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ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TOWARD FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS

by

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ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TOWARD FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS

Dorothy J. VanderJagt, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 2000

There is a shortage of females in educational administration. Women represent a majority of teachers, yet men occupy most administrative positions. The purpose of this study was to determine attitudes of selected Michigan school administrators toward women as managers. This study was intended to create an awareness of the perceptions administrators hold toward women as leaders and investigate attitudes that may be accountable for the disparity of women leaders in education.

Two research questions were studied: (1) Do the attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers? (2) Do the attitudes of superintendents and assistant superintendents toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward women as school managers?

This study is a replication of a Mississippi study conducted by Polk (1990) utilizing a population consisting of 133 female and 215 male administrators from the state of Michigan. A majority of the respondents were male. The largest group regarding age fell between fifty-one and fifty-six. A majority of respondents were employed in districts that ranged in size from 1001-3000. More men than women began their administrative career under the age of thirty. Most females acquired their first K-12 public school administrative job between the ages of thirty and thirty-five.

The Attitudes Toward Women as Managers scale, developed by Yost and Herbert (1977), was used to collect data for the study. The results of this study showed a statistical difference between attitudes of male and female administrators toward women as school managers. The results also indicated that there was no significant difference in the attitudes of secondary principals and upper level administrators toward women as school managers.

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ii

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents - continued

CHAPTER

CHAPTER

LIST OF TABLES

viii

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

There is an underrepresentation of women in the ranks of educational

administration. Males hold more educational leadership positions even though

women comprise seventy percent of teachers, the group from which school

administrators are most often drawn (Chase & Bell, 1994). The logical assumption

would be that in a profession represented largely by females, there would be

numerous women administrators who were leaders. But, according to Montenegro

(1993), only 7.1% of superintendents, 24.3% of assistant superintendents, and 34.2%

of principals are female.

The amount of female K-12 superintendents has shown minimal improvement

in spite of increased efforts of Affirmative Action (Montenegro, 1993). Bell and

Chase (1993) found that only 5.6 % of K-12 public school districts have women

superintendents. There is a disproportion in the ratio of female to male administrators

in public schools. In the field of education, women prevail in total number, but men

1

dominate in power (Johnson, 1995).

Women frequently serve longer in the teaching role and encounter more obstacles in becoming a school administrator. The overall gains have been modest in placing women and minorities in top leadership spots and these additions have been uneven across all of the administrative positions (Kowalski, 1995). Once a female begins to advance through the ranks of administration, she is typically responsible for curriculum issues, where a male is often the sole decision-maker for a building or site. Most women who are promoted from the classroom receive staff positions instead of line positions. Women are repeatedly denied the right to seek line positions based on prior assumptions of the female place in education. The stereotyped notion that men are superior administrators has contributed to the lack of female role models serving as administrators (Edson, 1988). The overwhelming number of males in positions of authority customarily sheds intimidation upon the female educator pursuing a leadership role.

The notion that males are more effective narrows the options for women and limits the views of those hiring aspirants (Edson, 1988). Women are not progressing quickly in school administration (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). Women face numerous gender-based perceptions when vying for administrative positions. Women

administrators are viewed differently from male administrators regarding perceptions

of power (Bruner, 1994; Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). These stereotypes suggest that

men are strong and women are weak. According to Jorstad (1996) many men

consider themselves to be more rational, logical and objective than many women.

These preconceived ideas often lead to the commonly held belief that women are not

capable leaders.

Helgesen (1990) posits that the behavior of women is different than men and

more effective. Women are qualified as leaders, but regularly confront obstacles as

they struggle to move among the administrative ranks. According to Waddell (1994)

the socialization process of schools often encourages internal barriers. Women have

typically been followers which leads to self-limitations. Internal barriers can be

overcome, but external barriers are frequently deeper issues and are more difficult to

master. The external barriers dictate employment opportunities for males and females

(Waddell, 1994). The problem of elimination from the good old boy's network and

sex discrimination are external barriers (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993). There are a

variety of barriers, both internal and external, that women encounter along the path of

becoming a school administrator. Male dominance in key leadership positions, lack

of mentors, and lack of career positioning are a few of the obstacles faced by women

(Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Women are definitely capable to lead our public schools, but are generally viewed in a different way than male administrators. Eakle (1995) concluded that people perceive assertiveness in men and women differently. Men are commonly praised for aggressiveness and dominance whereas women are seen as pushy if they exhibit these characteristics. Men are expected to be authoritative in situations and appear to have an advantage when applying for a job. Since the males are in authority in school administration, they determine the guidelines for the hiring process of new administrators. Men supervising the selection proceedings in addition to the disconnection of female administrators prevents numerous females from pursuing administrative positions (Shakeshaft, 1989).

The comprehensive research question is: Do certain attitudes toward women in administration exist, causing fewer women to obtain administrative positions than men? This study examined the attitudes administrators hold toward women as school managers and is a replication of the research conducted in 1989 by Polk (1990), entitled <u>A Comparison of Attitudes and Perceptions of Female and Male Administrators Toward Female Administrators</u>.

Past studies of attitudes of superintendents and school board members have

shown that these parties hold unfavorable attitudes toward women in administration

(Shakeshaft, 1989). Attitude has a tremendous impact on the behavior of people,

especially in the work place. The attitude a supervisor has in regards to the ability of

women to serve in managerial capacities will affect the extent to which he or she

judges a female's performance or grants or withholds developmental opportunities

(Yost & Herbert, as cited in Polk, 1990).

The research indicates that women encounter many barriers as they work their

way up the administrative career ladder. Sex discrimination is clearly one of the

reasons women fail to gain administrative roles (McGrath, 1992). Males have the

power in the schools and make most of the important decisions. Since men are

predominantly in the highest administrative positions they are responsible for the

employing of administration. Studies tell us that people tend to hire candidates like

themselves; thus males hire males (Shakeshaft, 1989).

<center>Purpose of the Study</center>

This study investigated how secondary administrators, assistant

superintendents, and superintendents perceived women as school leaders. The

purpose of the study was to determine the beliefs and attitudes of selected Michigan

school administrators toward women as school managers.

Significance of the Study

There has been some serious speculation about how women lead in organizations and the empirical research has been limited and inconsistent (Clark, Carafella, & Ingram, 1998; Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, & Harris, 1994). Much of the work on women leaders has consisted of descriptions or prescriptions for practice (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Fagenson, 1993). There is a critical need for research established in well formulated data-based scholarship focusing on women in leadership positions.

The leadership curriculum graduate schools study regarding school administration evolves from the professional experience of men. A review of major publishing houses found few texts on leadership, the principalship, the superintendency, the professoriate, or educational administration written by women or other minimized groups (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995). The plentiful abundance of males in authority has resulted in their background being the primary focus in supervision. Since the overall experience and knowledge of women is devalued and hidden in our culture and women have been excluded from positions of school

leadership, their experience is not available as a resource (Regan & Brooks, 1995).

According to Heller, Woodsworth, Jacobson, and Conway (1991) research has continued to indicate that males and females are disproportionately represented in K-12 school administration despite the existence of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Legislation. Women who choose to enter an administrative career and are successful in obtaining a position are defying the expectations (Waddle, 1994). Several females who have the desire to pursue a leadership role keep this interest private to avoid disapproving reactions from their male and female peers. Women tend to wait to be persuaded to apply for administrative positions, rather than taking the initiative to do so because they want the jobs (Waddle, 1994).

Many women who are selected for a principalship are often responsible for an elementary school. Polk (1990) reported that most female school administrators are at the elementary level. Therefore, most of the research around women in educational leadership has focused on elementary principals, however some has centered on secondary principals (Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992). There is a necessity to increase the number of potential female educational leaders, especially at the secondary and central office levels. Factors affecting the advancement of women in educational administration should be explored. Shakeshaft (1989) indicated that

the issues of personnel selection need to be examined in light of both gender differences and discriminatory practices.

In 1987 the Michigan Model project was developed to increase the number of females in administrative positions, which was funded by the Women's Educational Equity Act and the Department of Education. A high priority of this project was the need to change perceptions and attitudes of those in authority that hire candidates for leadership roles. Polk (1990) studied Mississippi administrators and found that female administrators had more positive attitudes toward women as school managers than male administrators and recommended that inquiring investigators continue to study attitudes that may be accountable for the disparity of women leaders in education. Research must be available in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations that may lead to an understanding of why there is a small percentage of female administrators. This information will presumably lead to a greater awareness for educators and possibly increase the number of women in leadership roles in our nation's schools.

Shakeshaft, Nowell, and Perry (1992) reported that males and females are treated differently and the impact of gender on behavior is deserving of study. In an effort to further the examination of gender differences related to administration, this

study inquired into the beliefs and attitudes of school administrators toward females as school managers. According to Craig & Hardy (1996), the chief administrative officer of a school district makes major policy decisions, appoints and assigns personnel, and assumes dozens of other responsibilities. Since the superintendent of a district and their administrative team are ultimately responsible for the hiring of new administrators, it is imperative to understand their perceptions regarding female leaders. Therefore, the major focus of this study was to determine the attitudes of selected Michigan administrators toward women as managers. The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1.0 Do the attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers?

2.0 Do the attitudes of superintendents and assistant superintendents toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward women as school managers?

Definition of Terms

Administrators are school leaders that are secondary principals, assistant

superintendents, and superintendents.

Assistant superintendent refers to the immediate associate to the

superintendent.

Gender-related attitude is the perception of ability regarding men and women

to serve in managerial capacities (Yost & Herbert, as cited in Polk, 1990).

Line administrator is a position where the administrator evaluates and

supervises employees.

School manager refers to a person in a position of leadership in a school

district.

Secondary principal refers to the building administrator of a high school,

junior high, or middle school.

Staff position refers to an administrator who provides a service to employees,

but does not evaluate. The staff person must influence employees.

Superintendent refers to the chief executive officer of a school district.

Upper level administrators are the assistant superintendents and

superintendents.

Conditions

This study was based on the following conditions:

1. Since this study was a replication of a study by Polk (1990), the author

utilized the instrument, t-test independent sampling and analysis of variance

procedures to determine comparison of results.

2. The subjects surveyed were presently employed as a secondary principal,

assistant superintendent, or superintendent and a majority were male.

3. This study was representative of K-12 public schools in the state of

Michigan.

4. Sex refers to the biological differences that distinguish male from female,

while gender refers to the cultural distinction that classifies men and women into

social groups (American Psychological Association, 1995). Since some authors have

used these words interchangeably, references to sex and gender in this document will

reference classification.

Summary

The majority of public school teachers are female, yet women are the minority

in school administraton. A majority of K-12 teachers are female and only 7.1% of

superintendents are female (Montenegro, 1993). Women frequently embark upon

barriers throughout their administrative journey. There are many obstructions that

limit the amount of women in leadership roles (Hill & Ragland, 1995). With the

amount of female teachers working throughout the nation, the matter of why there is

such a small number of female administrators needs to be addressed. This study

examined the attitudes and perceptions of administrators toward women as school

managers.

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction and

the background of the study. This includes the background of the problem, the

purpose of the study, significance of the study, questions to be answered, definition of

terms, and summary.

Chapter II is a review of the research and literature related to the topic of the

study. Within this chapter is a brief review of the background of leadership and

gender, educational administration positions, career tracks, barriers present, attitudes,

and leadership styles.

Chapter III details the design of the study. This chapter includes the location

of the study, sample procedure, population, target sample, research variables, study

hypotheses, survey instrument, and scoring and interpretation. The chapter also

discusses data collection and procedure.

Chapter IV is comprised of four sections: (1) the instrument and scoring

procedures; (2) sample population and the respondents' characteristics; (3) discussion

of each hypothesis and the corresponding data analysis, testing the hypotheses; and

(4) summarization of the findings. The analysis of collected data, statistical methods,

and findings are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter V is the final portion of the study and has three main sections: (1)

discussion of the study, (2) summary and conclusions, and (3) suggestions for future

study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to determine the beliefs and attitudes of school administrators toward women as school managers. The review of the literature in Chapter II is divided into ten sections: (1) women and leadership, (2) women in educational leadership, (3) career tracks of women administrators, (4) barriers that women face as administrators, (5) the gender difference, (6) attitudes toward women leaders, (7) leadership styles of women administrators, (8) leadership styles of men administrators, (9) women and the superintendency, and (10) summary.

Women and Leadership

The number of women in the professional workplace is increasing. They are following new paths, reaching new horizons, and building new realities (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992). The female population may be entering the work force in a larger capacity, but there are some obstructions in the governing order. Bass and Avolio (1994) reported women comprise less than 5% of board directorships and corporate

14

officerships in most sectors. There are only three female Chief Executive Officers of

Fortune 500 companies (Hotaling, as cited in Srinivas, Allen, & Sakamoto,1999). A

1991 survey based on Fortune 1000-sized companies reported that women comprised

37% of employees, but only 6.5% of executive-level managers (Tannen, 1994).

Based on the meager numbers of females in command, there is an apparent struggle

for women pursuing leadership. Burns (1978) defined leadership as:

> the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and
> values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of
> competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually
> held by both the leaders and the followers (p. 425).

There are numerous qualified women available to join the ranks of leadership,

however it is difficult for women to reach executive level jobs in organizations.

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions in all portions of our society

(Whitaker & Lane, 1990).

Early in childhood education our children create assumptions of their

possibilities and limitations based on their sex (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995). These

speculations are embedded deeply within society and contribute to ideologies

regarding gender. Throughout the ages men have dominated in power and leadership.

The females in our population have often been ignored, ridiculed, thwarted, or

prevented from considering leadership roles (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Women realize

once they begin to seek a position of authority there are substantial barriers that stand in their way. A glass ceiling has existed that prevents many qualified females from assuming leadership roles (Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, & Harris 1994). Tannen (1994) described the glass ceiling as "an invisible barrier that seems to keep women from rising to the top" (p. 133).

Women often realize they are stranded at a certain point in their career and generally feel intimidated by the situations caused by the overpowering amount of males in command. A survey conducted in 1992, of 400 female managers, reported that over half of the managers indicated that progress was slow with regard to hiring and promotion of women in the United States, and 70% stated that a significant hindrance to their success was the male-dominated corporate culture (Anon, as cited in Bass & Avolio, 1994). Men are regularly associated with aggressive, dominating, and powerful behavior. Unfortunately, women who exhibit these same characteristics are perceived as pushy and threatening.

The same circumstances and situations exist for both genders, but women continually have different predetermined characteristics for which they are considered effective. Women leaders attempting to balance career and family are frequently judged on how much they are neglecting either issue. However, males are

encouraged to work long hours, travel, and devote extra time to their job. Men are

often viewed as exemplary dedicated workers in areas that a woman would be

criticized for mastering. When women focus on their career potential they often

consider the mobility of their family. Conflict between personal and professional

demands is an obstacle to women's participation in administration along with

expectations for support from family, friends, and colleagues (Manera & Green,

1995).

Throughout history in most cultures, conflicts between the role of leader and

expectations for female roles have occurred (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Women

experience these circumstances and oppositions in all regions of the supremacy

employment spectrum. However, women must continually strive for leadership

positions in an effort to change the statistics and be available as role models for other

ambitious females.

<center>Women in Educational Administration</center>

A substantial number of women have been moving into previously male-

dominated professions since the mid-1960s with the exception of the hierarchy of

administration. Whitaker and Lane (1990) posit that women are not progressing

rapidly in public school administration. The field of education employs mainly women, yet men are at the helm of the organization. Mertz and McNeely (1988) reported that from the beginning school administration has been male dominated and male defined. It is an unfortunate situation that women represent the majority of the teaching population, yet are the minority in school administration. Females far outnumber male teachers, 71% of all K-12 teachers and 88% of all elementary teachers are female (Montenegro, 1993). Since a preponderance of educators are women, an inaccurate assumption exists that several school administrators are female. In 1992, there were approximately 15,449 superintendents in the nation, with males comprising 93.4 percent and females 6.6 percent (Glass, as cited in Johnson, 1995). As women seek an administrative title they abruptly realize the lack of female leaders that extends throughout educational institutions. The deficiency of females in school administration is consistent in rural, suburban, and medium-sized city districts (Mertz & McNeely, 1988).

Previous writers resolved the lack of female administrators on the premise that women were not interested or prepared for that type of an obligation. However, the research indicates there are numerous qualified females for administrative positions who are willing to take on the responsibilities of being the leader and

preparing themselves in the field. McGrath (1992) reported that over half of all

doctoral students in administration are female. Since there are more female than male

teachers and an abundance of female educational leadership students, there is

obviously a misrepresentation of gender in the positions of school administration.

There likewise appears to be an inaccurate description in the studies of

prospective administrative candidates. Most of the information educational

administration students' study is based on the knowledge of men and taught by men.

According to Johnson (1995) the research and understanding of the superintendency

and advancement potential of this position have been based almost exclusively on the

experience of men. Since women have been excluded from positions of school

leadership, their experience is not available as a resource (Regan & Brooks, 1995).

The bias toward men in textbooks and in graduate education during the 1900s helped

to further promote the many inequities against women administrators (Dardaine-

Ragguet, Russo, and Harris, 1994). The dominance of the male worldview in

research and knowledge is called androcentrism (Owens, 1998). In organizational

studies it refers to the virtual overlooking of women, their absence from the

scholarship itself, and the unexamined assumption held by those who conducted

studies that men and women experience organization life in essentially the same ways

(Owens, 1998). Recent inquiries are raising serious question regarding this assumption.

Women promptly comprehend that there is a preference toward men in educational administration as they focus on the goal of leadership. They often have to deal with more difficulties and wait longer to become an administrator than their male counterparts. Women in administration are older than men in similar positions and generally have classroom experience (McGrath, 1992).

It is apparent that women in the professional work place have constantly faced complications throughout history. Nevertheless, in a field where a majority of the population is female, one would presume it would be easier to advance through the organization. But, the literature reveals that women face many obstacles even in the field of educational leadership. Women must understand the image that pertains to their gender is domesticated and working females will confront adversity once they set their aspirations on leadership.

Career Tracks of Women Administrators

There is a difference in career paths in administration between men and women (Ozga, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1989). Women spend more time in the classroom

than men before entering a leadership position. Male administrators spend an average

of five years teaching; women spend an average of fifteen (Waddle, 1994). The time

difference between men and women in the classroom directly relates to the age of the

person in administration. Women administrators are older than men in similar

positions (Shakeshaft, 1989). Since men begin the administrative track at an earlier

age, they are generally able to reach more influential positions during their career.

In a survey conducted by McAdams (1995), most superintendents felt that

holding a variety of positions within a school system provided the best preparation for

the superintendency. Since women enter administration at a later point in their career

than men and often occupy an elementary principalship, they are generally unable to

maintain a diversity of jobs. Experience in several positions within the ranks

communicates credibility among staff members. McAdams (1995) indicated the job

identified as the best preparation for superintendency was the high school

principalship. This duty closely parallels the top spot in a school district. These

positions are accountable for a variance of complicated components and must

demonstrate prominence within the community. Women are ordinarily missing from

the high school principal role and erroneousness presumptions are often made

regarding this inadequacy.

According to Johnson (1995) researchers discovered that a lack of awareness exists in the career patterns of successful women. Many practitioners and researchers of the past were under the assumption that females did not desire administrative positions based on the small quantity of women in such positions. However, Ortiz and Covel (1987) determined that women do in fact have similar aspirations as men, but often lack the opportunity.

There appears to be differences based on gender for pursuing school administration. Typically, men move into administration to increase their income and occupational and social mobility, whereas women take on the position after the support and encouragement of a mentor or by an accidental occurrence (Ortiz, as cited in Ruhl-Smith, Shen, & Cooley, 1999). Women are often guided to the path of school leader where men customarily strive for the title. Manera and Green (1995) found that older women did not envision administration as a career goal, but were encouraged by male administrators to apply for administrative positions. Many women have the desire to become an administrator and often keep this goal private. Women simply think that they cannot be school administrators and wish to keep their thoughts a secret to avoid negative reactions (Waddle, 1994). Ruhl-Smith, Shen, and Cooley (1999) noted that most females move into administration only following

much encouragement.

The type of preparation and administrative job held also differs between men and women. Women prepare for leadership by taking graduate courses specializing in administration before they apply for a position (Gotwalt & Towns, as cited in Manera & Green, 1995). More than half of all doctoral students in administration are women (McGrath, 1992). Once men move from teaching they tend to acquire line positions, while women tend to move from teaching to central office staff positions, then to principalships (Ortiz, 1982). This situation creates variance in supervision as well. The women have created an extensive background in instructional programs, but lack in issues dealing as an administrator over a site. Since women with prior administrative experience generally hold staff positions as opposed to line positions, they are not as likely to encounter situations of asserting authority over others.

The distinction between the career paths and experiences of men and women leaders reflect sex segregation in public education (Bell & Chase, 1995). Many previous studies that inquired into career placement and advancement reported findings without regard to gender. This created a representation of the leadership field almost exclusively based on male experience. According to Shakeshaft (1987) the literature that exists on career paths in administration is different from the

experiences of women administrators, primarily because the experiences used to

define and document career tracks are from men. The information available on the

paths of female administrators needs to be investigated and expanded. As the number

of women moving into administration continues to rise, the process by which they

obtain this goal must be documented.

Barriers That Women Face as Administrators

The first female superintendent in the city of Chicago, Ella Flagg Young,

predicted that in the 1900s more women than men would be in charge of the

educational system (McGrath, 1992). This prediction is not a reality and women still

confront several frustrations and complications as they attempt to enter school

administration. They encounter various internal and external barriers on their quest

for leadership. Internal barriers relate to aspects of personality, values, and attitudes

where external are environmental circumstances that mediate entrance into the

superintendency (Leonare & Papalewis, as cited in Kowalski, 1999). Internal barriers

can be mastered by individual change where external barriers demand social and

institutional change (Shakeshaft, 1987).

An internal barrier that some women struggle with is the lack of self

confidence. Many women believe that they are not capable of becoming a leader in an educational organization. Waddell (1994) reported that fifty-one percent of beginning male teachers have a desire to become school administrators, but only nine percent of the single women, eight percent of the married women, and nineteen percent of the widowed, separated or divorced women express interest in becoming an administrator. Women are not straightforward with their ambition to become a school leader and often wait for an opportunity to present itself.

The small number of female administrators creates another internal barrier, the lack of female role models. Grogan (1996) reported that women leaders spoke of a deficiency of sponsorship, lack of females in leadership positions available to model for others, concerns with separating home and work lives and frustrations of the good old boys network. Men have a variety of support systems from the number of available male mentors to society in general. Women leaders cited lack of support as a difficulty for many women (Manera and Green, 1995).

Women confront complex issues regardless of whether they are single or married. In a study conducted by Ramsey (1997), women superintendents indicated that the job came at the price of family time, privacy, and role changes with their marriages. Single women must face the mobility component with larger

consideration then men. According to Hill and Ragland (1995) the problems related to being alone in a new situation are more significant for single women facing safety, socialization and child care. Women are often held accountable on how they balance family life and career aspirations. Married women may face the school boards questioning if they have time to manage the family and job, yet if they are not married they may be seen as not family-oriented (Waddell, 1994).

The formal and informal screening process is an external barrier for women. School boards determine requirements for positions based on experience, and women often are screened out as viable candidates (Waddell, 1994). The personnel selection and advancement process in an educational setting tends to favor the male contender. Pounder (1989) posits that equity issues are present relating to recruitment, selection, promotion, and compensation.

Exclusion from the good old boy's network and ongoing sex discrimination in practice and attitude exist as external barriers (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1993). Many women cannot become part of the network process simply because of their gender. Shakeshaft (1987) suggested that in many studies, the explanations supplied for not hiring or promoting women have to do with the fact that they were female.

Hill and Ragland (1995) stated there are several barriers that limit the number

of women in leadership positions. The obstacles are: (1) male dominance of key

leadership positions, (2) lack of political savvy, (3) lack of career positioning, (4) lack

of mentoring, (5) lack of mobility, and (6) internal barriers and bias against women.

The difficulties women encounter are continuous throughout their career in

administration. According to Konnert and Augenstein (1995) once a women reaches

the top position in school administration, the superintendency, the barriers may

remain as obstructions to achieving success and satisfaction in the superintendency

and may serve as the final force in exiting the job.

The Gender Difference

The underrepresentation of female role models in a field dominated by

females causes question on the issue of whether women are treated fairly when

seeking an administrative title. Many women are not considered as serious

candidates in the arena of administration. Women experience sex discrimination

throughout the administrative hiring process from application to screening interview

and selection (Pavan & Robinson, 1991). Since men have the power in educational

leadership, they set the standards for hiring. Shakeshaft (1989) reported that men

managing recruitment and selection operations, along with the isolation of female

administrators prevents many females from pursuing administrative positions.

Ragins (1991) reported that gender is a factor regarding power in

organizations. Men are generally in positions of authority, whereas women are often

below them in subordinate roles. This frequently leads to the misunderstanding that

effective administrators must be male. The image of a principal is firmly rooted in

stereotypes of age and gender in the minds of some people (Regan & Brooks, 1995).

Even though women have proven themselves in administrative positions, people

proceed to question their ability. Once a women is selected for a line position, she is

often placed at an elementary level. Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, and Harris (1994)

reported that women are more likely to occupy elementary principal positions, as

opposed to secondary principal positions. Women may actually be more effectual

than men as elementary principals and a preference for females would presumably

result in superior schools (Shakeshaft, 1987). Women are prepared for administration

and need to be represented at all levels of educational leadership.

According to Riehl and Byrd (1997) gender is significant in career

development due to the fact that men and women encounter different situations, act

differently, and/or experience different outcomes. The salary of female

administrators is often less than that of their male counterparts. Ford (1999) stated

that women only earn seventy-six cents for every dollar that a man makes. Many

attribute the injustice of pay to power and control believing that a man displays more

authority. A typical belief is that men and women differ in their ability to influence

others, men are considered to exhibit more influence and women are easily influenced

(Gurman & Long, 1992).

Throughout history in most cultures conflicts between the role of leader and

expectations for female roles have occurred (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Women must

often overcome obstacles and confront situations regarding the gender issue. Brunner

(1997c) studied twelve female superintendents and found that there are additional

expectations related to gender and women must address these expectations with

action in order to be successful. Women cannot ignore the gender difference or

blame shortcomings on barriers related to gender. Men and women differ in their

examples for managerial and leadership success (Bolman & Deal, 1992). The female

administrator of today must capitalize on the differences to become an effectual

leader and a positive role model for future women leaders.

Attitudes Toward Women Leaders

Even though both men and women are capable of occupying leadership

positions, people maintain different views on how women lead compared to their male counterparts. Eakle (1995) believes that men and women have a distinct outlook on leadership and people perceive assertiveness in men and women differently. Men are often commended for being aggressive and taking charge, where women are seen as pushy and bossy if they display these same attributes. Women are associated with fragility and are not perceived as strong and effective as male leaders. According to Shakeshaft (1989) studies of attitudes of superintendents and school board members have shown that they hold unfavorable attitudes toward women in administration.

Men appear to have an advantage when applying for an administrative title. Hudson (1994) indicated during the application of formal job routes, white males are often trusted where Blacks and women must prove themselves and have a good reputation before they are considered for the position of superintendent. The majority of administrators are men and they feel secure and comfortable promoting men with similar attributes. Dunlap and Schmuck (1995) found when studying male superintendents that one reason some men did not hire women in vital and close positions was the concern that sexual tension would occur and be significant.

Shakeshaft (1989) reported that a number of white males in Texas were upset

in regards to the hiring process in various districts throughout the state. These

candidates were informed that they were not considered for the job because the

Affirmative Action regulations required districts to hire a woman or minority.

Unfortunately, the statement was used as an excuse and if these men would have

investigated further they would have noticed that a white male was actually hired.

However, the men assumed they lost jobs based on their gender and race which made

the males extremely angry at women and minorities. This is an unfortunate situation,

women and minorities undergo enough trouble breaking into the administrative ranks

without deliberate excuses and ploys.

McGrath (1992) cited a 1989 Texas A&M study conducted by Folmar (1989)

which found that male school board members viewed female leaders as less effective

than males. It should be noted that ninety-one percent of these school board members

were male. Women encounter a disadvantage when being compared to men. Pedras,

Oak, and Vail (1994) conducted a study and found that most administrators see a

need for women educators in the technology arena, but discovered they would not be

hired above equally qualified men. The evaluation of females in leadership roles

faces similar problems of stereotypical assumptions. Ragins (1991) suggested that

since perceived power is positively associated to evaluations of leadership

effectiveness, and females are inclined to have less positional power in organizations

than males, gender differences in leader power may contribute to the inconsistent

findings on subordinate evaluations of female leaders.

There is information that exists on the other end of the spectrum and is

encouraging for female leaders. Some of the research supports the notion that women

are perceived as proficient administrators. Hein (1988) studied selected principals'

attitudes toward male and female capabilities as school administrators in Colorado.

The researcher discovered that the principals perceived the women's capabilities more

positively than the men's capabilities.

Leadership Styles of Women Administrators

Many women support the concept of team learning and collaboration in the

professional work place. Regan and Brooks (1995) define collaboration as "the

ability to work in a group, eliciting and offering support to each other member,

creating a synergistic environment for everyone" (p. 425). Rosener (1990) conducted

interviews and discovered that women repeatedly expressed interest about involving

others and sharing information along with power. Women are often concerned how

people feel and develop an alliance with members of the organization. Research

comparing women and men revealed that relationships with others are central to actions for women administrators, teaching and learning are the major focuses for women and building community is central to women's administrative style (Capper, 1993).

Women use very different leadership styles from men (Rosener, as cited in Owens, 1998). Females appear to favor an environment of encouragement, shared input, and continual growth. The feminocentric critique states that men and women understand and experience the world in substantially different ways (Owens, 1998). A study conducted by Carless (1998) of managers revealed that superiors evaluated female managers as more transformational than male managers.

According to Helgesen (1990) the behavior of women is different from men and more effective. When given the opportunity, women have proven they are able to rise to the challenge. Pavan and Reid (1994) studied the highest achieving Chapter 1 elementary school involved in a Philadelphia school improvement project. Four out of five of the top-achieving schools were led by women. The study concluded that those principals, predominately women, who emphasized instructional issues in a supportive climate had more productive schools.

Johnson (1995) reported that as women have entered into the administrative

position there has been a shift from the top-down, authoritarian, head-boss concept of

leadership to leadership that is empowering, facilitative and participatory. Women

are comfortable with sharing authority and seeking assistance in their leadership

positions. Regan and Brooks (1995) suggested that women reach out to others, ask

for help when needed, and collaborate to accomplish tasks. Even though these

methods are effective for most women leaders, some have problems associated with

power and control.

There are unconscious practices and social norms that support the perception

that power is masculine (Brunner, 1997a). Brunner and Schumaker (1998) posit that

women perceive power as a way of social production, whereas men perceive power as

a component of social control (Hill & Ragland, 1995). Women may be viewed as

weak and easily influenced if they do not exhibit dominating characteristics. Manera

and Green (1995) studied six successful women administrators and found that being

nurturing and caregiving can be problematic for females in administration.

The differences between tasks and interpersonal leadership styles, and

democratic and autocratic leadership styles, are segregated by gender due to the

stereotypic notions in regards to human behavior (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Women

are distinguished as insecure guides who seek advice and input where men are seen as

aggressive forerunners. Many researchers maintain that women commonly approach

leadership in a much more developmental, supportive, and collaborative way than

men (Ozga, 1993; Rosener, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1989).

The literature reveals support for the belief of varying leadership styles based

on gender, but there is an argument against this concept. Bell and Chase (1995) do

not accept the notion that women have different leadership styles than men. But, their

research does suggest that gender is one of the contextual factors that shapes

leadership practice. McGrath (1992) noted that both men and women have the

potential to be effectual leaders and their characteristic styles can complement each

other.

Leadership Styles of Men Administrators

Men and women often have distinct perspectives based on prior experience

and knowledge. When men and women are given similar responsibilities, they often

approach the work differently (Shakeshaft, 1987). Men are often viewed as

dominant, competent and powerful. Eakle (1995) pointed out that the illustrative

male superintendent favors a top-down administrative approach. Johnson (1995) also

noted that the typical stereotype defines men as authoritative and decisive. Men

relish being in a position of authority and frequently exhibit control in situations.

According to Gurman and Long (1992) men have formal status roles and in a group

situation with both men and women present it is the norm for many participants to

allow men to take the lead.

Jorstad (1996) reported that several men perceived themselves to be more

rational, logical, and objective than many women. Men demonstrate confidence in

their organization and are comfortable with their decisions. Men are considered more

influential than women who are considered easily influenced (Gurman & Long,

1992). Male leaders are associated with strength, skill, and determination. Power is

analogous with masculine behavior and there are social norms that support this

perception (Brunner, 1997a).

Male and female leaders approach situations differently based on their

understanding of the circumstances. Men and women often listen for distinct

information and communicate differently (Shakeshaft, Nowell, & Perry, 1992).

There is a difference in communication styles and feedback for men and women. The

research indicates that males receive more feedback than women (Shakeshaft,

Nowell, & Perry, 1992).

Men have a large network in leadership based on the number of males in

respective positions. McGrath (1992) noted that men are affiliated with others through service clubs or sports organizations which has proven beneficial when seeking a superintendency. A nationwide study found that male superintendents exhibited confidence in their capability to manage operations, facilities, and finance, but desired growth in communication, implementation of new instructional systems, curriculum development, and teacher evaluation (Glass and Sclafani, as cited in McGrath, 1992). Male leaders have demonstrated difficulty empowering others. Hossack (1993) reported men may have problems adopting an empowering leadership style and managing their experiences with feelings and emotions. When men are able to demonstrate feeling it is habitually pessimistic. Hossack (1993) surveyed over 150 Canadian senior male executives in leading private sector, for profit organizations and found that men tend to show negative emotions in the workplace.

The cited literature supports the variance of leadership styles, but this body of research is not without critics. These writers argue that there are few, if any differences in the ways men and women lead (Astin & Leland, 1991; Donnell & Hall, 1980). Bass (1981) studied leadership styles of females and males, and reported that there is not a distinct pattern of variance between them.

Women and the Superintendency

According to Craig and Hardy (1996) not one leadership style can be directly

attributed to success in the superintendency. There are a variety of styles used by a

wide range of leaders. Many male superintendents prefer a traditional top-down

administrative style in contrast to women who favor a collaborative site-based

approach (Eakle, 1995). Female leaders tend to involve others in the decision making

process and often emphasize empowerment. A study of women urban

superintendents conducted by Wesson and Grady (1994) found that these women

define their leadership style as collegial and collaborative. They see themselves as

productively working with people, effectively communicating and identifying a

vision.

Women display visionary ideas and innovative concepts, yet history has not

been easy for women in educational leadership. There is a shortage of female school

chiefs in our nation. Montenegro (1993) reported that only 7.1% of superintendencies

are held by women. Women and minorities continue to be underrepresented in the

superintendency (Kowalski & Reitzug, 1993). Male dominance prevails in the

highest dwelling of a school system as well in school board positions, professional

associations, and unions. Ramsey (1997) revealed that there are gender issues

relating to the job of superintendent. Stereotypic perceptions of gender capabilities

often encumber boards from seriously considering female applicants for

principalships and superintendencies (Carr, 1995).

According to Ramsey (1997) women usually fight harder, wait longer, and

experience more scrutiny on the path to the superintendency. It has been a difficult

journey for women to acquire the highest position in a school district. The abundance

of female educators would seem to produce a sufficient quantity of chief executives.

However, time has not caused an increase in the count of officers over the years. The

number of representation of women in the superintendency in the 1930s has not been

equaled by 1990 (Blount, as cited in Shakeshaft, 1998). The female leader has

demonstrated competency in her role if only awarded the opportunity.

The fact that women are underrepresented in school administration is not a

reflection of their inability to do the job (Bolman & Deal, 1992). Women are ready

and qualified for the top positions in a school district, however once a women is

successful in obtaining a superintendency she often feels alone. This loneliness is

intensified for women due to the lack of women in superintendency positions

nationwide. Tallerice and Burstyn (1996) suggested that the isolation that goes with

being a minority in the profession and the gender bias disadvantage women

superintendents experience can intensify the stress in this situation.

There is less availability of mentors and support groups for women superintendents. Women are the minority in the profession which leads to a small professional network (Ramsey, 1997). An experienced mentor can guide a prospective or new superintendent toward success with a wealth of knowledge and information. Konnert and Augenstein (1995) posit that mentoring is significant in accessing a superintendency. This is an area that a woman leader must often proceed alone, finding her way in a male dominated position. There are few peers or mentors that a female superintendent can identify with in her position (Craig & Hardy, 1996).

The districts affiliated with employing female school chiefs often are accompanied by various issues and uncertainties. According to Tallerico and Burstyn (1996), proportionately more than men, women tend to occupy superintendencies in the smallest and least cosmopolitan districts, with the fewest central office administrators and declining student enrollments. The researchers also stated that there is more reported stress in the job for women, less satisfaction, and the greatest vulnerability to lethal school board conflict.

Females appear to have a great chance of leading districts with diverse issues. Kowalski (1999) indicated that women and minorities have a better chance obtaining

a superintendency in the large school districts, specifically urban school systems.

Urban districts have grown to become the target of public criticism and are

surrounded with a variety of problems. These districts experience shrinking pools of

superintendent applicants and the average tenure of an urban superintendent is 2.4

years (Kowalski, 1995).

There will be opposition for females attempting to climb the bureaucratic

career ladder. Women seeking the superintendency must capitalize on their strengths

and be able to handle pressure with grace since they will be under examination most

of the time. Women leaders should focus on what they believe to be effective for a

district and allow everyone to grow. Eakle (1995) stated that collaboration, caring,

courage, intuition, and vision are characteristics of women in educational leadership

positions. Women leaders must use their knowledge and abilities to provide the best

organizational culture possible.

Many of the leadership characteristics identified by women are possessed by

exemplary leaders. Mahoney (1996) interviewed approximately ninety

superintendents in Ohio and found important elements of being a successful school

chief. The components identified by the leaders were: (1) strong communication

skills, (2) people skills, (3) being visible and accessible, (4) being visionary, (5)

having a sense of humor, (6) being compassionate, (7) keeping a sense of balance, (8)

fostering team work, and (9) being knowledgeable. These superintendents also

stressed motivating others, providing a secure work environment, fostering trust and

providing resources as key factors in establishing effective leadership.

Brunner (1997c) studied exemplary superintendents in the nation and

determined significant factors that were found in the practice of these leaders. One of

the discoveries was that women administrators need to share power and credit.

Several women leaders support site based management which utilizes many resources

within an organization. These leaders must reach for their goals and strive for

success regardless of the barriers that stand in their way. Both men and women have

the potential to become effective school leaders. Carr (1995) stated that effective

communication and interpersonal relationships are not constrained by gender. There

is no research on whether men or women make better superintendents, but women

must be ready to challenge the existing stereotypes (Craig & Hardy, 1996).

Women are primarily in the teaching positions in our schools although some

of these women should be in leadership positions. Riehl and Byrd (1997) believe that

if women administrators are going to have a significant impact on schooling, the

amount of women administrators must increase. The number of females in

administration over the past two decades is slowly rising. However, the glass ceiling

has not been shattered, especially in the high school principal position and the

superintendency (Dunlap & Schmuck, 1995).

Summary

The historical perspective of females is one of a submissive gender, whose

contribution to society tends to be measured by raising children, preparing meals, and

substituting when men were not available to perform specific career functions

(Whitaker & Lane, 1990). Women and the role they are associated with has been one

of domestication.

This temperament has penetrated into education. A variety of internal and

external barriers that women face have been identified in this chapter as having an

impact on why there are small numbers of women in administrative roles. A majority

of the literature illustrates that women do encounter obstacles and must exert

determination and persistence in order to reach their career potential.

The small percentage of females as school chiefs signifies that the top position

in a district has remained stagnant over the years. It is still difficult to systematically

and accurately track the number of women in school administration even after nearly

two decades of attention to this matter (Shakeshaft, as cited in Dunlop & Schmuck, 1995). The most used source is the American Association of School Administrators survey of chief state school officers. This is the best data available but even these counts are not complete. There is a lack of a reliable uniform nationwide database that would reveal how many women are school administrators and at what levels. This deficiency of information has political ramifications, if annual comparisons by sex and race are not made it is difficult to make justification for action and remedy the condition (Shakeshaft, as cited in Dunlop & Schmuck, 1995).

Movement needs to happen in the arena of school administration and women must advance into the executive roles. This transition will not be simple or without challenges. Change is never easy because it involves going from a state of knowing to not knowing; it can affect individuals' sense of security and safety (Owens, 1998). But, society is seeking visionary transformational leaders capable of making decisions which direct the organization into a more competitive world (Shakeshaft, 1987). Hopefully, women will capitalize on their strengths and progress into administrative positions.

The review of the literature revealed information that leads to the two questions which will be studied in Chapter IV. These include:

1. Why is there a low number of women in educational administrative positions? Are the attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers different from the attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers?

2. Are the perceptions of upper level administrators regarding females significant? Do the attitudes of superintendents and assistant superintendents toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward women as school managers?

The research indicates that females have been treated in a different way than their male associates in their venture to achieve educational administrative positions. Shakeshaft (1989) reported that attitudes and perceptions toward males whether it be barriers, qualifications, or personnel selection are different than the attitudes and perceptions toward females.

Chapter II has presented a review of the literature related to (a) women and leadership, (b) women in educational leadership, (c) career tracks of women administrators, (d) barriers that women face as administrators, (e) the gender difference, (f) attitudes toward women leaders, (g) leadership styles of women administrators, (h) leadership styles of men administrators, and (i) women and the

superintendency. The methodology is discussed in Chapter III, and the findings are

reported in chapter IV. Conclusions and recommendations are found in Chapter V.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the beliefs and attitudes of

selected Michigan school administrators toward women as school managers. The

study explored how secondary administrators, assistant superintendents, and

superintendents perceived women administrators. The research focused on two

questions. Do the attitudes of male administrators differ from the attitudes of female

administrators toward women as school managers? Do the attitudes of upper level

administrators differ from the attitudes of secondary principals toward women as

school managers?

The focus of this chapter is the methodology and instrumentation. There are

nine sections in this chapter: (1) overview, (2) sample description, (3) research

variables (4) hypotheses (5) instrument, (6) reliability and validity of the instrument,

(7) data collection procedure, (8) scoring and interpretation, and (9) summary.

This study replicated a Mississippi study entitled <u>A Comparison of Attitudes</u>

47

and perceptions of Female and Male Administrators Toward Female Administrators

conducted in 1989 by Polk (1990). When Polk conducted her study, she discovered

that over 90% of the superintendents in the nation were white males and that only

four superintendents and nine high school principals in the state of Mississippi were

women. She conducted her study for the purpose of collecting essential information

regarding attitudes and perceptions of male administrators toward female

administrators that could lead to the small proportion of women in educational

administration.

By using the 1987-88 Mississippi Educational Directory, Polk (1990)

identified school districts in which a female was employed as a secondary school

principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent. She discovered twenty-four

districts and eighty-nine administrators throughout the state met her requirements.

The sample size for the Polk (1990) study included sixty-two of the eighty-nine

administrators selected, twenty-four females and thirty-eight males.

Sample Description

The subjects chosen for this study were secondary principals, assistant

superintendents, and superintendents in the state of Michigan where a female was

employed in one of these positions. The 2000 <u>Michigan Education Directory</u>

contained a listing of 524 public K-12 school districts and their respective

administrators. This directory was used to determine if a female was employed as a

secondary school principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent. A telephone

call was made to the district's central office if the listed information was not clear as

to whether the name in print was a male or female.

There are 249 public K-12 school districts that employ a female in at least one

of these positions: secondary principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent.

From the list of 249 districts, 152 were randomly selected to be surveyed. The

number of public school districts surveyed reflected an accurate sample necessary to

achieve a 95% confidence level from a finite population (Krejcie & Morgan, cited in

Isaac & Michael, 1990). In order to determine a survey's reliability, for a population

of 249 districts, 152 should be used.

Research Variables

The independent variable in this study was gender and the dependent variable

was the attitudes of respondents toward females as school managers.

Hypotheses

Conceptual Hypotheses

1. The attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers are different than attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers.

2. The attitudes of upper level administrators toward women as school managers will differ significantly from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward women as school managers.

Operational Hypotheses

There is a difference in the mean score of attitudes toward women as school managers between male administrators and female administrators.

The mean score of the attitudes toward women as school managers is different among the upper level administrators and secondary school principals.

Instrument

The instrument selected for the study was the Attitudes Toward Women as Managers (ATWAM) Scale. This was the same questionnaire utilized by Polk (1990)

in the Mississippi study. Edward B. Yost developed the instrument in 1977 under the direction of Theodore T. Herbert. Polk (1990) selected this instrument since it can measure and identify the perceptions and attitudes toward women as administrative leaders. This study is a replication of Polk's (1990) research, therefore like instruments were used.

The ATWAM instrument consists of twelve items, with three conceivable responses for each item. These three potential answers included a test response, a response matched in social desirability with the test response but not related in content, and an unrelated response (Yost & Herbert, 1985). Two of the twelve items are not scored, but are incorporated to disrupt any mental set and to reduce transparency of the instrument.

The ATWAM instrument gives the respondent two selections of equal social desirability for each item, where one of the choices represents the attitude of interest and the other with an unrelated attitude, plus a third selection of opposing social desirability but not related to the attitude of interest (Yost & Herbert, 1985). Consequently, there are three choices for every question on the instrument. The respondent selects from each item the single answer that is most characteristic of himself or herself and the one that is least characteristic.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Reliability

Reliability refers to the level of internal consistency of an instrument over a duration of time. The ATWAM has been tested and the results have supported the superiority of the instrument in that it is less transparent than a similar scale and responses are less likely to be faked. The properties of ATWAM have been shown to be stable and internally consistent, test-retest reliability was 0.7660, split-half reliabilities, odd-even correlation was 0.8129, and first half-second half correlation was 0.9103.

Validity

Content validity is concerned with the measurement of a test. It refers to the extent which a sample of items represents the content the instrument is designed to measure. The existing definitions and measurements of attitudes toward women were comparatively similar, so construction of this instrument was established in a mutual understanding of content.

Construct validity deals with the meaningfulness of a test. It refers to the

degree to which a specific test can be shown to measure a hypothetical construct.

Peters, Terborg, and Taynor (1974) designed an instrument to identify and measure

attitudes toward women as managers called the Women as Managers Scale (WAMS).

Herbert and Yost (1978) reported that the WAMS was transparent and respondents

could falsify answers which would limit value. Therefore, ATWAM was developed

to further the study of attitudes toward women managers.

Thomas and Killman (1977) stated that the ATWAM Scale controls social

desirability and additional feasible response biases. Items on the ATWAM Scale

were factor analyzed and only pure items were maintained (Nunnally, as cited in Yost

& Herbert, 1985). According to Christie (1978), the ATWAM Scale has a forced-

choice style which is similar to the Mach V Attitude Inventory. A free-choice Likert

type allows answers to be swayed by social desirability, despite directions to respond

truthfully (Christie & Geis, 1970). A forced choice format diminishes the ability of

respondents to choose items that do not represent their attitudes regarding

controversial or value-laden issues (Yost & Herbert, 1985).

Data Collection Procedure

There are 524 K-12 public school districts in the state of Michigan and 249

were distinguished as having women administrators. A random sampling technique was utilized to select a sample. A table of random numbers was used to draw a sample from districts with female administrators as determined by the directory. The sample for this study consisted of 152 public school districts with a total of 650 administrators in either the secondary principalship, assistant superintendency, or superintendency. The sample of 650 administrators consisted of 231 females and 419 males.

Each secondary administrator, assistant superintendent, and superintendent of the identified districts were sent an introductory letter (Appendix C), instrument, response sheet (Appendix F), and consent form (Appendix G) after permission was received from the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (Appendix B) and author of the instrument (Appendix A). The introductory letter included the purpose of the study, potential benefits, confidentiality issue, and the phone number of the researcher.

The instrument mailed was the Attitudes Toward Women as Managers Scale, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to reply. Participants were requested to respond to the twelve-item instrument by rating their perceptions and attitudes of women as administrative leaders. This process was accomplished by

responding to a sequence of three brief descriptive statements for every

predetermined item. Participants selected the answer that was most characteristic of

their style and the answer that was least characteristic of their style.

Respondents were requested to return the instrument within two weeks. If

they did not respond, a follow-up letter (Appendix D) was sent three weeks after the

original mailing. Should the respondent be interested in the results, a separate

response sheet (Appendix F) was included to be returned with the survey or

separately.

Scoring and Interpretation

The ATWAM is fairly more difficult to score than a Likert-scale or free-

choice instrument. The style of the ATWAM provides various choices of response

rather than a single scale. Variable points are given to each set based on the

combinations of responses for each set of statements. The particular series of

responses are associated with different attitude levels.

The first and the sixth set of items on the ATWAM are not scored. To disrupt

mental set and decrease transparency of the instrument only ten of the twelve items

are scored (Yost & Herbert, 1985). The scores can range from ten to seventy and

forty is the theoretical neutral point.

High and low scores on the survey are associated with attitudes. The range for

the ATWAM scale is from ten to seventy. The low scores on the ATWAM are

analogous with positive or favorable attitudes toward women in managerial roles.

The lower ATWAM scores indicate a more favorable attitude. Therefore, a low score

would indicate that the respondent does not hold negative sex role stereotypes. A

high score on the ATWAM would show a negative or unfavorable attitude toward

women in managerial roles. The higher ATWAM scores indicate an unfavorable

attitude. Consequently, a high score would indicate that the respondent does hold

negative sex role stereotypes.

Summary

The methodology instrumentation used in this study has been outlined in this

chapter. Throughout the state of Michigan, 650 questionnaires were distributed to K-

12 public school administrators. There were 231 females and 419 males in the sample

of 650 administrators. Participants were requested to complete a twelve-item

instrument called the Attitudes Toward Women as Managers scale.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the attitudes and beliefs of school

administrators toward women as school managers. This researcher's study, although

limited to the state of Michigan, compares results to Polk's (1990) study in Chapter

IV. Determination is made whether the results were significant and whether

differences exists between Michigan and a Mississippi study.

In Chapter IV, data from the respondents appears in tables depicting numbers

and percentages of responses received. The conclusions and summary of this study

with recommendations for further investigations are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of selected Michigan

school administrators toward women as managers, replicating a Mississippi study

entitled <u>A Comparison of Attitudes and Perceptions of Female and Male</u>

<u>Administrators Toward Female Administrators</u> conducted in 1989 by Polk (1990).

The research centered on two research questions. Do the attitudes of female

administrators and male administrators differ toward women as school managers? Do

the attitudes of upper level administrators differ from the attitudes of secondary

principals?

The sample population for this study consisted of 650 administrators from the

state of Michigan. The Polk (1990) study consisted of eighty-nine administrators

from the state of Mississippi. Data received from the Michigan respondents were

utilized to make comparisons relative to the Polk (1990) study.

Chapter IV is divided into four sections. The first section explains the

instrument and scoring procedures. Section two defines the sample population as

58

well as a discussion and comparison of the respondents' characteristics. The third

section discusses each hypothesis and the corresponding data analysis. A summary of

the findings is presented in section four.

Instrument and Scoring Procedures

The instrument used in this study was the Attitudes Toward Women as

Managers (ATWAM) scale developed by Yost in 1977. Polk (1990) used this same

instrument in the Mississippi study of school administrators. The ATWAM scale

consists of twelve questions, each containing three statements. For each set of three

statements, respondents were requested to select the statement with which they agreed

the most and the statement with which they agreed the least.

The scores on the ATWAM are associated with attitudes toward women as

managers. The low scores on the ATWAM correspond with positive attitudes toward

women in managerial roles. The lower ATWAM scores indicate a more favorable

attitude toward women as managers. High scores on the ATWAM correspond with

negative attitudes toward women in managerial roles. The higher ATWAM scores

indicate an unfavorable attitude toward women as managers.

The range for the ATWAM scale is from ten to seventy, with scores under

thirty reflecting positive attitudes, scores from thirty to forty representing neutral

attitudes, and scores over forty reflecting unfavorable or negative attitudes toward

women as managers (Yost & Herbert, as cited in Srinivas, Allen, & Sakamoto, 1999).

The scores in this study range from a low of twenty to a high of forty-four. The

scores in the Polk (1990) study ranged from sixteen to forty-eight. The instrument in

this study was tested for reliability. The measure for attitudes of administrators was

found to be reliable (alpha = .5298).

For analysis purposes, the data compared responses of male administrators to

those of female administrators. Also, included in the data analysis was the

comparison of responses of superintendents and assistant superintendents to those of

secondary principals. An item-by-item analysis is presented for the hypotheses.

Whenever data were available from the Polk (1990) study, these results are presented

so the reader can compare the Polk (1990) results to the results of this study.

<h3 align="center">Respondents' Characteristics</h3>

The study sample consisted of 650 randomly selected K-12 public school

superintendents, assistant superintendents, and secondary school principals from the

state of Michigan who employed a female in one of these positions. The research was

based on responses from 348 (54%) of the 650 administrators who were requested to participate in the study. The total number of respondents was 394 (61%). However, forty-six (7%) of the questionnaires could not be used due to the following reasons: thirty-seven were returned partially answered, two were returned completely unanswered, and seven did not follow directions for answering the questionnaire correctly. Two administrators contacted the researcher and indicated that they were not comfortable completing the survey, therefore they were not sent reminder letters.

The sample consisted of 231 females and 419 males. One hundred fifty-two females returned surveys and 133 (38%) were usable. Two hundred forty-two males returned surveys and 215 (62%) were usable. The response rate of usable surveys for the female population was 58% and the response rate of the male population was 51%.

The research in the Polk (1990) study was based on responses from sixty-two (70%) of the eighty-nine administrators who were requested to participate in the study. The total number of respondents was sixty-nine (78%), but seven questionnaires could not be used due to the following reasons: the directions were not followed, the questionnaire was returned partially answered, or the questionnaire was

returned completely unanswered. Thirty-eight (61%) of the respondents in the Polk

(1990) study were male and twenty-four (39%) were female.

For this study, the first mailing included an introductory letter (Appendix C),

consent form (Appendix G), response sheet (Appendix F), and the instrument. The

second mailing consisted of a letter (Appendix D) indicating their response was not

received, with a request to complete the survey. The first mailing produced 364

surveys. After the reminder letter (Appendix D) was sent, thirty additional letters

were returned. A total of 394 (61%) surveys were returned to the researcher. Table 1

shows the return rate of the sample.

Table 1

Questionnaire Return Rate for the Administrators

Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Number of Questionnaires Used in Data	Return Rate Percentage	Usable Rate Percentage
650	394	348	61	54

As previously mentioned, the researcher informed administrators on the

consent form (see Appendix G) that their replies would be completely anonymous.

Participants were not asked to put their names on the form. They had the option of

declining to answer any question or to decline to participate in this study if they so

wished.

Gender

The majority of the respondents were male. Of the 348 respondents, 215

(62%) were male and 133 (38%) were female. The Polk (1990) study was based on

sixty-two respondents, twenty-four (39%) female and thirty-eight (61%) male. Table

2 shows the gender distribution.

Table 2

Gender Distribution for Questionnaire Respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Female	133	38
Male	215	62
Total	348	100

Age of Respondent

The predominant age group occurred between fifty-one and fifty-five years of

age. There were 134 (39%) respondents in this category. Of these administrators,

thirty-three (9%) were superintendents, thirty-one (9%) were assistant

superintendents, thirty-four (10%) were high school principals, and thirty-six (10%) were middle school principals. Forty-four (13%) of the respondents in this category were female and ninety (26%) were male. The majority of respondents in the Polk (1990) study were in the forty-six to fifty-five age category, which consisted of thirty-three (53%) respondents. The second largest group was the forty-six to fifty. There were 103 (30%) respondents in this category, thirty-six (10%) were middle school principals, twenty-four (7%) high school principals, twenty-one (6%) assistant superintendents, and twenty-two (6%) superintendents. Forty-eight (14%) of the respondents in this category were female and fifty-five (16%) were male. None of the respondents were under thirty years old, however there were ten (3%) that were in the thirty to thirty-five category, four (1%) were middle school principals and six (2%) high school principals. Two (.6%) of the respondents in the thirty to thirty-five category were female and eight (2%) were male.

The first representation of superintendents was in the age range of thirty-six to forty. There was only one (.3%) superintendent in this group and the gender was male. Polk (1990) listed one (1%) superintendent in the age range of thirty-six to forty-five and the gender was male. The greatest number of superintendents was thirty-three (9%) and this was in the fifty-one to fifty-five category. The Polk study

had eight (13%) superintendents in the fifty-sixty to sixty plus category, which was

the largest section for superintendents. There were ten (3%) administrators in the

above sixty category. This consisted of one (.3%) middle school principal, one (.3%)

high school principal, four (1%) assistant superintendents, and four (1%)

superintendents. In the above sixty category, one of the respondents was female and

nine were male. Table 3 shows the age distribution. Table 4 shows age and

population distribution and Table 5 shows the age and gender distribution.

Table 3

Age Grouping Distribution for
Questionnaire Respondents

Age Grouping	Number or Respondents	Percentage
Under 30	0	0.0
30 – 35	10	2.9
36 – 40	17	4.9
41-45	33	9.5
46 – 50	103	29.6
51 – 55	134	38.5
56 – 60	41	11.8
60 +	10	2.9
Total	348	100

Table 4

Age Grouping and Position Distribution
for Questionnaire Respondents

Age Grouping	Middle School Principal	High School Principal	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent
Under 30	0	0	0	0
30 – 35	4	6	0	0
36 – 40	7	6	3	1
41-45	12	10	4	7
46 – 50	36	24	21	22
51 – 55	36	34	31	33
56 – 60	10	12	7	12
60 +	1	1	4	4
Total	106	93	70	79

Table 5

Age Grouping and Gender Distribution
for Questionnaire Respondents

Group	<30	30-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	60+
Female	0	2	8	14	48	44	16	1
Male	0	8	9	19	55	90	25	9
Total	0	10	17	33	103	134	41	10

Current Position

The middle school principal was the largest category for position which

totaled 106 (30%) of which fifty-five (16%) were female and fifty-one (15%) were

male. The assistant superintendent group was the smallest category regarding

position which consisted of seventy (20%) respondents, thirty-one (9%) were female

and thirty-nine (11%) male. Seventy-nine (23%) of the respondents were

superintendents. In this category, nineteen (5%) were female and sixty (17%) were

male. Ninety-three (27%) of the respondents were high school principals. Twenty-

eight (8%) of this group were female and sixty-five (19%) male. The position

distribution is shown in Table 6. The gender and position distribution is shown in

Table 7.

Table 6

Position Distribution for Questionnaire Respondents

Position	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Middle School Principal	106	30.5
High School Principal	93	26.7
Assistant Superintendent	70	20.1
Superintendent	79	22.7
Total	348	100

Table 7

Gender and Position Distribution
for Questionnaire Respondents

Group	Middle School Principal	High School Principal	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent
Female	55	28	31	19
Male	51	65	39	60
Total	106	93	70	79

First Administrative Job

There were 133 (38%) female and 215 (62%) male administrators who participated in the survey. Most respondents began their K-12 public school administrative careers in the age range of thirty to thirty-five. There were 110 (32%) respondents in this category. This group consisted of forty-one (12%) females and sixty-nine (20%) males. The thirty to thirty-five age range was the largest category for women. The largest number for men regarding age of first administrative position in K-12 public schools was the same for two categories, under thirty and thirty to thirty-five, both totaled sixty-nine respondents (20%). There were twelve (3%) women who indicated that they began their administrative career under the age of thirty.

None of the respondents began their administrative career in K-12 public

education over the age of sixty. There were two (.6%) female respondents who began

their administrative career in the fifty-six to sixty age group. There were no men in

this category. The oldest group for men to begin their administrative career was the

fifty-one to fifty-five category, there were two (.6%) males in this category. There

were three (.9%) women in the fifty-one to fifty-five category. Table 8 shows the

first administrative position distribution. Table 9 shows the gender and first

administrative position distribution.

Table 8

First Administrative Position Distribution
for Questionnaire Respondents

Age Grouping	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Under 30	81	23.3
30 – 35	110	31.6
36 – 40	67	19.3
41-45	53	15.2
46 – 50	30	8.6
51 – 55	5	1.4
56 – 60	2	0.6
60 +	0	0.0
Total	348	100

Table 9

Gender and First Administrative Position Distribution
for Questionnaire Respondents

Group	<30	30-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	60+
Female	12	41	25	32	18	3	2	0
Male	69	69	42	21	12	2	0	0
Total	81	110	67	53	30	5	2	0

School District Enrollment

The majority of the respondents were employed in school districts that ranged

in size from 1001-3000. A total of 121 (35%) administrators represented this

category, forty-seven females (14%) and seventy-four (21%) males. Forty (11%) of

the respondents in this category were middle school principals, thirty-eight(11%)

were high school principals, eleven (3%) were assistant superintendents, and thirty-

two (9%) were superintendents. The Polk (1990) study reported the majority of

respondents were employed in school districts with an average population of 5,625

and a female administered the smallest district.

The smallest group for this study regarding school district enrollment was the

7001-9000 category. This group represented twenty-six (7%) respondents. Eight

(2%) of the respondents in this group were female and eighteen (5%) were male.

There were six (2%) middle school principals, seven (2%) high school principals,

eight (2%) assistant superintendents, and five (1%) superintendents in this category.

There were twenty-nine (8%) administrators employed in districts with

enrollment under 1000, eighteen (5%) were female and eleven (3%) were male.

Seven (2%) were middle school principals, thirteen (4%) high school principals, no

assistant superintendents, and nine (3%) superintendents. The largest districts, those

above 9000, represented sixty-three (18%) administrators, twenty-two (6%) were

female and forty-one (12%) were male. The school district enrollment distribution is

shown in Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 10

Position and School District Enrollment

Position	Under 1000	1001-3000	3001-5000	5001-7000	7001-9000	Over 9000
Middle School Principal	7	40	18	11	6	24
High School Principal	13	38	16	8	7	11
Assistant Superintendent	0	11	18	15	8	18
Superintendent	9	32	16	7	5	10
Total	29	121	68	41	26	63

Table 11

School District Enrollment

Group	Under 1000	1001- 3000	3001- 5000	5001- 7000	7001- 9000	Over 9000
Female	18	47	24	14	8	22
Male	11	74	44	27	18	41
Total	29	121	68	41	26	63

Data Analysis Procedures

Introduction

This portion will examine each hypothesis of this study. A t-test for independent sampling and one-way analysis of variance were used to measure the difference between the two means at the alpha level .05. If the exact probability is smaller than the alpha, the null hypothesis is rejected and the conceptual hypothesis is accepted (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994). If the exact probability is larger than .05, the conclusion will be that there is not enough evidence to show the relationship between the two means. Polk (1990) utilized similar testing procedures. The t-test for independent samples and the analysis of variance with multiple comparisons were utilized in the Polk (1990) study.

Hypothesis One

Conceptual Hypothesis

The attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers are

different than attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers.

Operational Hypothesis

There is a difference in the mean score of attitudes toward women as school

managers between male administrators and female administrators.

Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in the mean score of attitudes toward women as school

managers between male administrators and female administrators.

Hypothesis Two

Conceptual Hypothesis

The attitudes of upper level administrators toward women as school managers

will differ significantly from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward

women as school managers.

Operational Hypothesis

The mean score of the attitudes toward women as school managers is different

among the upper level administrators and secondary school principals.

Null Hypothesis

There is no difference between the mean score of the attitudes toward women

as school managers in upper level administrators and secondary school principals.

Results of the Tests of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no difference in the mean score of attitudes toward

women as school managers between male administrators and female administrators.

The mean score of female administrators is 26.1, while the mean number of

male managers is 29.2. The obtained probability is .000, which is less than the alpha

level of .05. Therefore, since the exact probability is smaller than the alpha, the null

hypothesis was rejected and the conceptual hypothesis was accepted. Table 12 shows

the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 12

Mean Values of the Relationship Between Attitudes of Males and Females
Toward Women as School Managers

Group	N	Mean	SD	Probability
Female	133	26.1	3.4	.000
Male	215	29.2	5.3	

Note: N = Number of participants. SD = Standard Deviation.

The Polk (1990) study reported the mean score for female subjects was 27.9,

and the mean for male subjects was 31.8. The obtained probability was .01, which

was less than the .05 alpha level.

Since this study found that there was a difference in attitudes between female

and male administrators toward women as school managers, each question was

studied to see if there were significant differences between questions for the male

administrators and the female administrators. Females scored lower on all questions.

Polk (1990) found that female respondents scored lower than did their male

counterparts on all items except items four, ten, and twelve. Item four dealt with the

issue of importance of job performance to women, money, and emotional capabilities

as managers. Item ten centered on courtesies shown to women, equality of hiring and

promotions, and loyalty regarding marital issues. The twelfth item inquired into the women's desire of the protection and support of men, separating emotions from ideas, and financial aspects of marriage.

In this study certain questions were significant based on the probability level. The obtained probability for item two was .003, item five was .002, item seven was .000, item nine was .000, item ten was .003, item eleven was .000, and item twelve was .001. These were all less than the alpha level of .05. Item two centered around parental responsibility, courtesies toward women and responsibility of job. Item five focused on emotions and managerial behavior, family budget, marital loyalty. Item seven was concerned with stressful situations, the home life of women, and their relationships prior to marriage. Item nine dealt with aggressive business situations, marital obligations, and retention of maiden name. Item ten centered on courtesies shown to women, equality of hiring and promotions, and loyalty regarding marital issues. Item eleven inquired into dominance as a leader, support from men, and personal relationships. The twelfth item inquired into protection and support from men, separating emotions from ideas, and financial aspects of marriage.

The obtained probability for item three was .145, item four was .464, and item 8 was .357. This was greater than the alpha level of .05 and indicated no significant

difference. Item three explored leadership roles, demanding situations, professions

for women. Item four dealt with the issue of importance of job performance to

women, money, and emotional capabilities as managers. The eighth item focused on

support of children, successful managerial skills, and marital vows. Table 13 shows

the individual analysis.

Table 13

Item-by-Item Analysis of Hypothesis One

Question	Female		Male		Probability
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Not Scored				
2	3.3	.8	6.7	1.0	.003
3	2.1	1.2	2.3	1.3	.145
4	2.5	1.1	2.6	1.4	.464
5	4.2	1.2	4.6	1.1	.002
6	Not Scored				
7	1.3	.8	1.7	1.3	.000
8	2.2	1.2	2.3	1.3	.357
9	3.0	.9	3.4	1.1	.000
10	3.0	.4	3.1	.6	.003
11	1.5	1.1	2.2	1.4	.000
12	3.0	.7	3.3	1.0	.001

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

Hypothesis Two: There is no difference between the mean score of the

attitudes toward women as school managers in upper level administrators and

secondary school principals.

The mean score of upper level administrators is 27.9, while the mean score of

secondary principals is 28.1. The obtained probability is .641, which is larger than

the .05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Table 14

shows the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 14

Mean Values of the Relationship Between Attitudes of
Upper Level Administrators and Secondary Principals

Group	N	Mean	SD	Probability
Upper Level Administrators	149	27.9	5.0	
				.641
Secondary Principals	199	28.1	4.8	

Note: N = Number of participants. SD = Standard Deviation.

The Polk (1990) study reported the mean score for upper level administrators

was 29.6 and the mean score for secondary principals was 30.9. The obtained

probability was .42, which was larger than the alpha level of .05. Since Polk's (1990)

study consisted of a smaller number it is assumed that a comparison of the four

separate groups was not recommended.

Each question was studied for further examination of the second hypothesis and showed that there was no significant difference. The mean was the same between groups for items three, four, five, and eleven. Item three focused on leadership roles, demanding situations, professions for women. The fourth item centered on the issue of importance of job performance to women, money, and emotional capabilities as managers. Item five dealt with emotions and managerial behavior, family budget, marital loyalty. The eleventh item explored dominance as a leader, support from men, and personal relationships.

The mean scores for secondary principals were higher for items seven, nine, ten, and twelve. Item seven centered on stressful situations, the home life of women, and their relationships prior to marriage. The ninth item focused on aggressive business situations, marital obligations, and the retention of a maiden name. Item ten explored courtesies shown to women, equality of hiring and promotions, and loyalty regarding marital issues. Item twelve dealt with support, emotions, and finance. The mean for upper level administrators was higher for items two and eight. Item two centered on parental responsibility, courtesies toward women, and responsibility of job. Item eight explored the support of children, successful managerial skills, and

marital vows. The analysis of each question is presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Item-by-Item Analysis of Hypothesis Two

Question	Secondary Principals		Upper Level Administrators		Probability
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Not Scored				
2	3.5	.9	3.6	1.0	.629
3	2.2	1.3	2.2	1.2	.688
4	2.6	1.3	2.6	1.3	.966
5	4.4	1.2	4.4	1.2	.618
6	Not Scored				
7	1.6	1.2	1.5	1.1	.452
8	2.2	1.2	2.3	1.4	.624
9	3.3	1.0	3.2	1.1	.661
10	3.1	.5	3.0	.5	.731
11	2.0	1.3	2.0	1.4	.973
12	3.3	.9	3.2	1.0	.372

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

Even though the results of this study indicated no difference between upper level administrators and secondary school principals, the researcher compared the four groups to see if there was a difference between groups. The mean values are

presented in Table 16. A one-way analysis of variance was utilized to test the

separate groups. The results indicated the same information as the combined groups,

that there was no difference between groups.

Table 16

Mean Values of the Relationship Between Attitudes of
Middle School Principals, High School Principals,
Assistant Superintendents, and Superintendents

Group	N	Mean	SD
Middle School Principals	106	27.6	4.4
High School Principals	93	28.8	5.2
Assistant Superintendents	70	27.9	4.9
Superintendents	79	28.0	5.2

Note: N = Number of participants. SD = Standard Deviation.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine attitudes toward women as school

managers. This research was a replication of a study conducted by Polk (1990). A

summary of the demographics was presented representing those administrators

responding to the survey. Such factors as gender, age, current position, age of first

administrative position, and size of school districts were prepared to ascertain

whether the results were a representative cross section characteristic of schools in Michigan.

Six hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed to K-12 Michigan public school superintendents, assistant superintendents, high school principals, and middle school principals who employ a female in one of these positions. Of the questionnaires distributed, 348 were returned for a 54% return rate. The sample consisted of 133 (38%) females and 215 (62%) males. The response rate of usable surveys for the female population was 58% and the response rate of the male population was 51%.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents were between the ages of fifty-one and fifty-five, and thirty percent were between the ages of forty-six to fifty. There were 106 (30%) middle school principals, ninety-three (27%) high school principals, seventy (20%) assistant superintendents, seventy-nine (23%) of the respondents were superintendents.

The testing of the first hypothesis showed that there is a relationship between the gender of an administrator and the attitudes they hold toward women as school managers. The obtained probability between the two means was .000, therefore the researcher was able to reject the null hypothesis. The testing of the second hypothesis

showed that there is no relationship between position of an administrator and the attitudes they hold toward women as school managers. The obtained probability between the two means was .641, therefore the researcher was unable to reject the null hypothesis.

In Chapter IV the findings of this study were presented. A discussion of these results follows in Chapter V and focuses on two main research questions:

1. Why is there a low number of women in educational administrative positions? Are the attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers different from the attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers?

2. Are the perceptions of upper level administrators regarding females significant? Do the attitudes of superintendents and assistant superintendents toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward women as school managers?

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the beliefs and attitudes of selected Michigan school administrators toward women as school managers. The study was a replication of the research conducted by Polk (1990) who studied the attitudes of selected Mississippi school administrators toward women as administrators. The comprehensive research question for this study was: Do certain attitudes or perceptions toward women in administration exist, causing fewer women to obtain administrative positions than men? The research questions used for investigation were:

1. Do the attitudes of male administrators toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of female administrators toward women as school managers?

2. Do the attitudes of upper level administrators toward women as school managers differ from the attitudes of secondary school principals toward women as school managers?

In order to answer these questions, the researcher conducted a survey study in

84

the state of Michigan. School districts that employed a female as secondary principal, assistant superintendent or superintendent were selected as the population and a random sample was determined. There were 249 school districts who employed a female as a secondary principal or upper level administrator. A random sample of 152 school districts was selected. There were 650 administrators in the 152 districts who worked as a secondary principal or upper level administrator. Participants in this study were 348 K-12 public school administrators who were employed as a secondary school principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent. The 348 respondents represented 146 of the 152 school districts. Of the 348 respondents, 133 were female and 215 were male.

Chapter V is divided into three sections. Section one is a discussion of the study. Section two includes the summary and conclusions. The last section encompasses suggestions for future study.

Discussion of the Study

The results of this study, as shown in Tables 11 and 12 indicate that there is a difference in the attitudes of female and male administrators toward women as school managers. The study revealed that the attitudes of female administrators toward

women as school managers differ significantly from the attitudes of male

administrators toward women as school managers. The research found that female

administrators have a more favorable attitude toward women as school managers than

male administrators. The Polk (1990) study found that there was a difference in the

attitudes of male and female administrators toward women as school managers. The

data revealed that the attitudes of female administrators are significantly more

favorable toward women as managers than are the attitudes of male administrators

toward women as school managers.

The results of this study also indicated that there was no significant difference

in the attitudes of upper level administrators and secondary principals toward women

as school managers. The Polk (1990) study also found similar results in that there

was no significant difference in the attitudes of superintendents and assistant

superintendents toward women as school managers compared to the attitudes of

secondary school principals.

The study also revealed that the female administrators surveyed were more

likely to respond than the male administrators surveyed. Fifty-eight percent of the

women administrators responded and fifty-one percent of the male administrators

responded. Of the 231 females who were requested to participate in the study, 152

females returned surveys and 133 (38%) were usable. Of the 419 males who were mailed questionnaires, 242 males returned the instruments and 215 (62%) were usable.

The 2000 Michigan Education Directory was utilized in this study and identified 249 districts who employed a female as a secondary principal, assistant principal, or superintendent. From the list of 249 districts, a random sample of 152 districts was selected. The 152 districts had 650 administrators who were employed as either a secondary principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent. Polk (1990) identified twenty-four school districts and eighty-nine administrators throughout the state of Mississippi. Polk (1990) used the 1987-88 Mississippi Educational Directory to determine which districts had a female employed as a secondary principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent.

The number of districts that employed a woman as a secondary principal, assistant principal, or superintendent listed in the 2000 Michigan Education Directory was much larger than the districts listed in the 1987-88 Mississippi Educational Directory. Another change noted was the number of superintendents. The 1987-88 Mississippi Educational Directory indicated that there were only four (3%) female superintendents in the state at that time. However, the 2000 Michigan Education

Directory indicated that there were sixty-four (12%) female superintendents. This

growth is encouraging, however the overall number of female superintendents

nationwide is still low.

Men often embark on the administrative track at an earlier age than their

female counterparts. A small amount (3%) of women in this study began their

administrative career under the age of thirty. However, sixty-nine (20%) of the males

began their administrative career under the age of thirty. This finding supports the

literature that indicated women are older than men in similar positions (Shakeshaft,

1989; McGrath, 1992; Waddel, 1994).

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of selected Michigan

school administrators toward women as managers. The study replicated Polk's

(1990) research, which focused attention on the issue of the small proportion of

women in educational administrative positions.

The literature conducted by Polk (1990) focused on three areas: (1) statistics

of women in educational administration, (2) barriers that women face as

administrators, and (3) attitudes toward women as managers. The review of literature

in Chapter II for this study centered around ten sections: (1) women and leadership,

(2) women in educational leadership, (3) career tracks of women administrators, (4)

barriers that women face as administrators, (5) the gender difference, (6) attitudes

toward women leaders, (7) leadership styles of women administrators, (8) leadership

styles of men administrators, (9) women and the superintendency, and (10) summary.

The author notified Polk (1990) in regards to replicating the study and

received permission from Yost (1985) to use the ATWAM scale (Appendix A). The

instrument consisted of twelve items, with three conceivable responses for each item.

Respondents were requested to select the response most characteristic of them and

least characteristic of them. Two of the twelve items are not scored, but are

incorporated to disrupt any mental set and to reduce transparency of the instrument.

While the investigation of attitudes toward women as school leaders is reliable, the

measure is based on a multi-item scale that was produced over twenty years ago

(Herbert & Yost, 1977). Future research should assess whether the items in this form

of a scale should be altered to reflect the current lifestyle.

The population for this study consisted of all K-12 Michigan public school

districts who employed a female as a secondary principal, assistant superintendent, or

superintendent. The sample contained 650 administrators from the state of Michigan,

of which after two mailings, 133 (38%) female and 215 (62%) male completed

responses were received.

The administrators participating in this study provided interesting and

valuable data. The majority (62%) of respondents were male. The largest group for

age was the fifty-one to fifty-five category, which consisted of 134 (39%)

respondents. A majority (35%) of respondents were employed in districts that ranged

in size from 1001-3000.

Women were older when they attained their first K-12 public school

administrative position. Only twelve (3%) women began their administrative career

under the age of thirty, but sixty-nine (20%) men indicated that their first

administrative job was under the age of thirty. This determination supports literature

in the field (Shakeshaft, 1989; Waddle, 1994; Manera & Green, 1995).

This study revealed a difference in percentages in the top spot in a district

between Mississippi and Michigan over time. The Polk (1990) study indicated that

there were only four (3%) females superintendents in Mississippi out of 153

superintendents. This study discovered that there were sixty-four (12%) female

superintendents out of 524 K-12 public school districts. However, the fact still

remains that in a profession where the majority is female, only 7.1% of women

occupy the superintendency positions nationwide (Montenegro, 1993). The research indicated that few minority women occupy positions of leadership, most notably in the superintendency. An interesting area to study would have been race as it related to women in administration.

This study demonstrated that differences between male and female perceptions of women as school leaders exist. This finding supports Stanek's (1995) study which concluded differences between male and female superintendents do exist as do the beliefs and perceptions of why there are so few female superintendents. Lemos (1996) surveyed 964 female superintendents nationwide and found that gender and gender expectations negatively affect women's increased visibility in this position.

Polk's (1990) study found that females have more positive attitudes regarding women in school leadership positions than men. Polk (1990) concluded that societal structure, which places the male in the leadership position, is a contributing factor to the small proportion of women in educational administration positions.

This study found that no differences between secondary school principals and upper level administrator's perceptions of women as school leaders exist. Polk (1990) discovered that the attitudes of superintendents and assistant superintendents did not

differ significantly from the attitudes of secondary principals. Polk's (1990) finding

supports conclusions by Forlines (1981) and Bargnesi (1981).

The negative or neutral attitudes toward women as school managers support

the fact that there are small numbers of women in administrative leadership positions,

especially in the superintendency. The results of the study seem to indicate that the

attitudes of selected administrators in Michigan toward women as school managers

may have been seen as a restraint to women who have sought to climb the

administrative hierarchy.

A study by Zumsteg (1992) reported that a majority of female respondents

perceived gender discrimination to be responsible for the small percentage of female

superintendents. However, the majority of males did not believe gender

discrimination was a factor in the small number of female superintendents. Gender

discrimination is one of the recurrent factors of why there are so few women in

leadership positions.

There are barriers that women must overcome as they begin to climb the

administrative career ladder. Many women see obtaining a leadership position as an

obstacle. Montenegro (1993) concluded that there is a difference in the manner in

which males and females are hired. Zumsteg (1992) reported that a high percentage

of female superintendents perceived boards of education reluctant to hire females.

According to Chase and Bell (1994) primary decision makers in superintendent

selection are inclined to focus on individuals and ignore or do not comprehend

external barriers faced by women and minorities. Regardless of past experiences

women must use each incident as a lesson and continue to grow.

Some changes could be implemented that may assist women in being

successful in their goal of school administration. A key to a smooth transition is to

find a mentor and utilize the experience of this person. Many women feel the need to

obtain success on their own, when in fact a mentor would increase their chance of

success. Creating an awareness of the proportion of women in administration is

essential. Graduate courses need to provide men and women with facts pertaining to

females in education and present strategies to assist in the advancement of women

leaders. Professors should attempt to incorporate texts by female authors in the field.

Many administrators believe that they are fair in hiring, evaluating, and

perceiving all administrators and may become defensive when approached with the

topic of the small number of women leaders. However, the literature indicates that

possible barriers exist toward women as school leaders (Shakeshaft 1989, Waddell,

1994; Mertz & McNeely, 1994). The research gathered for this study will hopefully

create an awareness of the perceptions that exist toward woman as school leaders.

One hundred seventy-two administrators that participated in the study requested the

results of the study. This is a small beginning, but will possibly shine some light on

the topic of women leaders in educational administration. Awareness of an issue is

the first step toward change. Change is never easy because it involves going from a

state of knowing to not knowing (Owens, 1998). According to Burns (1978) real

change is a transformation of attitudes, norms, institutions, or behaviors which last

over time.

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that differences between male and

female administrators do exist as to the perceptions of women as school leaders. The

research revealed that female administrators have a more favorable attitude toward

women as school managers than male administrators. The study also found that

differences between secondary principals and upper level administrators do not exist

as to the perceptions of women as school leaders.

Recommendations for Future Study

The purpose of this study was to determine attitudes toward women as school

leaders. Notable research has been conducted which demonstrates a strong possibility

of bias toward women continues to be present (Shakeshaft, 1989; Zumsteg, 1992;

Brunner, 1997b; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Stanek, 1995). The majority of educators are

female, yet women are the minority in administrative positions. The numbers of

women leaders in education should increase, especially in the superintendency where

there are only 7.1% nationwide. To assist in potential increase the following studies

may be conducted:

1. Conduct further studies including board members. Research could study

the attitudes of school board members toward women as school managers and if these

attitudes hinder women from securing administrative positions.

2. Examine educational administrative graduate coursework. Study the types

of programs offered and the preparation available to women in order to strengthen

their interview and administrative skills.

3. Investigate the perceived barriers of female superintendents and suggestions

for improvement. A national study on perceived obstacles faced by women

administrators and ideas from the participants on how to overcome or avoid such

problems could provide useful information.

4. Investigate perceptions of women administrators and barriers confronted. It

is recommended that the present study should be expanded to a national level

However, updating the instrument needs to be considered.

5. Study the change in Michigan pertaining to women in administration over the course of time. It is recommended to focus on one state to make a comparison and then report the growth or decline discovered.

There needs to be an expansion of female leaders in the nation's public schools. Interested researchers should continue to investigate and identify issues that may be responsible for the disproportion of women in educational administration.

Appendix A

Permission Letter From Edward Yost

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97

BUSINESS
COLLEGE OF
OHIO UNIVERSITY

Department of Management Systems

Copeland Hall 401 • Athens, Ohio 45701-2979 • (614) 593-2060/2061 • FAX (614) 593-9342

14 September, 1999

Ms. Dorothy J. VanderJagt
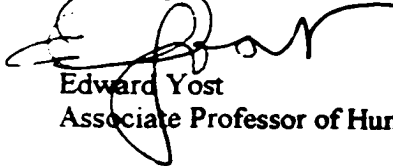159 Teasel
Comstock Park
Michigan 49321

Dear Ms. VanderJagt;

This letter is to grant you full rights to utilize the instrument titled: **Attitudes Toward Women as Managers (ATWAM)** for research purposes.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions regarding the instrument or any related issues. Good luck with your dissertation and please inform me of the results of your research.

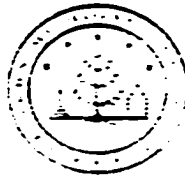I have enclosed a copy of a paper that was presented recently that utilized the ATWAM scale.

Sincerely;

Edward Yost
Associate Professor of Human Resources

Appendix B

Approval Letter From Human Subjects
Institutional Review Board

99

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: 5 November 1999

To: Charles Warfield, Principal Investigator
        Dorothy VanderJagt, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Sylvia Culp, Chair *Sylvia Culp*

Re: HSIRB Project Number 99-09-23

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Attitudes and Perceptions of Michigan School Administrators Toward Female Administrators" has been **approved** under the **exempt** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 5 November 2000

Appendix C

Initial Survey Letter to Administrators

101

159 Teasel
Comstock Park, MI 49321

November 17, 1999

«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
«JobTitle»
«Company»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

Dear «Title» «LastName»,

I am a doctoral student at Western Michigan University in the process of writing my
dissertation. The study focuses on the attitudes and perceptions of Michigan
Administrators toward female administrators. Your district has been selected to take
part in this research. Surveys have been sent to superintendents, assistant
superintendents, and secondary principals of selected districts.

Enclosed you will find the Attitudes Toward Women as Managers Scale which can be
completed within 10 to 15 minutes. Please take the time to complete the survey and
return it by November 15, 1999, in the self-addressed stamped envelope. I assure you
that complete anonymity of your responses will be maintained.

Thank you for your participation and assistance in this matter. Should you have any
questions, please feel free to contact me at home (616) 784-5811 or work (616) 235-
7551. Please indicate on the enclosed response sheet if you would like a copy of the
results upon completion of the project.

Sincerely,

Dorothy J. VanderJagt

Appendix D

Follow-up Letter to Administrators

103

159 Teasel
Comstock Park, MI 49321

January 17, 2000

Dear Administrator:

Approximately three weeks ago I mailed out surveys on the subject of women administrators in the state of Michigan. This survey is to gather data for the completion of my doctoral dissertation.

I realize your schedule is extremely busy, however if you would take the time to complete the survey I would be most appreciative. The survey will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dorothy J. VanderJagt

Appendix E

Response Sheet

105

RESPONSE SHEET

_____ Yes, please send me a copy of the survey result.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

_____

RESPONSE SHEET

_____ Yes, please send me a copy of the survey result.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Attitudes and Perceptions of Michigan School Administrators
Toward Female Administrators
Dr. Charles Warfield, Principal Investigator
Dorothy J. VanderJagt, Student Investigator

Confidential Survey Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "Attitudes and Perceptions of
Michigan School Administrators Toward Female Administrators." This study is
designed to examine existing attitudes and perceptions of Michigan school administrators
toward female administrators, and is being conducted by Dr. Charles Warfield and
Dorothy J. VanderJagt from Western Michigan University, Department of Teaching,
Learning and Leadership. The research is being conducted as part of the dissertation
requirements for Dorothy VanderJagt. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be
useful to you as an administrator of a school district by providing you with insights and
potential prescriptions for administrative practices which influence the way female
leaders are perceived.

The enclosed survey consists of 5 background items and 12 questions requiring a rating
which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your replies will be
anonymous. You may choose not to answer any question and simply leave it blank. If
you decide not to participate in the survey, you may either return the incomplete survey
or you may discard it.

Returning the survey indicates your consent of the use of the responses you supply. If
you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Charles Warfield at (616)387-3890,
Dorothy VanderJagt at (616)784-5811, the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
(616)387-8293, or the vice president for research (616)387-8293.

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board had approved this consent form for use
for one year as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the
upper right hand corner. You should not participate in this project if the corner does not
have a signature and stamped date.

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