiences.

Communication and Feedback

Being able to wear many hats is the communication piece for these principals. As stated by Ms. March “You have to know what to say, how to say it, and when to say it if you are going to be successful in connecting your school to the parents, the business community, the churches, and the people in the community.” For Principal Price, the communication portion of her career has assisted in the development of a health clinic at her school for the students in the community; not just Scottsdale, but all students under the age of eighteen are allowed to attend, get shots, have physicals, or seek other health care as needed:

We have a health center. We have our backpack buddy system in which we send food home every weekend for our families. We are partnered with the afterschool program that takes care of our free services of our students after-school. We have chess club, busido, step class. We are very big on health and nutrition. So, with the big urban community group (name deleted) we have juvenile diabetes committee and the juvenile obesity committee. Popular AA male senator from the area was at the school last week doing his walk to address juvenile obesity and diabetes. We have a GED program for our parents. We have graduated roughly 30 parents over the last two years. Therefore, I communicate with my parents the same way I communicate with my staff and my students and I treat them the same way. There are no secrets with me. It is what it is. If you are doing wrong then I am going to tell you. They respect me for being this way.

Principal Thompson states that communication is very important . . . very important. She communicates with her staff through direct conversations:

Conversations . . . conversations. . . through a lot of collaborations and meetings;

we meet frequently. . . we meet bi-weekly for what is called data team meetings. So, we talk about individual kids, we use our dashboard on a regular basis. We know most of our kids inside and out. The ones we provide the most intervention for, the ones that have the most need, the most intense, I know on a first name basis and most are the majority of my kids. So, we collaborate on a lot of concerns on a regular basis.

Equity Concerns

The two principals that were rated as high poverty on their state report cards spoke consistently of how limited resources manipulated the decisions they made about their schools. Many of their answers to several other questions were connected with the limited resources and budget cuts that the school district was experiencing. When asked what factors impeded her leadership development Dorothy Price stated:

OOOHHH! Not enough time. I think that is the biggest thing; it's so much that I want to be able to do for my kids, for my staff and time and funding are the biggest two. Because that would be programming, staff development, things that I don't have the monies to do what I would like to do. So that prevents us from doing some things.

Ms. Thompson agreed; however, stated her situation differently. When the researcher asked her if she was dealing with budget cuts she stated:

Yes, I am, but you're going to find out that is going to happen regardless. The District does not have the resources necessary to just give you everything that you need. To understand it, I have been in it long enough and when I came in, I came in during the time it was turning over and transitioning into lack of funds.

So, whereas, I never experienced the abundance that other leaders experienced in the district who have been in it much longer than I have. I came in in the turning point time. I came in at a time in which I had to be creative in how I staffed my school, I had to be creative in how I setup my classrooms, because I did not have the resources. I never really had 100% of the resources I needed, that I feel would have made my school more successful. So, I always had to be more creative in my thinking. So for me, I don't feel as deprived as some would feel at this point who has known better. Because, I have not really known better (laughs).

Ms. March does not experience resource problems as the two other principals which was indicated on her follow-up questionnaire and during her interview. She may be a part of the same district as the other schools; however, higher incomes make the equity concern different for her. She stated:

I have fantastic parents who want to see their children succeed. So, if there is something financially that I need for the students, I ask my PTA for it and they make it happen for me. I am truly blessed when it comes to the finances for my school.

Ms. Price and Ms. Thompson's responses to this question involved using different leadership techniques, not the skills taught in training class, to fill the gaps where money is not available to them. This situation would involve changing the way one thinks, tapping into one's personal-lived experiences, and other nonmonetary resources to come up with creative solutions to problems that normally only money could fix.

Urban Principalships

The researcher ended the interviews by asking the participants questions concerning the urban principal's connection to the business community, the churches, and why they thought most AA females worked in urban schools instead of suburban school districts. All three spoke of the importance of the urban principal being connected to the business community. Even Principal March, who is not having financial problems, stated:

The business community gives us more than just money. They give us something more important than money; they give us bodies. We need people to help mentor our students and to participate in their daily lives. The business community is awesome about sending us people who volunteer their time to see a child succeed. That is invaluable.

Dorothy Price agreed:

The business community is the key because a lot of the business community has a false sense of what truly goes on in the schools. So, when they are able to come out and see what is going on they have whole new respect for the school.

Ms. Thompson indicated the importance of being connected with the business community by stating:

Very! Very much so... we draw support from our business community and that's one of the things, coming into this school, I had to work on because a lot of relationships had gone by the weigh side and I was dealing with a lot of disconnects, so I had to work to try to bring some of those back to partner with education for the simple fact that we need that additional support from the community and from the businesses to succeed.

Religion.

The African American church is the pillar of the Black community. From slavery through present day, the African American church has been instrumental in assisting the members of their community in defining hope, faith, and patience, by giving this community an unambiguous prospective of survival, in lieu of, poverty, social injustice, racism, and a feeling of hopelessness that has permeated throughout the history of this community.

Furthermore, educational research has eluded to investigate the connection between the African American female, religion and spirituality, and how it has shaped their leadership style (Witherspoon & Taylor, 2010). In their study of four (4) African American female principals, Witherspoon & Taylor (2010) stated, “Spirituality was not neutral in matters of social justice and leadership in schools. Our analysis revealed that social justice and the spiritual were closely related and often intertwined. For the participants, to be spiritual *was* to be socially just” (p. 137).

Therefore, it is important and should be noted that all three of the principals I interviewed considered themselves religious. They all stated that they seek understanding and clarity from God. They all pray, a lot. Ms. Thompson stated:

I am a spiritual person and I believe that God has a purpose for everybody’s life and my purpose is to impact and make a difference in the lives of children who are disadvantaged and who are in urban schools that for a long time have not really reached them. That is the backbone for me (referring to the church). I have to speak just for me; that I am spiritually minded; I am grounded in my spiritual beliefs and that is what keeps me going. And having the support, because I have a spiritual administrative team, my secretaries have my back, when I am not

praying, they are; and it makes a difference; it makes a difference in the culture and in the feeling of our school; it makes a difference in the things that come against me on a daily basis; and how I am able to deal with them and the strength that I draw, that is just my total... I just know why I can do what I do and why I get the results I get.

Ms. March spoke succinctly about her connection with religion and how the church has made a major effect in her school, on the curriculum, and with the academic level of her students. Katherine stated:

The church is remarkable because they find us monetary support, they donate goods, like clothing and food, and they give us bodies to assist our students with math and science and whatever help they may need. The churches in our community give out baskets to our families, that are in need during the holidays. They also fund families for Christmas. But, their most precious gift is themselves. The members will come out during state testing and sit with our students to offer them the support they need to pass. Our school does extremely well every year on the state test. I am very proud and our community is proud of how our school performs. I owe all to a group effort.

Furthermore, she is not afraid of the line that has been drawn between state and church. Out of thirteen choices, plus the opportunity to add any characteristics that were not available on the list, Katherine indicated religion as one of the five characteristics that described her leadership attributes. According to her:

I'm well versed in the laws between Church and state and I make sure we never cross it. But, in the same token, I'd never turn down such a vital instrument in the

neighborhood. You have to remember that all your business partners, parents teachers, staff members, and the students attend these churches. Churches are just an extension of who we are in this school. To shut them out would be shutting out the people who are your stakeholders and the backbone of this community.

Although Dorothy concurred with the other two principals concerning the difference that the church had on her school, she was the one who spoke least about her personal religious commitment although she indicated religious as one of her main leadership characteristics on her follow-up questionnaire. During her interview she had this to say about the churches affiliation with her school:

As long as we don't go around forcing our beliefs onto others. We let our families know the church, because we have sign-up sheets, this church is giving away twenty-five baskets to our families. We want to put you down to receive this. So, we never just send folks. We always talk to everyone because we've had parents that had Christmas full of things and the church would call and say come pick up your things and they would say, I am sleep. I am going to need you to give her stuff to somebody else. So, the churches recognize the need. We utilize our churches more so when our families are in need. The Churches are big during Christmas and Thanksgiving. That's what they normally help out with . . . That's why they formed their coalition so that we can strengthen our community because if we don't raise our kids, and this is what I tell my parents, if we don't raise our kids now, society will raise them for us later.

I utilized this section to introduce the topic of their careers being considered a part of their calling. Each principal made a comment connected to their present position and called it their calling or considered their current position as divine intervention. Ms. Thompson stated:

I can speak only for me, and I know for some of my colleagues that I work with have the same thought, and that is I have to go work where I am needed and that my job is an assignment it is not something that I chosen or that I prefer; it's an assignment.

Dorothy stated:

I called Ms. March (Katherine) and told her that they were that they were trying to get me to interview at this school. My family wanted me to take this suburban school. I talked to my professor and I told him that I didn't want to be the first Black assistant principal at this school. I didn't want that on me. So, even though he tried to push me and I knew I would be great; it still was not where my heart was. So, I stayed here. I am from this community.

Katherine reiterated:

I was born in this city and I will probably die here. I know this is my calling because how I got here was strange. I had interviewed for another school with a cohort of mine, who was a White male. They chose him. It wasn't two weeks later when I got the call that they were looking for a principal for this school. I interviewed and I got the job. That was seven years ago, and I am still here.

The researcher would like to examine further this concept of "being called" to work in a certain position. The mysterious nature of this topic was included in the religion section due to the subjective nature of its content.

Religion, although subjective in nature, should be pointed out, is utilized and considered a vital part of the leadership qualities of these three principals and was ingrained in them from birth through the Black church. Two principals revealed that they would not consider taking action within their organization before praying and consulting their bible for clarity and direction. Moreover, religion was utilized as a part of the leadership role of these individuals and without the assistance and support of their churches and their faith, they envisioned their journeys as more difficult to maneuver and with the possibility of being less successful and effective in their prospective communities. These women looked to God for patience, guidance, and to enhance their ability to make decisions that would work out best for their students, staff, and the communities they worked.

Other opportunities.

When the researcher asked why they thought that so many AA females were working in urban schools, the researcher indicated responses would range from racial to gender discrimination, lack of opportunities for AA females, to “no one would take this school so I took it.” However, I was surprised by the responses that each one of these principals gave. All the principals expressed that they were where they were because they felt that God had placed them there. They all said that their particular school was their calling. Ms. March agreed that her educational background and knowledge does afford her the ability to seek administrative positions in Central Office. “However, I am content where I am right now. Maybe a few years in the future that will change, but now I am where I am supposed to be”.

From listening to the voices of these three AA females I began to understand that many of the AA females who are working in these environments want to be there. They went to college knowing that their careers would bring them back to the same neighborhoods they left in

order to be able to offer their communities the educational advantage that other neighborhoods received. They were using their talents to bring equity and justice back into their communities that were not financially affluent. This could be considered their brand of the “Talented Tenth” philosophy to keep their neighborhoods growing and succeeding.

Influences and limitations

All of the observations and interviews were carried out using similar methods and by asking similar questions to each participant. However, some of the questions generated answers that were verbatim while other responses were totally different from one another. For example, when faith and religion were talked about in the interview it was introduced by each participant. The researcher did not include any questions that specifically filtered answers about their religious beliefs or their connection with God. However, each participant, somehow, found an opportunity to let the researcher know their religious beliefs and how God was the driving force within their lives. Some quaint sayings such as, “Only through the Grace of God” and elaborate explanations (see Thompson under religion) allowed the researcher the ability to extrapolate the notion that religion played a major role in the development of the leadership qualities for these three AA females.

When describing their leadership characteristics these three AA females were adamant in being known as transformational leaders. Although they used different terms to explain their characteristics: collaborative, democratic, and people-oriented, they all expressed the need to be the best leader they could be for the people they led. They constantly reiterated that the lives of many families depended on their ability to lead effectively and successfully. They all were concerned about developing leaders within their organization. For all of them, that is how they gauged their success; by the success and development of others around them. The differences in

leadership characteristics were steeped in the tactics used to make this happen. For instance, Ms. Thompson, used her data meetings to make everyone feel that they were involved in the decision-making portion of their school. Ms. Price spoke of allowing everyone in her organization lead some event from the beginning to the end. Ms. March spoke of constantly asking her staff members, “What do you think?” This made them answer their own questions instead of making her give her opinion all the time.

Surprisingly, none of these females felt that race or gender had hindered the development of their careers or stopped them from achieving the goals that they had set for themselves. Actually, they all said the opposite. They felt that being African American and female gave them the opportunity to be in this field. Thompson and March indicated that when they entered this arena most principals in urban schools were White males. Their district was looking for talented minority women to begin training for leadership positions. They believed that they were actually in the right place at the right time.

Only one of the principals had actually heard of the term othermothering; however, all agreed that they were definitely othermothers for the students under their leadership. They took care of much more than academics. Each of these women listed the issues they have dealt with during their principalships. They have attended to their student’s health, eating habits, physical activities, intimate relationships, family problems, religious well-being, and any other concerns that the students bring into their offices.

All agreed that othermothering should be a term that is connected with leadership skills because they all did it whether they wanted to or not. They all considered othermothering just part of their jobs. All of these women felt that another term should be used to encompass their male counterparts who are just as nurturing and caring for their students - otherfathering.

All of the women had someone whom they called a mentor. The differences were the extent and the reasons that cultivated that mentor relationship. One principal's mentorship evolved from her mother being a teacher and was based on the relationships that her mother had developed while being in the profession. Those relationships were then passed on to her. Another principal had a mentor assigned to her in a training program she attended. However, she did not feel that this mentor contributed to the development of her leadership style. She basically showed her the ropes and when the program was over; their relationship was over. The third female did not feel that she had someone she could call a mentor; however, she did remember one person who allowed her to call upon him if she needed anything. Therefore, she felt that he could be considered a mentor; however, they did not have the traditional mentor/mentee relationship.

Two of the three females identified financial concerns as the largest hindrance to their leadership capabilities. Not having the money to send staff for training, not able to bring in programs to assist the students academically, mentally, and physically, having to do without certain equipment, books, and other paraphernalia curtailed their ability to provide the best programs for their organizations; therefore, restricts their leadership abilities.

All of the women in the study deemed communication and feedback as essential tools for a leader to possess in order to be successful and effective within their organization. These tools determined the type of relationships that were built within their organizations. As Ms. Thompson put it, "You have to have a great mouthpiece to be able to get what you need for your kids." Even in Madisonville where money was not an object, Ms. March contends that her communication skills set the tone for all of her meetings with her staff, teachers, students,

community and churches. “My tone of voice is just as important as the words coming out of my mouth, especially when the majority of your stakeholders are White.”

As stated earlier, the researcher expected that these AA females would think that a conspiracy was occurring within urban principalships since so many African American females are working in urban schools that are suffering financially and academically. However, the two women who are working in high poverty schools told me that this is where they want to be. They actually attributed their placements as their calling; a gift and blessing from God. They both said there is nowhere else they would rather be and if they had the choice they would choose where they are now all over again. Both of the females believed that they need to be where they are so that they can provide their students with what they need. They both felt that no one else would step into their position and fight harder for their children than them.

All of the principals are byproducts of the district in which they now work. Although one chose to go through private schools from 9th grade through graduate school. The sentiments toward their communities and this city are deeply rooted in their own tenacity and demonstrated through their leadership abilities. Most contribute this to their lived experiences; what happened to them as they grew up in this city. How their parents raised them and the ties they have to this city. Education was upheld as the quintessential response to living a good and decent life on your own terms. Many of their parents embraced this belief by continuing their own educational goals. Two of the principals had mothers who received an associate degree or higher. The other female had a mother who finished her high school diploma. One participant had a father who completed a Bachelor’s degree. One of the participants stated that their father had completed an associate’s degree and the other said that her father had only completed tenth-grade. All the

participants said that their parents urged all of their children to seek education beyond the high school diploma. Most of the participants came from families that had three or more children.

Summary

To conclude, despite the parallels and variations that each of these women's journeys took them on, they all obtained the same goal: a principalship in an urban school district, within the city that they grew up. They all made ultimate sacrifices within their families and their lives to achieve their goals. One of the participants postponed having children of her own to capture and achieve the job of her dreams.

These three African American females volunteered their time to allow their voices, the voices of AA females; to offer credibility to the role that they created within the field of leadership and to stake their claim as competent, strong, and outstanding leaders in their communities. Their contribution to my study led this researcher to identify several themes and subthemes that converged to mold the leadership characteristics that these three AA females displayed during their observations and interviews. The researcher identified six themes from the literature review that would deem pertinent to this study; they included race and gender, othermothering, mentors, equity concerns, communication and feedback, and urban principalships to assist in the determination of how these situations affected their leadership characteristics.

From these six themes emerged another set of subthemes that surfaced during the coding and analysis of my data that connected leadership characteristics of the three AA female principals. These included: training, culture, the business community, religion, life experiences, and having a calling. Another round of mixing and coding of data resulted in the development of more topics: honesty, independent, religious, nurturing, and fair which could possibly be

associated with and developed from these principals having to deal with issues surrounding academics, poverty, discipline, lack of parental and financial support, physical and mental abuse, gang violence, and drug abuse.

This chapter provided the results of the three African American female principals that participated in my study. Their tenacious spirits permitted them the resolve to share their stories without fear of retribution, in order to shed light on the contributions that AA females make to influence and to literally change the face of traditional leadership. The next chapter includes a summary of the study, a discussion of the findings and conclusions, and implications for the AA females in the field of leadership and future research.

CHAPTER FIVE – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The first section of this chapter focuses on the summary of the research study including the methodology and methods incorporated in the study. The next section focuses on a discussion of the findings and the conclusions deduced from the study. A section discussing the implications of the study is contained in the section of this chapter along with suggestions for future research and a conclusion.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a small subset of African American female elementary school principals in educational leadership roles in a large urban school district by exploring these two questions: 1) what factors influenced and limited the opportunities that AA females face in order to obtain and maintain a leadership role in urban elementary schools? and 2) what is the significance of supporting diversity in leadership within urban settings? The researcher addressed these questions through the use of this dissertation that elicited four chapters to organize and discuss its findings.

Chapter One began with a discussion of my interest in African American female leadership issues and presented a statement of the problem. Basically, as an African American female, I struggled with issues surrounding leadership since I began working. “Always the bridesmaid and never the bride” is a metaphor that sums up my experiences in leadership. Always asked to perform leadership duties, but, never given the title or the money for doing the work; I have always been curious about what African American women, who have been given this opportunity, did to deserve it and what they were doing to keep it. This chapter summed up the statement of the problem as the need for further research into the experiences of AA females

in leadership roles due to the scarcity of information and the research that has been done in the past. The reader is introduced to other researchers who have delved into this topic and their stance on leadership. A historical overview of the African American female in education was included in this chapter. The reader was introduced to the operational definitions and the research questions that guided the structure of the study.

Chapter Two introduced the reader to the three types of theoretical frameworks that the researcher chose to utilize under a qualitative study; Black Feminist Thought and Transformational Leadership. Each theoretical framework was discussed in detail and has a section that explains its theories and development.

An intense review concentrating on the background of leadership was conducted during the literature review along with my interpretation of which leadership models are better for explaining why the AA female would or would not develop leadership skills from these schools of leadership. Figures displaying the leadership movements and their activity over the past 100 years (figure 1), the transformation leadership model (figure 2), and Kofi Lomotey's African American leadership conceptual framework (figure 3) are included in this chapter.

One significant concern that emerged from the literature review illustrated that the research involving the leadership characteristics of the AA female was scarce and in dire need of research to be conducted. A literature review involving the factors that researcher felt influenced or limited the leadership abilities of the AA female were introduced; including leadership. These factors included inquiries into race and gender, othermothering, mentors, communication and feedback, equity concerns, and urban principalships.

Chapter Three reviewed the specific methodology for this study that included the purpose and design of the study, sampling, data collection and the instruments used, data analysis

procedures, validity and reliability limitations of the study and the ethical considerations and protection of human subjects within the project. In-person interviews and shadowing of the principals for half a day were instruments that were used to gather and analyze data. This chapter detailed Culturally Sensitive Research Framework with a constructivist design and how it was used to incorporate the personal-lived experiences of the women into my data. Three African American female elementary principals who were selected by this large urban school district's research division were asked to participate in the study. At the same time, a packet was submitted to the researcher's Internal Review Board (IRB) to gain entrée into the study.

All of the principals utilized in this study were African American females who were currently holding the position of elementary principal at the time the study was conducted. All of the principals were from the same large urban district in the Mid-West. The participants agreed to be observed within their elementary environment and conducted an in-person interview with the researcher. A follow-up survey developed on Survey Monkey was used to gather final thoughts and to gather further data to triangulate with the observation and interview segment on the AA female principal's perspective on leadership (Appendix D). The qualitative research method was utilized because it captured the rich description of the voices of these African American female's feelings about leadership and the role that they have in it.

Chapter Three also included a detailed description of the large urban district and its history. The readers were introduced to the participants and their schools: Janice Thompson, Dorothy Price, and Katherine March (pseudonyms were used to protect their and their schools anonymity).

Chapter Four presented the information that was gathered and analyzed from the data collection process. Detailed profiles for each of the participants and the schools they led are

included in this chapter. Emerging themes were identified and discussed using open, axial, and selective coding methods. The voices of the participants were used to explain the guiding research questions identified from Chapter One. A figure designed by the researcher was included in this section that offered a breakdown of the themes she explored during her research and the themes that emerged after coding data, sorting, and recoding to create an explanatory schema of the themes and subthemes that captured the characteristics of leadership developed by three AA female principals (figure 4).

Discussion of the Findings

The findings in this dissertation address the paucity of research conducted with AA females in leadership roles. This project examined three African American female elementary principals and permitted them the opportunity to share their leadership experiences using their own voice. This qualitative study utilized Black Feminist Thought and Transformational Leadership, coupled with Culturally Sensitive Research Framework, to examine the personal lived experiences of the AA females and the influence and limitations that race and gender, othermothering, mentors, communication and feedback, equity concerns, and urban principalships had on their leadership development. This study set out to explore two questions: 1) what factors influence and limit the opportunities of AA females to obtain and maintain leadership and administrative positions in urban elementary schools and 2) to determine the significance of supporting diversity in leadership in this venue. This chapter expounds upon the results discussed in chapter four.

Race and Gender

First, the data revealed that race and gender appeared to have little direct impact on the leadership development of these three African American female principals. In fact, the data from

the three interviews indicate that race and gender appeared to have a positive impact by opening the doors of opportunity for these three women. They all felt, at this time, it gave them the advantage to seek advancement in the educational field. This finding is consistent with the studies of researchers Reed and Evans (2008), who indicated, “African American females need to be placed in leadership assignments based on their experience and abilities, and not based on ‘what you see,’ race, and gender” (p. 488). Principal Price shared these same views by acknowledging her ascent into an administrative role:

Interviewer: And what role, if any, has being an African American female played in your ascent to becoming an urban principal?

Price: It hasn’t!

Interviewer: It hasn’t?

Price: It really hasn’t. I started out my first interview, not my second interview, which was at another urban school in this district, with a team of six staff members, plus the principal; all older Caucasian males and females. So, as I am leaving my interview, I wasn’t even in my car before they called to offer me the position. Now, I say that because my first interview was with an African American [male] principal and he was new and I was going to be new and he was hesitant to hire me because he did not know how the community or how the people would take a young black male and a young black female both running the school. That was probably the best thing that ever happened to me because that team of Caucasian people, who were all old enough to be my parents, took me in and never once questioned my ability to be an administrator. So, that’s where I started.

As I reviewed the data further, the interview transcripts indicated Principal Price received discriminatory practices from someone of her own race who perceived her race and gender to become a possible threat to his career.

Othermothering

All of the principals shared the belief that they participated in the concept known as “othermothering” and performed mothering duties. In addition, all the principals discussed getting involved with the student’s personal family business, feeding student’s dinner, dealing with drug addiction, health concerns, and turning their schools into safe havens for the students and families. As stated by Katherine March, “if a child comes to school and their hungry, you feed them; if a child comes to school in need of clothing, you cloth them, you don’t worry about what people call this, you worry about the welfare of the child”.

These data suggested that these AA female principals are expected to assume the role of a mother. This includes focusing on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the student as well as concentrating on academic goals. The researcher deems that this concept of “othermothering” was forced upon AA female principals in urban areas because of the financial and social conditions within the communities and schools that they work. As indicated by Case (1999), “Currently, an othermothering tradition exists within the urban elementary school context, and African American female educators play an integral role in fulfilling the psychoeducational needs of the urban child”(p. 25). The finding of this study supports the research found by other scholars that suggest “othermothering” is an integral part of AA female principal’s job and their leadership development.

Furthermore, this concept has become an integral part of the role that AA female principals in lower income schools may have to contend with in order to effectively get their

students to perform academically. From a personal point of view, I noticed that othermothering was the one part of their profession that they were happy to do, although, it added much more work; physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially, to their daily routine.

Othermothering appeared to give these AA females credence to their work and generated many other programs that not only assisted the student; but the community as a whole. As indicated in Ms. Price's environment, her othermothering assisted in the creation of a health clinic within the school, aided in the development of an Adult Education Program, and has strengthened the community watch program to fight against crime. The concept of othermothering should be included in the leadership qualities that illustrate how AA females guide their schools. More research is needed in this area to determine othermothering's influence on the AA female's leadership style.

Mentors

The data suggested that AA female principals believed that mentoring was vital and important in leadership. However, each of the principals mentoring experiences was unique and influenced their role as leaders. One principal's mother was a teacher and had been exposed to mentors due to her the relationships her mother had developed within the school system. This personal-life experience culminated into her having an established group of mentors who nurtured her education and career from the beginning. This principal had attained the highest rank in her field; lead principal.

The second principal had a mentor assigned to her through the leadership training program that was mandatory to attend before obtaining an administrative position. During training, the assigned mentor was attentive to her questions and understanding the logistics of the administrative position, however, when the program ended the mentoring relationship ended.

The third principal did not feel that she had a mentor, but with some thought she could think of one person that she could call upon for assistance if needed. Interestingly, she considered herself as a mentor because other principals called upon her with questions; although she never had a mentor to speak with herself. The data in this study indicated that all the principals thought mentoring to be a vital component for leaders to have access to in order to manage their jobs; however, it was not a vital component in the success of two of these principal's leadership development.

According to Allen, Jacobsen, and Lomotey (1995), having a mentor is an integral part for the success of aspiring AA administrators and a reason why there are low numbers of AA administrators due to low numbers of mentors. Objectively looking at the three AA principals in this study, only one principal is a lead principal within the district. The lead principal is the only principal whose personal life experiences included mentoring from her mother and the network of educators with whom she had built relationships.

Based on the research, I believe that mentoring is a vital part of effective and successful leadership within the educational environment. I am not suggesting that one cannot be successful without a mentor(s); however, I understand the benefit from having a mentor(s) and how this symbiotic relationship could make the journey in this career easier to transcend. The data suggested that Ms. March, who had an abundance of mentors throughout her career, and is a Lead Principal, was further along in attaining her career goals than her counterparts due to the mentoring she had during her career. This caveat is fundamental to the success of future AA females who are considering the administrative field in education.

Furthermore, the researcher determined that she and the participants may have defined the term mentor differently. After careful reconsideration, the researcher believes that she

should have offered a definition for the term mentor or had the participants define the term mentor so that we were certain that we had the same meaning of the word. Based on the responses received from the participants it could be concluded that we were not utilizing the same definition.

Communication and Feedback

All of the women in this study felt that it was very important to have strong communication and feedback within their organization and for the development of leadership among administrators. According to Portin (2000), “ Principals, especially urban principals will need to develop expertise in communicating the unique characteristics of their school that suffer when schools are ranked and compared against criteria that fell to account for the unique challenges of their community”(p.503). The data in this study supported Portin’s notion that communication is the key to successful leadership. Specifically, past research has suggested that “AA leaders are more inclined as a group to involve parents and other community members in school activities and, to a degree, in decision making” (Lomotey, 1986, p.177).

Each of the AA principals within this study was noted to include and encompass assistance from parents through the PTA, or other committees within the school and the school’s district. In addition, all three of the principals reached out to the surrounding business community, churches and other volunteers. This researcher, through the use of observations and interviews, supports the viewpoint that these three leaders have strong communication skills that they use in order to create a strong institution of learning for their students.

These women have learned to use all sources of communication and feedback to provide their students with a suitable academic, social, political, and financial program that could be maintained in their environment. Through the use of newsletters, e-mails, cell phones, and

computers, they are promoting and developing schools that are on the cutting edge. By connecting with the business community and the churches on the corners, these teachers have commandeered monies, supplies, and developed programs that assist in building academically and physically healthy children. These schools are providing not only the students, with an education, but they are reaching out to educate the parents and the community as a whole.

Equity Concerns

This researcher identified two principals who are in high impoverished areas that tie them directly to the level of resources received by those schools. One of the principals is situated within a middle class urban area that has no funding problems. According to this principal there financial needs are met through real estate taxes and through parental fund raising events. From the two principals in the high poverty area; equity concerns were the number one problem impeding leadership development. This limitation impeded the buying of new equipment to promote academic excellence.

One of the principals explained that her staff was not able to attend training that would benefit the development of her staff and meet academic goals. Yeakey, Johnston, and Adkinson (1986), suggests that some groups control and have more access to resources than other groups of people which affects the outcome of academic achievement. The conclusions drawn in this study supported the findings by Yeakey, Johnston, and Adkinson. Academically, the two impoverished schools are currently rated as Continuous Improvement and on Academic Watch. On the other hand, the middle class urban school, with no equity concerns, was rated as Excellent with Distinction for the past two years.

The researcher believes that equity woes will cripple the educational system one day. Based on the data that was gathered, I deemed that money made a difference in the type of

education a student received and the quality of education that was given. I am not saying that the teachers are not highly qualified; however, the more up-to-date supplies they have to manipulate, then the more they can teach their students and the more they can do with their students, such as field trips. Although students do not have to have all the latest gadgets to learn, it makes a difference when it comes to competing for the better colleges, which in turn will open the door to getting the better jobs.

Urban Principalships

A consensus was drawn among the urban principals. They all believed that their leadership style is a mixture of all leadership styles. The principals contended that they utilize transformational, traditional, and nontraditional characteristics to augment their leadership capabilities which are utilized based on the problem being dealt with. Previous research maintains that different leadership styles are contingent on the different types of problems flanked within the urban community. Furthermore, Cistone and Stevenson (2000) concluded that “the urban principal is characterized by considerable uncertainty and complexity” (p. 441). According to one of the principals “I am a collaborative leader; I am an intense driven leader. I am a result driven leader. I look for results from my leadership.”

The researcher wanted to understand why so many AA female worked in urban principalships. The researcher’s preconception suggested that the factors listed above, as well as, failing schools that no one wanted to lead, would account for many AA females being placed within these schools. However, the crucial finding in this research established that many of these women chose to work in urban schools due to their passion, commitment, and love for their communities, the children, and for the advancement of the African American race. Principal Thompson is quoted as saying, “If we didn’t come back and teach our students, who will?”

I agree with Ms. Thompson. Our communities are in dire straits due to the financial strains that we are feeling. Therefore, our students must educate themselves to be able to “pay it forward” once they have completed school. If the African American race is going to survive as a community, we must begin reinvesting in our communities. This means educating ourselves, then returning to teach the younger generations. Again, it is the same concept that DuBois spoke of when he coined the phrase “The Talented Tenth.” At least a portion of African Americans must learn what is necessary for the success of our community, then bring that information back to the others. Moreover, this is the same attitude as conveyed by Ms. Thompson, we must want to come back and teach the younger generation if we are going to survive as a people.

Conducting and analyzing this study using Black Feminist Thought and transformational leadership, coupled with cultural sensitive research framework provided for rich data. The next section will discuss the conclusions based on this study.

Implications

This study of AA female principals in urban elementary schools presented the researcher with several implications. These implications included the need to create a network of AA female principals in order to assist with mentoring responsibilities for new principals. Johnson (1998) stated “by sharing their experiences, African American women administrators empower protégé’s of the non-dominant culture-who, like them, must understand and, in some instances, adopt the behavior of the dominant culture-to navigate effectively within a dominant-culture organization” (p. 49). As this statement suggested, a strong network needs to be put in place for AA female principals to have access to in order to be able to communicate with one another about the problems and challenges they face within their urban environment on a daily basis. This researcher suggests the development of an internet platform that would allow principals

across America to network. The internet platform would ensure that these AA female principals would have a connection to ideas and solutions available to them 24-hours-a-day. This would take mentoring to the next level.

In addition, “othermothering” should no longer be a silent aspect of urban principal leadership. Although the researcher has concerns about this concept, it has become a part of the urban school culture and should be researched and incorporated within leadership programs addressing the social aspect of everyday life of urban students. As indicated by Hill-Collins (2000), “Moreover, these understandings of women-centered kin networks become critical in understanding broader African American understandings of community” (p. 183). I would challenge this further to incorporate the men within the schools who practice nurturing and “othermothering” practices like their counterparts. This phenomenon should be considered an “otherfathering” aspect and should be researched and developed to include males in urban schools. Furthermore, we should train other diverse cultures or anyone who wants to teach in urban schools because the concept of “othermothering” seems to be coming an integral part of the urban experience.

Finally, equity concerns are a major issue for urban principals. As stated previously, two of the three principals are in impoverished areas of an urban school district. Their main focus was consistently trying to find ways to acquire financial support and volunteers to assist with furthering academic and social prowess. The third urban principal leads a school with no financial issues. The researcher suggests that a program be developed in which affluent schools adopt other urban impoverished schools. The program would allow the affluent schools to raise money, through fundraising events, in order to sponsor a specific targeted need as addressed by the principal of the impoverished school. For example, the principal of the impoverished school

could suggest a need for new technology, teacher training programs, curriculum and instructional materials or any other deficiency observed within the school.

Limitations of the Study

This study was not designed to compare the leadership styles of other races, gender, or cultures. The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership styles of three AA female elementary principals within an urban school district and convey their leadership experiences as urban principals.

Additionally, this study was not intended to generalize the leadership qualities of all AA females. However, this study was expected to give a comprehensive overview of three AA female elementary urban principals and their personal lived experiences and its effect on their leadership development. The focus was on an urban school district; which included two impoverished and one affluent urban school. Although AA female principals lead rural schools, they were not included within this research study.

It was expected that all three principals would participate in a final follow up session questionnaire submitted to them through email utilizing Survey Monkey (Appendix D). The follow up session questionnaire was a reflective document that would allow them to include any information they felt the left out and to give them a chance to make any corrections to their transcripts. In addition, it was a place to provide their opinion, and to develop questions they felt the researcher should have included within the study. All of the participants returned their questionnaires after several attempts were made by the researcher to get the information returned. Therefore, the interviews, observations, and survey results were triangulated and analyzed for this study. However, using other types of data, such as, written questionnaires and case studies, might have produced different results.

While only three AA female urban principals were included within this study, the researcher asserts that this is a purposeful sample; however the purposive sampling procedure decreased the generalizability of the findings. It is important to note that a more in depth and broader study would enhance this study's findings.

Future Research

This researcher had several suggestions for future research. First, a broader study should be conducted utilizing AA female principals from K-12. This broader study would afford the researcher the opportunity to gain a more in depth analysis of leadership development among AA female urban principals. Furthermore, studies should be conducted with AA female principals who worked in rural schools to do a cross-analysis of their leadership skills and development.

Future investigations could possibly benefit from leadership studies involving concepts of othermothering. These concepts could include the male's influence within urban schools and in the student's lives and be termed otherfathering. The othermothering and otherfathering concepts are in their infancy within leadership development studies. The researcher suggests that these concepts be a key component of leadership development.

Furthermore, equity concerns consume much of these AA female urban principals' time and attention. In order to alleviate financial constraints, the researcher suggests that research be done on the concept of affluent schools adopting impoverished schools. This concept would be vital to leadership development because it would assist with diminishing equity concerns that urban principals face when leading urban impoverished schools. Equity concerns are considered to be a limitation to leadership development. This limitation stunts the growth of the educational organization that in turn stunts academic growth.

Future research is an important facet into gaining information about AA female urban principals' contributions to the study of leadership development and the discipline of leadership. Future research into this study would allow the opportunity for scholars and other individuals to gain insight into the influences and limitations confronted by this group of individuals while leading vital organizations within the educational community.

Conclusion

Ideas, Relationships, and Adventure. Ideas are the basis for change, for re-invention, for, yes, intellectual capital. Relationships have to do with outstanding people working in harmony and openness, where everyone feels empowered, where all members feel included and at the center of things, where they feel competent and significant. And Adventure has to do with risk, with a bias toward action, with curiosity and courage. And the challenge of leadership is to create the social architecture where ideas, relationships, and adventure can flourish. (Bennis, 1994, p. xiv)

The three participants of this study sought to create an atmosphere where ideas, relationships, and adventure for life is evident as you walk through the doors of their schools. Through race and gender, mentoring, othermothering, equity concerns, communication and feedback, and their desire to be an urban principal, these three women have undertaken a leadership journey that possesses a unique balance between personal life experiences and the foundation of education. The title of this study is "Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice." Transformational leadership is evident through their actions; whereby they merge their education and experience in order to create an environment where staff assists with the decision

making process. In addition, these women are reaching out to their families, communities, and the businesses in order to support the goals of education.

There are five identifiable characteristics that appeared within this study exemplifying the qualities of AA female elementary principal's leadership in urban schools: 1) Honesty 2) Independence, 3) Religious, 4) Nurturing, and 5) Fairness. Although, many other traits were apparent, the researcher observed these five characteristics when discussing the concerns of academics, poverty, discipline, lack of financial and parent support, mental and physical abuse, drug abuse, and gang-related violence (See Figure 4).

More research in this area is needed to understand how AA females become and maintain successful leadership within an urban environment. Due to the concerns listed above, the AA female principals within this study was observed having a nurturing and passionate approach in order to cope with problems such as homelessness, hunger, drug addiction, and other social ills within their particular schools. One principal stated that a single mother, with nine children, called her and told her that she had lost everything to bed bugs. The principal immediately contacted her LSDMC chairperson who contacted the owner of a furniture store. The principal, chairperson, and owner worked on securing beds for the mother and her children.

Being honest and having a charismatic personality complimented their ability to communicate to their stakeholders and was used to persuade them to assist with increasing limited resources within the school. The researcher observed one principal and her staff laughing and joking with one another. However, when the time came for serious conversations and completing a task, immediately the professional attitude emerged. The principal's charisma turned a frustrating situation into a pleasant assignment and working relationship. Her honesty

empowered her staff members to make decisions concerning this task. This characteristic was vital to all three principals and used effectively by each to successfully lead her organization.

Being independent thinkers was necessary in making the decisions that lead the organization, staff, students, and community to obtain and meet academic goals. The researcher considered all three principals as independent thinkers based on the fact that none of the principals had an assistant principal. All of these women were the only individuals who made the decisions based on the needs of the school. Ultimately, the consequences of everyone else's actions, and the decisions that were made concerning the school rested with these principals.

In describing the principals in this study, the researcher would compare them to the likes of the Energizer Bunny and how they kept going and going and going. The researcher observed all three principals multitasking. One principal was handling several classrooms that were taking state mandated tests, while dealing with a walk in parent who was having problems with her son's doctor. At the same time, she was dealing with three students who were discipline problems and missing the state tests, while having lunch ordered for herself and her staff members all at the same time. The researcher observed the principal at ease with every situation as it happened and she did not appear to be drained or upset. This scenario was accepted as a part of her daily duties.

As stated above, the researcher did not ask questions concerning the principals religious beliefs; however, every principal took the opportunity to let the researcher know how her religion supported her decision making, getting her through the day, and her reason for being there at the school. This researcher suggests that the religious aspect was seen as a vital element for these women to have in order to be successful in their endeavors as a principal. All the

principals expressed that without religion it would be more challenging to be successful within their jobs.

The research presented the argument that race, gender; othermothering, mentoring, communication and feedback, equity concerns, and issues that urban principals dealt with influenced and shaped the leadership qualities of AA female elementary urban principals. Furthermore, their personal lived experiences assisted with the development of their leadership styles.

This study found that race and gender were not significant factors that influenced or limited their leadership development. On the other hand, othermothering seemed to be a built in component of the urban principal's job. Equity concerns, by far, challenged and manipulated their leadership development and created a wide range of leadership styles that each principal used based on the issues. Effective communication and feedback was the key to successfully persuading stakeholders to give their time and monies to the educational organization within their communities. One of the important discoveries of this study rests around the idea that African American females worked in urban schools not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

It is essential to research African American female leadership in order to bring social justice and equity among leadership around the world. The researcher has added to the literature that supports the significance of researching African American females in leadership positions in urban settings. By allowing her to tell her story this study gave her the opportunity to define what she saw as her limitations and what she felt she needed to occur in order to pursue leadership for social justice for the African American female principal. This researcher gave the African American female urban principals permission to share their voices:

Silenced. We fear those who speak about us, who do not speak to us and with us. We know what it is like to be silenced. We know that the forces that silence us, because they never want us to speak, differ from the forces that say speak, tell me your story. Only do not speak in a voice of resistance. Only speak from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, an unfulfilled longing. Only speak your pain. (hooks, 1990, p. 152)

References

- Allen, K., Jacobson, S. & Lomotey, K. (1995). African American women in education administration: The importance of mentors and sponsors. *Journal of Negro Education*, 64, 409-422.
- Alston, J. (2005). Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering in the superintendency. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 4, 675-688.
- Ambrose, D. (1995). *Leadership: The journey within*. (2nd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Antonakis, J., Cianciolo, A., & Sternberg, R. (2004). *The nature of leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Anyon, J. (2005). *Radical possibilities: Public policy, urban education and a new social movement*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Barth, R. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents, and principals can make the difference*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bass, B. (1998). *Transformational leadership: Industry, military, and educational impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N., & Tarule, J. (1997). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind* (10th ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Bell, D. (1988). White superiority in America: Its legal legacy, its economic costs. *Villanova Law Review*, 33, 767-779.
- Bennis, W. (1994). *On becoming a leader*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.
- Bennis, W. (2003). *On becoming a leader: The leadership classic* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.

- Bloom, C. & Erlandson, D. (2003). African American women principals in urban schools: Realities, (re)constructions, and resolutions. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39, 339-369.
- Brown, F. (2005). African Americans and school leadership: An introduction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41, 585-590.
- Bryant, N. (1988). Reducing the relational distance between actors: A case study in school reform. *Urban Education*, 33, (1), 33-49.
- Burns, J. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Camblin, Jr., L. & Steger, J. (2000). Rethinking faculty development. *Higher Education*, 39, 1-18.
- Carlin, P. (1992). The principal's role in urban school reform. *Education and Urban Society*, 25, (1), 45-56.
- Case, K. I. (1997). African American othermothering in the urban elementary school. *Urban Review*, 29, (1), 25-39.
- Cistone, P. & Stevenson, J. (2000). Perspectives on the urban school principalship. *Education and Urban Society*, 34(4), 435-442.
- Collier-Thomas, B. (1982). The impact of Black women in education: An historical overview. *Journal of Negro Education*, 51(3).
- Collins, K. & Lightsey, O. (2001). Racial identity, generalized self-efficacy, and self-esteem: A pilot study of a mediation model for African American women. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 27, 272- 287.
- Colman, A. (2009). *A dictionary of Psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t87.e9254>

- Dantley, M. (2003). Critical spirituality: Enhancing transformative leadership through critical theory and African American prophetic spirituality. *Leadership in Education*, 6, 3-17.
- Dillard, C. (1995). Leading with her life: An African American feminist (re)interpretation of leadership for an urban high school principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 31, 539-563.
- Edson, S. (1988). Life in the trenches: Female administrative aspirants' perceptions of affirmative action. *Educational Policy*, 2, 157-175.
- Essed, P. (2002). Everyday racism: A new approach to the study of racism. In P. Essed and D. T. Goldberg (Eds.), *Race critical theories* (pp. 176-194). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Foss, S. & Waters, W. (2007). *Destination dissertation: A traveler's guide to a done dissertation*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Foster, M. (1993). Othermothers: Exploring the educational philosophy of Black American women teachers. In M. Arnot & K. Weilder (Eds.), *Feminism and Social Justice in Education: International Perspectives* (pp. 101-123). Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Givens, L. (Ed). (2008). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* [OhioLINK electronic book center]. Retrieved from http://ebooks.ohiolink.edu.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/xtf-ebc/view?docId=tei/sage/The_SAGE_Encyclopedia_of_Qualitative_Research_Methods/The_SAGE_Encyclopedia_of_Qualitative_Research_Methods.xml&query=&brand=default
- Glenn, E.N. (1991). Cleaning up/kept down: A historical perspective on racial inequality in "women's work". *Stanford Law Review*, 43, (6), 1333-1356.

- Glicken, M. (2003). *Social research: A simple guide*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gooden, M. (2005). The role of an African American principal in an urban information technology high school. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 630-650.
- Grogan, M. (1999). Equity/equality issues of gender, race, and class. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 35, 518-536.
- Guiffrida, D. (2005). Othermothering as a framework for understanding African American students' definitions of student-centered faculty. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76, (6), 701-723.
- Gupton, S. L. & Slick, G. (1996). *Highly successful women administrators: The inside stories of how they got there*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Hacker, S. & Roberts, T. (2003). *Transformational leadership: Creating organizations of meaning*. Milwaukee, WI: American Society For Quality, Quality Press.
- Hill-Collins, P. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hirt, J., Amelink, C., McFeeters, B., & Strayhorn, T. (2008). A system of othermothering: Student affair administrators' perceptions of relationships with students at historically black colleges. *NASPA Journal*, 45, (2), 210-236.
- Holmes, S. (2004). Introduction: An overview of African American college presidents: A game of two steps forward, one step backward, and standing still. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 73(1), 21-39.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- House, R. & Aditya, R. (1997). The social scientific study of leadership: Quo vadis? *Journal of Management*, 23(3), 409-473.

- Hoy, A. & Hoy, W. (2006). *Instructional Leadership: A research-based guide to learning in schools*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hull, G., Scott, P., & Smith, B. (Eds.). (1982). *All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave: Black women's studies*. New York, NY: The Feminist Press.
- Iserbyt, C. (1999). *The deliberate dumbing down of America*. Ravenna, Ohio: Conscience Press.
- Jacobs, D. (Ed.). (2003). *The Miles Horton Reader: Education for social change*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press.
- Johnson, G. (1998). African American women administrators as mentors: Significance and strategies. *Initiatives*, 58,(3), 49-56.
- Kelley, C. & Peterson, K. (2002). The work of principals and their preparation: Addressing critical needs for the twenty-first century. In Jossey-Bass Reader (Ed.), *Educational leadership*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Klenke, K. (2008). *Qualitative research in the study of leadership*. Howard House, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Kouzes, J. M. (1999). Finding your leadership voice. In F. Hesselbein and Paul Cohen (Eds.). *Leader to leader: Enduring insights on leadership from the Drucker Foundation's Award-winning Journal*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Loder, T. (2005). African American women principals' reflections on social change, community othermothering, and Chicago public school reform. *Urban Education*, 40, 298-320.

- Lomotey, K. (1986). Black principals for black students: Some preliminary observations. *Urban Education*, 22(2), 173-181.
- Lomotey, K. (1989a). *African American principals: School leadership and success*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Inc.
- Lomotey, K. (1989b). Cultural diversity in the school: Implications for principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 73, 81-88.
- Lorde, A. (1970). Age, race, class and sex: Women redefining difference. In B. Guy-Sheftall (Ed.), *Words of fire: An anthology of African American feminist thought* (pp. 283-291). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Lord, R., De Vader, C., & Alliger, G. (1986). A meta-analysis of the relationship between personality traits and leadership perceptions: An application of validity generalization procedures. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 402-410.
- Marshall, C. (1989). More than black face and skirts: New leadership to confront major dilemmas in education. *Agenda*, 1(4), 4-11.
- Mertz, N. T. & McNeely, S.R. (1998). Women on the job: A study of female high school principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34 (2), 196-222.
- Murtadha, K. & Watts, D. (2000). Cleaning up and maintenance in the wake of an urban school administration tempest. *Urban Education*, 35,(5), 603-615.
- Murtadha, K. & Watts, D. (2005). Linking the struggle for education and social justice: Historical perspectives of African American leadership in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(4), 591-608.

- Parker, L., & Lynn, M. (2002). What's race got to do with it? Critical race theory's conflict with and connections to qualitative research methodology and epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8,(1), 7-22.
- Pollard, D. S. (1997). Race, gender and educational leadership: Perspectives from African American principals. *Educational Policy*, 11 (3), 353-374.
- Portin, B. (2000). The changing urban principalship. *Education and Urban Society*, 32, 492-505.
- Portin, S. R. (Ed.). (2004). Pros and cons of paper and electronic surveys. In S. Portin (Series, Ed.), *New directions for institutional research*, 0271-057(121), 91-97.
- Quirk, M. & Fandt, P. (2000). *2nd language of leadership*. [DX Reader version] Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Reed, L. & Evans, A. (2008). "What you see is [not always] what you get!" Dispelling race and gender leadership assumptions. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 21, 487-499.
- Scott, J. & Marshall, G. (2009). *A dictionary of sociology*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t88.e2258>
- Sergiovanni, T. (2005). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sernak, K. (2001). *School leadership: Balancing power with caring*. New York: Teachers College.
- Shakeshaft, C. (1987). *Women in educational administration*. Newbury, CA: Sage.

- Shakeshaft, C. (1995). A cup half full: A gender critique of the knowledge base in educational Administration. In R. Donmoyer, M. Imber & J.J. Scheurich (Eds.), *The knowledge base in Educational administration: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 139-157). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Tillman, L. (1998). Culturally specific research practices: A response to Bishop. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11, 221-224.
- Tillman, L. (2006). Researching and writing from an African-American perspective: reflective notes on three research studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(3), 265-287.
- Van Seters, D., & Field, R. (1990). The evolution of leadership theory. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 3, 29-45.
- Williams-Collins, K. & Lightsey, O. (2001). Racial identity, generalized self-efficacy, and self-esteem: A pilot study of a mediation model for African American women. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 27, 272-287.
- Witherspoon, N. & Mitchell, R. (2009). Critical race theory as ordinary theology of African American principals. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(6), 655-670.
- Witherspoon, N. & Taylor, D. (2010). Spiritual weapons: Black female principals and religio-spirituality. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 42(2), 133-158.

Yeakey, C. Johnston, G. & Adkinson, J. (1986). In pursuit of equity: A review of research on minorities and women in educational administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 22, 110-149.

Yow, V. (2005). *Recording oral history: A guide for the humanities and social sciences*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Appendices

Appendix A

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice **Interview Guide** **Janet Wardell Warren, M.Ed**

The researcher will use the following questions to be asked of the urban elementary principals during a tape recorded (videotaped) interview session. The taped recordings will be transcribed and maintained in a locked file cabinet. You (the principal) may refuse to answer any questions, ask to turn off the tape recorder (video), or withdraw from the interview at any time with no questions asked. A number will be assigned to the transcripts, publications and any other written materials to protect the identity of the principal and ensure confidentiality.

Demographics

Name: Participant Number: (_____)

City and State of Birth: _____

Marital Status:

Married _____

Divorced _____

Single _____

Widowed _____

Divorced, Remarried _____

Family Information:

1) Tell me about your parents' education. What was the highest educational level obtained by your mother:

Less than high school diploma _____

High school diploma _____

Associates degree _____

Bachelor's degree _____

Master's degree _____

Doctorate _____

Certificate _____

Professional _____

Other _____

Don't Know _____

2) What was the highest educational level obtained by your father:

Less than high school diploma _____

High school diploma _____

Associates degree _____

Bachelor's degree _____

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice

Janet Wardell Warren, M.Ed

Interview Guide

Master's degree _____

Doctorate _____

Certificate _____

Professional _____

Other _____

Don't Know _____

3) Do you have any children?

Please check one: Yes _____ No _____

How many? _____

Ages: (Please list)

Education Information:

Tell me about your schooling?

Elementary _____

Middle School _____

High School _____

College(s) _____

Degrees obtained: (please be specific)

Undergraduate _____

Graduate _____

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice
Janet Wardell Warren, M.Ed
Interview Guide

Employment Information:

What positions, if any, have you held outside of education?

Describe the positions you held in education.

Tell me about your current position.

Demographics of School: (PI will ascertain this information from the school website)

Name of school you are currently a principal: _____

Number of students:

African American

Hispanic

White

Asian

Total # of student's

Other Information:

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice
Janet Wardell Warren, M.Ed
Interview Guide

My name is Janet Warren. Today is May 25, 2011. I am with my third interviewee who will be addressed as participant three. First of all, I would like to thank you for agreeing to be a part of this research. May I begin this interview by stating that you, participant three, may refuse to answer any questions, ask me to turn off my tape recorder, or withdraw from this interview at any time with no questions asked. Your identity will be kept anonymous for the transcripts, the publication of my dissertation and any other written materials in order to protect your identity and ensure anonymity. Do you have any questions before I began the questioning? Then, let us begin.

My first questions will focus on leadership styles.

John Garner (1989) listed these traits for traditional leadership: Physical vitality and stamina; intelligence and action-oriented judgement; Eagerness to accept responsibility; Task competence; Understanding of followers and their needs; Skill in dealing with people; Need for achievement; Capacity to motivate people; Courage and resolution; Trustworthiness; Decisiveness; Self-confidence; Assertiveness and Adaptability/flexibility.

Evaluation of Leadership Styles

1. Participant three how would you characterize your leadership?
2. What factors contributed to your developing this kind of leadership style?
3. What factors have supported your development as a leader?
4. What factors have impeded your development as a leader?
5. What personal characteristics are revealed in your leadership?
6. What elements in your leadership have been influenced by your life experiences?
7. What challenges do you face as an urban elementary principal?
8. Do you want to pursue an upper level administrative position in education?
Why or Why not?

Othermothering

Have you heard of the concept of othermothering: To make sure that we have the same definition I would like to define it the same way Patricia Hill-Collins (2000) did as a woman with no biological connection to a child becoming or sharing in the responsibility of raising a child. Based on this definition:

1. Has “othermothering” affected your leadership style? If so, how?
2. Can you describe one or two of your “othermothering” situations.
3. Is there any way the AAF principal to avoid the “othermothering: scenario?
4. Do you think that White female principals in urban schools participate in “othermothering?”
Why or why not?

5. Would othermothering qualify as a leadership quality?

Race and Gender

1. How would you define racism?
2. What role, if any, has being an AAF played in your ascent to becoming an urban principal?
3. Do you think that being an AAF has had a positive impact on the way your teachers, parents, and other stake holders respond to your leadership? Why or why not?
4. How do you think students respond to AAF principals?
5. What issues would you characterize as being unique to African American principals in urban educational settings?

Mentoring

1. Is mentoring an effective technique to assist prospective and current principals? Why or why not?
2. Did you have a mentor?
3. Did you seek them out or did they seek you out?
4. What is your mentor's profession?
5. Was your mentor helpful in assisting you with the challenges of being an urban principal?
6. Have you mentored aspiring principals?
7. What did you feel was important for them to know in order for them to become successful principals?

Equity Concerns

Research suggests that “some groups control and have more access to resources than other groups of people, thereby, affecting outcomes (Yeakey, Johnston & Adkinson, 1986).

1. What resources does your school have?
2. Are they enough to do your job?
3. How do cuts in the school budget affect your leadership style?

Communication and Feedback

1. How are you able to communicate problems and concerns with your staff members effectively?
2. What are ways that you communicate with your staff, parents, students, and the community?
3. How do you handle difficult situations with staff members? Parents? Students? and the Community?
4. How is feedback given to staff members?
5. How does your supervisor communicate with you?
6. Do you consider it an effective means of communication?
7. How often does your supervisor provide you with feedback?
8. Do you use these same techniques with your staff?

Urban Principalships

1. How do you empower your teachers and staff to assist in the decision making process of the school?
2. How important is it for urban principals to be connected to the business community?
3. What are the differences between schools that are supported by the business community?
4. How does church become an effective tool for urban principals?
5. Is it important for you to know about other African American females in order to be effective and successful in your job? Why or why not?
6. Why do AAF's seek and accept positions in urban schools?

Appendix B

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice Principal Observation Field Note Chart

Principal Name or Code: (will be changed during transcription):

School Name or Code: (will be changed during transcription):

Area of Focus: _____

Date: _____ Page _____ of _____

Arrival Time: _____ Departure Time: _____

Observation Time: _____

Field Notes

e
a
Notes

Appendix C

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice Data Management Grid

Participant Code: _____

School Code: _____

Field Notes Charts, Census, Map, Articles, Awards,
Training Certificates, Calendar data

Type	Quantity	Classification	Notes

Online Survey (SurveyMonkey) Questionnaire

1. Has race or gender ever been an issue during your employment with your school district?

- ☐ Has race or gender ever been an issue during your employment with your school district?
Yes - I have experienced racial biasness at least once
- ☐ Yes - I have experience gender biasness at least one
- ☐ Yes - I have experience racial and gender biasness at least once
- ☐ No - I have never experienced racial biasness
- ☐ No - I have never experienced gender biasness
- ☐ No - I have never experienced racial or gender biasness
- ☐ Maybe - I think I have faced racial biasness; but; they may not have thought so.
- ☐ Maybe - I think I have faced gender biasness; but,they may not have thought so.
- ☐ Maybe - I think that I have faced race and gender biasness; but, they may not have thought so.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. How fair is your pay at your school?

- ☐ How fair is your pay at your school? Extremely fair
- ☐ Very fair
- ☐ Moderately fair
- ☐ Slightly fair
- ☐ Not at all fair
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. Overall, are you satisfied with your school district as a place to work, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it, or dissatisfied with it?

- ☐ Overall, are you satisfied with your school district as a place to work, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it, or dissatisfied with it? Extremely satisfied
- ☐ Moderately satisfied
- ☐ Slightly satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

- ☐ Slightly dissatisfied
- ☐ Moderately dissatisfied
- ☐ Extremely dissatisfied
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. Othermothering is a concept used to express someone else who is not the biological "blood" mother of a child participating in the raising of that child. How much othermothering do you think you do on your job?

☐ Othermothering is a concept used to express someone else who is not the biological "blood" mother of a child participating in the raising of that child. How much othermothering do you think you do on your job? None

- ☐ Little
- ☐ Some
- ☐ This is all I do!
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. How would you characterize your leadership? Check the five that apply.

- ☐ How would you characterize your leadership? Check the five that apply. Independent
- ☐ Charismatic
- ☐ Passionate
- ☐ Nurturing
- ☐ Energetic
- ☐ Religious
- ☐ Visionary
- ☐ Good Communicator
- ☐ Dedicated
- ☐ Open
- ☐ Creative
- ☐ Assertive
- ☐ Integrity
- ☐ Honest
- ☐ Humble

- ☐ Fair
 - ☐ Sense of Humor
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-

6. What factors have impeded your development as a leader? Check all that apply.

- ☐ What factors have impeded your development as a leader? Check all that apply. Lack of mentors
 - ☐ Poverty within the community
 - ☐ Discipline problems with students
 - ☐ Lack of support from my staff
 - ☐ Lack of support from my parents
 - ☐ Lack of support from my district
 - ☐ Lack of financial support (district, state, & Federal)
 - ☐ Lack of school resources (computers, books, supplies, etc.)
 - ☐ Lack of support from business community
 - ☐ Lack of support from the churches
 - ☐ Gang Related Violence
 - ☐ Drug Related Activities
 - ☐ Physical Abuse Issues
 - ☐ Mental Issues
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-

7. Mentoring - Check all that apply.

- ☒ Mentoring - Check all that apply. Yes - I have a mentor
- ☒ Yes - I mentor other principals
- ☒ Yes - I mentor my staff
- ☒ Yes - I mentor my students
- ☒ Yes - I mentor my parents
- ☒ Yes - I mentor in the community in which I work

- ☐ Yes - I am part of a mentoring network
- ☐ No - I do not have a mentor
- ☐ No - I do not mentor other principals
- ☐ No - I do not mentor my staff
- ☐ No - I do not mentor my students
- ☐ No - I do not mentor my parents
- ☐ No - I do not mentor in the community in which I work
- ☐ No - I am not a part of a mentoring network
- ☐ Other (please specify)

8. How much attention does this school district give to your professional growth?

- ☐ How much attention does this school district give to your professional growth? A great deal
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ A little
- ☐ None at all
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. How easy it is to get the resources you need to teach at this school?

- ☐ How easy it is to get the resources you need to teach at this school? Extremely easy
- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Moderately easy
- ☐ Slightly easy
- ☐ Not at all easy
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Why do you think African American (AA) females seek and accept positions in urban schools?

- ☐ Why do you think African American (AA) females seek and accept positions in urban schools? It is the 'only' opportunity they are given.
- ☐ They want to work in urban schools.

- ☐ They consider it their "calling" to work in urban schools.
- ☐ They like the money associated with working in urban schools.
- ☐ Urban schools are the only schools in which AA females are chosen to be leaders.
- ☐ AA females are only effective and successful in urban schools.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Thank you for dedicating your time and attention to my study. Without your sacrifice completion of this project would not have been possible. Thank you again.

Appendix E

Adult Consent Form for Research
University of Cincinnati
Department: CECH – Urban Educational Leadership
Principal Investigator: Janet Wardell Warren, M.Ed
Faculty Advisor: *Dr. Lanthan Camblin*

Title of Study:

Merging Education with Experience: Transforming Learning into Practice

Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Please read this paper carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Who is doing this research study?

The person in charge of this research study is Janet Wardell Warren of the University of Cincinnati (UC) Department of *Urban Educational Leadership*.

What is the purpose of this research study?

The purpose of this research study is to provide insight into the leadership style of the African American female principal in an urban elementary setting by studying two questions: 1) What factors promote, influence and limit her opportunities to obtain and maintain leadership and administrative positions in the urban elementary setting and 2) Determine the significance of supporting diversity in leadership in this venue. I have chosen elementary principals since the literature reflects that elementary principalships are the last positions considered for administrative and Central Office promotions (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, Lomotey, 1989).

Who will be in this research study?

About three African American female elementary principals will take part in this study. You may be in this study if you are an African American female elementary principal who has been working for at least one year in this administrative position.

What will you be asked to do in this research study, and how long will it take?

You will be asked to participate in an interview that will take at least two hours of your time. However, the PI is not setting a time limitation on the interview; the PI will remain with the participant until they think that they have given them all of their information concerning our research questions pertaining to leadership.

The interviewee will be asked to fill out a background questionnaire that will take about 15 minutes of your time. Then an interview that will take about an hour and half will be conducted by the researcher.

The participant will have the choice to conduct their interview at a venue of their choice. However, if you would like for the researcher to suggest a venue; I can reserve a room in Langsam Library on the Main Campus of the University of Cincinnati for our use.

At the conclusion of the interview, the participant will be asked to pick a date and time that the researcher can come back and observe you at work for half of your day. At this time I will be observing and asking few questions. Two staff members may be asked to answer a few questions concerning your leadership style after the observation is complete. You will not need to be present during this time.

At the end of the observation, I will ask you to set a date and time in which we can come back together for a final session in which we can reflect on our time together and to clear up any questions that you or I may have.

Are there any risks to being in this research study?

I do not foresee any risks or discomforts occurring. However, if something occurs I will be contacting Dr. Camblin immediately and submitting the appropriate paperwork to the IRB within 24 hours of the situation.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?

There will not be any direct personal benefit to the participant. However, participation in this study will add to the paucity of information that is currently available that could assist our society in understanding the importance of understanding diversity in leadership roles.

What will you get because of being in this research study?

For participating in this research study, the PI agrees to send you a copy of the final project as a token of reciprocity and as a final thank you.

Do you have choices about taking part in this research study?

If you do not want to take part in this research study you may simply not participate. I would like to audio and video tape portions of our sessions. However, you have a choice whether or not to take part in the audio and video portions of this study. There is a place at the end of this paper to mark your choice.

How will your research information be kept confidential?

Information about you will be kept private by using a study ID number for your name, school and school district on the research forms and during the transcribing of your information. The master list of names will be stored in a separate location from the research forms in a safe deposit box at my bank. No one will have access to this information other than the Faculty Advisor, my Doctoral Committee and me. All transcribed information will be kept on a password-protected computer used only by the PI.

Your information will be kept in locked file in Dyer Hall room 401B for two years as recommended by the University of Cincinnati. However, Federal regulations require that signed consent documents must be kept for a minimum of three years after the study is closed. After that it will be destroyed by the shredding of the paper research files. The video portion would be destroyed after the interview was

transcribed.

The data from this research study may be published; but you will not be identified by name.

Agents of the University of Cincinnati may inspect study records for audit or quality assurance purposes.

What are your legal rights in this research study?

Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights you may have. This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

What if you have questions about this research study?

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, you should contact Janet Warren at 513-917-0551 or email me at UELdissertation@yahoo.com. Or you may contact Dr. Lanthan Camblin at 513-556-3331.

The UC Institutional Review Board reviews all research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants is protected.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the UC IRB at (513) 558-5259. Or, you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.

Do you HAVE to take part in this research study?

No one has to be in this research study. Refusing to take part will NOT cause any penalty or loss of benefits that you would otherwise have. You may start and then change your mind and stop at any time.

To stop being in the study, you should tell Janet Warren at 513-917-0551 or email at UELdissertation@yahoo.com of your decision.

Agreement:

I have read this information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

____ Yes, you may audio tape my interview.

____ No, you may not audio tape my interview.

____ Yes, you may video tape my interview.

____ No, you may not video tape my interview.

Participant Name (please print) _____

Participant Signature _____

Date _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent _____

Date _____