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Barriers to Pursuing the Role of Head of School as Perceived by Female Administrators in Independent Schools

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Barriers to Pursuing the Role of Head of School as Perceived

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to those who believed in my, especially my family. To my children Kayleigh and Donovan, thank you for your unwavering love and encouragement. To my husband Ken whose love and dedication to me and this process has allowed me to make my dream a reality. To my father Tom and brother Sean, thanks for still helping me with my homework. To my mother Adrienne who never stopped believing in me. To my SJFC family, to the Summit is where you will find me. To Dr. Wallis, Dr. Corrigan, Dr. Lyons, and Dr. Powers, thank you for your support, even in my darkest hours. To Eagle Hill Southport School and CAIS for supporting this process. To my neighbors and friends, the journey has finally come to an end.

Biographical Sketch

Kathleen Gallagher is currently the Head of Lower School at Eagle Hill Southport School, an independent day school for children with language based learning disabilities, ADD, and ADHD. She attended the College of New Rochelle from 1989 to 1993 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and continued at the College of New Rochelle and graduated with a Master of Art in Special Education. She received her administration certification from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. She began her doctoral studies in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2015. She conducted her research studying the underrepresentation of women as heads of schools in independent schools under the direction of Dr. Jeff Wallis and earned her doctoral degree in 2017.

Abstract

The current representation of women as heads of schools in accredited National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) schools is significantly less than that of men. Further, the percentage of women in these top positions remains far below their representation in the profession of teaching. This phenomenological study examined the perspectives of female administrators from the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) on the underrepresentation of women as heads of school in independent schools. This qualitative study was framed through social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 1988), and was guided by three research questions: What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a head of school? How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders? In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions? To understand the barriers, a sample of 10 female administrators working in an NAIS accredited CAIS day schools were interviewed. The study results identified common barriers and supports found in the literature in the context of leadership, gender, and public schools, such as work/family balance and mentorship. Further, it supported women's preference for a more collaborative approach. It also indicated that barriers to women assuming head of school leadership is influenced by the perception that independent schools have a gendered expectation of leadership, are increasingly run like a business, and the leader's role in working with the board of directors can be unclear.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The independent school sector has a disproportionate representation of men in head of school positions (Chubb, 2015; Ostos, 2012). What prevents women from pursuing head of school positions in independent schools? Are the barriers to independent school leadership positions comparable to those previously identified in research related to gender and public school leadership roles?

School leadership has been an area of focus in research over the last several decades, and one segment of that research is related specifically to gender. Much of this research has been conducted in the context of a public school setting. However, another educational segment is that of independent schools in the United States. Independent schools have had minimal focus in the extant research. Further research is necessary in order to understand the barriers to leadership for women in independent schools.

Organizational Structure of Independent Schools

Independent schools are an alternate choice to public school education. These schools are mission-driven (Basset, 2002; Dolin, 2012). A mission-driven school can provide an environment that may be in alignment with familial philosophy or student learning style. Public funding does not support independent schools, but rather, independent schools operate on a tuition-driven model (Dolin, 2012). All funding for independent schools is provided by tuition and initiatives such as capital campaigns and other fundraising efforts. Independent schools can be boarding and/or day schools, and

serve boys, girls, or both (NAIS fact sheet, 2009). Independent schools can provide a unique educational experience for students and families in Grades pre-k to 12.

The leader of an independent school is called a head of school. In independent schools today the headmaster, or head of school, works with a board of directors to oversee both the academic and the business aspects of the program (Dolin, 2012; Lumby, 2011). The headmaster is responsible for many aspects related to these domains and works in conjunction with specific support staff in areas such as curriculum development, budgeting, marketing, development, admissions, human resources, and alumni relations (Madsen, 2005).

Since the head of school is responsible for so many jobs, independent schools have their own organizational structure. There is a great deal of collaboration and oversight in many areas that are centered on the mission of the school; as a result, it becomes ingrained in the school culture (Madsen, 2005). According to Madsen (2005):

In addition to enjoying the benefits of autonomy and shared governance, private schools involve their participants in cultivating a school ethos based on community principles. By being responsive and sharing authority, private schools establish a cultural linkage that invites a cultivated social order founded on norms, values, and traditions. (Madsen, 2005, para. 5)

It is this cultivated social order (Madsen, 2005) that results in independent schools having a distinct culture. Since the mission of the school drives all operations and decisions, all members of the school community work collaboratively to achieve the goals of the school. This results in a culture that has been developed over time and steeped in values and traditions. (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

As heads of schools step down from their positions in independent schools, there is a need to fill these roles. In the spring 2015 issue of *Independent School*, a publication of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), President John Chubb (2015) stated,

> Today, schools of education are more often led by women than by men. Only a third of independent schools are headed by women, and a smaller percentage than that in schools with an upper school division. The majority of our teachers, on the other hand, are women. The young, bright innovators who are now leading our classrooms into the future, and are often women, provide us a promising pool of educators soon to lead our schools. (para. 12)

The current representation of women as heads of school in independent schools is far below that of men. Further, the representation of women in these leadership positions remains far below that of the representation of women in the profession. Would research in independent schools related to women and school leadership run a parallel existence to that of public school research?

In contrast to independent schools, public schools offer a free education to students and are supported by state and local funding (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). In the context of a public school setting, the highest leadership role is that of the superintendent, followed by the principal (Meador, 2016). A principal serves as leader at an individual building level (i.e., elementary school, middle school, or high school). Principals report to the superintendent of the district and are responsible for administrative tasks, teachers, and students within their school. At the district level, the leadership entity is that of superintendent. Superintendents oversee the schools within a

district, and focus on areas such as curriculum, rules, and policies in order to support the success of students. Superintendents work with school boards to make sure that the legal right to an education is being provided to students (Action for Healthy Kids, n.d.). The public sectors are reporting improvement toward equal gender representation in recent years in school leadership roles such as principal and superintendent (Bitterman, Goldring, & Gray, 2013; Kerr, Kerr, & Miller, 2014).

The titles of school leaders can vary from principal to head teacher, but the role remains the same: they are responsible for a single school (Lumby, 2011). Most of the research related to women and specific leadership positions lies within a public school framework. There is little research related to women in independent schools (Ostos, 2012). The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) reports that despite the fact that the majority of classroom teachers are women, only one-third of independent schools have females serving in head of school positions (Chubb, 2015).

The goal of this research is to examine why the phenomenon of the disproportionate representation of men in independent school leadership is occurring. This research explores women's perceptions of the barriers to leadership facing them in independent schools and whether the organizational structure and the culture of independent schools is influencing the under-representation of women in head of school positions.

Problem Statement

Despite the fact that women fill the majority of teaching positions, women only represent one-third of the heads of schools in independent schools (Chubb, 2015). As heads of schools step down in independent schools, there will be a need to fill these

positions. The pool of candidates remains small as the women educators who are potential candidates in these schools are not applying for these positions (Chubb, 2015). The NAIS has identified a need for people to fill leadership positions in independent schools. However, they have not addressed the reasons why women have not pursued these roles. Research into this matter will support this identified need of independent schools.

Research related to women and school leadership needs to continue in non-public sectors such as independent schools. According to Trinidad and Normore (2005),

Leadership has often been described as the most studied and least understood behavioral process. Whatever our idealized view of educational leaders and despite calls for leaders who shape the fundamental culture, structure, and goals of educational organizations, stereotypes about leadership need to be challenged and addressed before educational training programs designed to promote women to the top will be successful. The absence of women in the ranks of senior management is a telling sign that the whole process of selection, recruitment and promotion in educational organizations is in need of an overhaul. (p. 584)

Research related to independent schools is lacking (Ostos, 2012). This lack of understanding may be perpetuating the problem. Understanding why women have not availed themselves as candidates for these high-level school administration positions will better guide the boards of independent schools in their succession planning for head of school positions and the need to include women. Research would help inform why women in independent schools are not pursuing these top leadership roles.

Although women do enter head of school positions in independent schools, there is an imbalance in gender equality represented in these positions. Research dedicated to the gender imbalance in leadership positions in the public school sector has been extensive. However, there is limited research related to independent schools.

Independent schools have an organizational structure and culture that is distinct from public schools, which may be creating barriers to women to consider or even pursue a head of school position. Research related to the gender imbalance in independent school leadership would help provide an understanding as to why the phenomenon of the disproportionate representation of men in head of school positions is occurring, and give insight into how to address it.

Theoretical Rationale

Independent schools have a majority of women as educators, yet the top leadership positions are mostly held by men (Chubb, 2015; Ostos, 2012). Why is achieving a leadership role in an independent school setting for a woman such a challenge? "As women break through the glass ceiling of leadership, fissures are weakening the structure of male-dominated leadership, and research is necessary to increase cultural and gender awareness" (Burkman, 2011, p. 64). A goal of having gender equality in school leadership is possible (Steyn & Parsaloi, 2014). Research suggests that schools offer equal opportunities for both men and women (Moreau, Osgood, & Halsall, 2007) yet independent school leadership is still dominated by men (Chubb, 2015). Research is needed in order to try to understand why this is occurring. Social role theory will guide this research to understand why this phenomenon is occurring in independent schools.

Social role theory. Researchers tend to look at people through defined categories, known as a theoretical framework, when conducting and interpreting the results of a study, especially those that are qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2014). "This lens becomes an advocacy perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change" (Creswell, 2014, p. 249). One such theoretical framework is social role theory. "This theory argues that the beliefs that people hold about the sexes are derived from observations of the role performances of men and women and thus reflect the sexual division of labor and gender hierarchy of the society" (Eckes & Trautner, 2000, p. 124).

Role theory is used as a framework to help understand cultural and structural barriers (Eagly, 1987). One theorist who comes to the forefront of social role theory is Alice Eagly. Her work, as well as her work with others, has helped to encourage research around trying to understand why sex differences occur (Eagly & Wood, 1988). Social role theory focuses on two constructs that are attributed to the conduct of men and women as related to their gender, their communal and the agentic behaviors (Eagly & Wood, 1988). According to Eagly and Wood (1988),

> Research on gender stereo types has consistently documented the existence of
> such socially constructed rules about male and female behavior. The content of
> these rules can be summarized in a very general way in terms of differences on
> two dimensions—the communal and the agentic. Women are expected to be
> communal – that is, friendly, unselfish, and concerned with others. Men are
> expected to be agentic – that is, independent, masterful, and competent. These
> role expectations are thought to arise from the distribution of women and men

into different social roles in society – in particular, the assignment of child-rearing

and other domestic work to women and the tendency for women and men to carry

out different types of paid employment. (pp. 3-4)

Examples of communal roles typically considered to be considered to be a female

occupation would be that of teacher, nurse, or social worker. Under social role theory,

this would be viewed as a logical progression from being a mother into another role that

would center on the role of caretaker. Agentic roles are thought to be independent,

assertive, and competent and are viewed as the financial providers outside of the home.

This type of understanding results in the expectation of work and occupations for people

based on their gender (Eckes & Trautner, 2000).

Eagly and Karau (2002) further the work of social role theory with role congruity

theory. In this framework, role congruity theory considers two forms of prejudice against

women. First, it looks at the role of a leader as being defined in a masculine framework

and then the gender role of women. This perceived incongruity leads to the prejudice of

women as they are not seen as fit to fill these roles. In the case when they do fill

leadership roles, another form of prejudice experienced by women is that they are judged

negatively in these roles when they appear to act too masculine (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Social role theory provides a framework through which to view differences in

gender. In her article related to the need for social role theory to be taught in social work

education, Dulin (2007) posits the congruity of human behavior in the social environment

(HSBE), and uses this as the basis for social work education, and social role theory.

Dulin discusses the importance of individuals within social systems, including economic

systems, and their interactions within. "Being cognizant that stereotypes and social roles

are powerful tools that most people tend to conform to, whether they realize it or not, is pertinent to all aspects of our lives—our families, our work, and our community" (Dulin, 2007, p. 110).

Social role theory and leadership. This way of thinking can oftentimes be seen within organizations. Based on people's sex, gender roles are a set of norms that have shared notions about behavior that is perceived as suitable for that particular sex (Eagly & Wood, 1988). If the perception of leadership is male, then a female's behavior in a leadership role may be in contrast to that way of thinking (Eagly & Karau, 2002). "In emphasizing gender roles as well as leader roles, social role theorists argue that leaders occupy roles defined by their specific position in a hierarchy and simultaneously function under the constraints of their gender roles" (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003, p. 572). This results in a perceived understanding of what leadership looks like.

This expectation of agentic leadership is supported by research. According to Eagly and Wood (1988), "We believe that the sex-difference findings in meta-analyses on social behavior lend themselves particularly well to a perspective that emphasizes social roles" (p. 3). Research supports the identification of a "spillover concept" which results in organizational practices that support gendered leadership roles and expectations (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

When researching participants in a principal preparation program, Burton and Weiner (2016) found that participants were influenced by gendered feedback throughout the program. In this study, social role theory provided the framework in order to understand the influence gender has on how people perceive candidates for higher status

leadership positions. In this case, the men received feedback to be more agentic, while women were encouraged to be more communal (Burton & Weiner, 2016).

Munoz, Pankake, Ramalho, Mills, and Simonsson (2014) used social role theory as a framework for one of the portions of their reanalysis of data from two previous studies in examining career paths to superintendency. The particular area of focus was the power of social and cultural norms and expectations. "Often facing discriminatory interview processes, these women had to be resilient in order to submit to higher levels of scrutiny necessary to attain superintendency positions" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 773). The reanalysis found that the role of superintendent was considered to be a gendered role and viewed positively for men and unfavorably for women.

Ostos (2012) used role theories to frame her mixed-methods study when examining leadership styles in independent schools. In the implications for policy and practice, she wrote: "Further, the current head of school cohort is on the verge of retirement. Head of school preparation programs should heighten these issues of sexism and bias" (Ostos, 2012, p. 106). More research was suggested related to gender bias and independent school leadership (Ostos, 2012).

When examining gender and school leadership roles, an area that was given great consideration was that of the role of superintendent. According to Bjork (2000),

> Over the past several decades, research on women and gender in educational administration has illuminated how culture and professional norms have created masculine myths of the existence of the one best way of leading and have perpetuated expectations and gender bias in the superintendency. (p. 14)

These very myths regarding cultural and professional norms may be perpetuating the expectation that a man should be filling these roles in certain settings. According to Bronars (2015), "Role theories, which include gender role theory, social role theory, and role congruity theory have been proposed as reasons why women work in the classrooms while men lead in the administrator's office" (p. 13). Social role theory may explain the gender gap in school leadership.

Independent School Culture

The body of research related to independent schools is insufficient (Ostos, 2012). Using social role theory as a framework to examine independent school leadership has been supported by the work of Ostos (2012),

> Increasing attention to the need to explore issues of leadership and women in educational administration has led to a wide research pool that currently addresses both gender issues and changing views of leadership, applying the experiences of both men and women. In fact, applying and taking into consideration the experiences of both genders does not generate blanket statements about leadership in general, but instead brings forth deeply ingrained social beliefs that color leadership experiences for both men and women. (p. 23)

The NAIS has documented an absence of women in school administrative positions (Chubb, 2015). This is representative of a gender-related, and perhaps a social issue, specific to independent schools: that despite the representation of females in the classroom, women in leadership positions in independent schools are lacking. The question that needs to be considered is, why?

Does the culture of independent schools encourage gendered institutional practices? According to Gibson (1995), "When individuals within a group have similar value orientations, that at the same time are distinct from the values held by other groups, then it is often assumed that the group constitutes a culture" (p. 4). Although Gibson's (1995) research was related to the concept of various national cultures, organizations may also have their own culture as well (Eagly, 2009; Stelter, 2002).

According to Deal and Peterson (1990),

The concept of culture is meant to describe the character of a school as it reflects deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of history. Beneath the conscious awareness of everyday life in any organization there is a stream of thought, sentiment, and activity. (p. 7)

Independent schools may have a culture steeped in traditions that are distinct from that of their public school counterparts. If this is so, could this be influencing the leadership gap for women in head of school positions? According to Stelter (2002), it can be the culture that may lead to the expectation that the leader should be a male. "These expectations may reinforce any emergence of male leaders while simultaneously discouraging emergence of female leaders" (Stelter, 2002, p. 95).

This researcher studied whether the imbalance of gender representation in independent school leadership is influenced by expectations of gender roles within the organizational structure and culture of independent schools. In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions? The culture of independent schools may perpetuate institutional practices which create barriers to top leadership positions in independent schools. These

barriers may be based on a gendered vision of what an independent school leader should be. Applying social role theory, and looking more closely at what the barriers women perceive to be regarding securing these positions, might inform the NAIS on how to address the gender imbalance within the leadership positions in these schools.

With only one third of the head of school positions held by women in NAIS schools (Chubb, 2015), this gender imbalance is a national problem. Since the majority of educators in the NAIS schools are women (Chubb, 2015), giving voice to women might help articulate their perspective on this leadership imbalance and may give insight into why this phenomenon is occurring in the independent school sector. Research related to independent schools needs to be done in order to better inform how to achieve gender parity in head of school positions. For the purpose of this study, social role theory (Eagly, 1987) provided the theoretical framework to understand the barriers that female administrators who work in independent schools identify when asked to consider the gender imbalance in head of school positions in independent schools. There is a need for more research to be applied to the independent school sector if the cultural norms are perpetuating gendered defined roles as social role theory suggests, thus resulting in a greater representation of men than women in the top leadership roles.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to increase the understanding of the perspectives of women on the barriers, organizational culture, and structure of independent schools, which might be limiting access to head of school positions for women in independent schools. Barriers determined by women with regard to school leadership have been identified through the research (Adams & Hambright, 2004;

Burkman, 2011; Coleman, 1996; Derrington & Sharratt, 2009; McGee, 2010; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). The commonly identified barriers were: sex role stereotyping and sex discrimination (Burkman, 2011; Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010), overt and covert discrimination (Coleman, 1996), socially defined roles outside the work situation (Coleman, 1996; Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; McGee, 2010; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010), *good ol' boys* network (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; McGee, 2010), the lack of support from the school community (Burkman, 2011; Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; Nichols & Nichols, 2014), and women's own self-perceptions (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Other research has highlighted how women have overcome barriers and utilized successful strategies on their career path to educational leadership such as networking and having a mentor (Lane-Washington & Wilson-Jones, 2010; Muñoz et al., 2014; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Wallace, 2014). The majority of this research examined leadership in the context of a public school setting.

The current representation for women as heads of school has not been equal to that of men in independent schools (Chubb, 2015). A qualitative study was conducted to understand how female administrators perceive the barriers, organizational culture, and structure of independent schools and how they might be contributing to the lack of women in head of school positions.

The results of this study will inform future training programs indicating adjustments that can be made to independent school culture in order to better prepare and foster the growth of women for these roles. As leadership in NAIS head of schools positions step down, these positions need to be filled. There is a need for new research to

examine the barriers women perceive regarding the pursuit of a headship position as well as the influence of the organizational structure and culture of independent schools on access to these positions for women. With this research, the NAIS will be able to create training programs to target the areas women identify so that qualified female candidates can have equal access to these independent school positions.

Research Questions

Gender disparity in independent school leadership exists. In order to understand why there is a gender gap in the head of school positions in NAIS member schools, the issue needs to be examined from the perspective of women administrators who work in independent schools. This research study looked at this target population to further understand why men still outnumber women in the headship positions in independent schools. The research questions are as follows:

1. What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a head of school?

2. How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders?

3. In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions?

Potential Significance of the Study

According to Burkman (2011) "Men have historically held leadership position in education, and the transition to women in leadership has been gradual" (p. 71). There is a gap in the research related to independent schools. Research highlights women's perceptions related to the imbalance of gender representation in independent school

leadership. Research considers women's perceptions of the barriers, organizational structure, and culture of independent schools that may be influencing a gendered expectation of what leadership looks like in an independent school. This research is important to the NAIS as the findings of this study could have implications for future research and the development of training programs to address the specific barriers, organizational structure, and culture of independent schools identified by women. Leadership opportunities can be improved with an understanding of the gender-related barriers, as well as an understanding of how to prepare women for these roles (Burkman, 2011).

Chapter Summary

Research related to gender and leadership has been conducted over the last several decades. The existing body of literature concerning gender and school leadership focuses primarily on public schools in relation to the roles of principals or superintendents, or the consideration of these roles by female educators. There is a lack of literature related to both independent schools and leadership within them.

The NAIS has stated that only one-third of independent schools are led by women, and heads of schools are stepping down with a call for them to be replaced. There is a need for new research to identify barriers to women regarding a head of school position in independent schools to better understand why the representation in school leadership positions is not commensurate with the representation of females in the classroom. Understanding the perception of women related to the barriers, organizational structure, and culture of independent schools might provide insights not previously considered. This study identifies factors that might be influencing a gendered

expectation of a head of school position in an independent school. Research related to the gender imbalance in independent school leadership helps provide an understanding as to why this phenomenon is occurring, and give insight into how to address it.

As a result of this research, the NAIS will be able to create training programs to target the areas women identify so that qualified female candidates can have greater access to these independent school positions. Training and mentoring programs can be initiated with an understanding of the issues women face in leadership (Burkman, 2011). Addressing the issues of inequality will reduce the imbalance at the leadership level (Burkman, 2011). This research adds to the body of knowledge not only related to women in educational leadership, but more specifically within an independent school setting.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This literature review examines research related to women in educational leadership in several areas that will highlight the experiences and gender disparities in settings both locally and globally, as well as in the public and private sectors. Barriers to pursuing these school leadership positions, experienced or perceived, by women will also be included. Also included will be research related to organizational structures and cultures that may influence people's perspectives on educational leadership as well as academic settings. It is important to note that although there are trends and commonalities that the research supports regarding the experiences of women in public school leadership positions, research related to independent schools is lacking.

Representation of Women in Schools

Women make up the majority of the teaching population, regardless of the type of school setting (Bitterman et al., 2013). Over the decades there has been an increase in representation in administrative and leadership positions as women break through the glass ceiling not only in education but other career markets as well.

A 2014 study by Kerr, Kerr, and Miller examined a data set compiled by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). This data set was not publicly made available and allowed for data analysis of school districts with over 100 employees looking at job categories by gender and ethnicity. The researchers looked at school districts and the gender-representation of teachers, principals, and administrators from the

2002-2008 school year and related it to new hires. Using the data set of up to 6,552 school districts, the study evaluated the representation of women in U.S. school districts focusing on the jobs of teachers, administrators, assistant principals, and principals. If a district was found to be male-dominated, did it appear to be that new hires employed within those districts helped to achieve gender parity? This quantitative study by Kerr et al. (2014) used descriptive statistics to answer the questions. The results showed that gender representation for women had increased over time, but parity had still not been met in any of the aforementioned roles. The study found that there were some districts that had no women in administrative roles, assistant principal, or principal. Finally, for districts with predominantly males in administrative and higher roles, the progress for women's representation in these roles was not as advanced as other districts (Kerr et al., 2014). According to Kerr et al. (2014), "The mid-level workforce - in this case, classroom teachers – is overrepresented by women, while men are overrepresented in administration" (p. 392). This study is important since it used data to examine the representation of females in specific school roles and validated that improvement is needed in this area.

Data continues to support that the representation of women in classrooms still far outnumbers men. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) from the 2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey related to public and private elementary school teachers in the United States, stated,

> Overall schools had a larger percentage of female teachers (76 percent) than male teachers (24 percent). . . . In public schools, a larger percentage of teachers were female in primary schools (89 percent) than in high schools (58 percent). In

private schools, 86 percent of elementary school teachers were female and 56

percent of secondary school teachers were female. (Bitterman et al., 2013, p. 3)

This highlights how women are the majority of educators across all facets of K-12

education. According to the NCES 2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey report on

public and private elementary and secondary school principal positions in the United

States, women are outnumbering men in the role of principal based on a collection of

data.

The percentage of public school principals who were female was 52 percent

overall, 64 percent in primary schools, 42 percent in middle schools, 30 percent in

high schools, and 40 percent in combined schools. . . . The percentage of private

school principals who were female was 55 percent overall, 75 percent in Catholic

schools, 41 percent in other religious schools, and 62 percent in nonsectarian

schools. (Bitterman et al., 2013, p. 3)

This demonstrates that women are beginning to achieve parity in certain school settings

in the role of principal.

The NAIS reports disparity in their head of school positions on a national level

(Chubb, 2015). As heads of schools step down, there is a need to fill these roles. In the

Spring, 2015 issue of *Independent School*, a publication of the NAIS, now former

President John Chubb reported that two-thirds of head of school positions are held by

men. With women as the majority in the classrooms in independent schools, the NAIS is

hopeful that these women will be the future leaders of independent schools (Chubb,

2015). Although this problem has been clearly identified, there is no research or

reporting of why this problem is occurring, or how it can be addressed. Research related

to independent schools and independent school leadership is sparse (Ostos, 2012). In order to consider possible answers to this current problem, it is logical to look at research related to the public school sector. Research related to teachers and leadership roles such as principals and superintendents may help to acknowledge what may have influenced the lack of the representation of females in leadership roles in the past. It may also help to explain what has encouraged the shift towards improving and/or achieving gender parity of late.

Women as Superintendents

Research in the area related to the superintendency is important as it continues to highlight that these positions are attainable for women. It is also highlights what potential barriers women may face or have faced in their pursuit of these top school administration roles.

In 2000, Bjork examined a collection of writings related to women in the superintendency within the context of feminist scholarship. Bjork's review of the literature affirmed that leadership styles differ between men and women. As a result, there was a call for an examination of how schools can change in order to more closely align with the leadership styles of women. In his conclusion, Bjork commented that the research pertaining to the role of the superintendent is defined through male leadership stereotypes and expectations. Additionally, it was found that the culture of the school districts is perpetuating these gendered stereotypes and expectations regarding how one should lead (Bjork, 2000). This review is important because it calls for more research related to women and the superintendency to gain a broader knowledge of this gender's experience. Further research may result in an understanding of how to address the gender

bias experienced by women. Current literature still reports male gender stereotypes and expectations regarding the role of superintendent.

A study published in 2008 by Montz and Wanat looked at women superintendents in one Midwestern state. The study resulted in a survey sample of 31 female superintendents that examined areas such as characteristics, qualifications, personal demographics, skills, and barriers to seeking superintendency. The surveys were analyzed to create a profile of female superintendents using percentages and frequency distributions based on responses. Once the results were collected, the respondents were asked if they would be willing to volunteer to be interviewed. This yielded 22 volunteers. A purposive sample of six women was selected based on varying factors such as years of experience, district size and enrollment trends, and job satisfaction. Interviews were held, transcribed, coded, and correlated to their answers in the initial surveys.

The results were organized by looking at various aspects such as demographics of the district, the boards of education, personal and professional information regarding the qualification of the women in the study, information related to their career paths, and identified barriers. The results highlighted that these women were mostly from rural districts, had been hired through a local search or search firm or hired within the district, and held an Ed.D. or a Ph.D. Other factors were the importance of board relationships, reflections on career paths, and length of job search (Montz & Wanat, 2008).

Of particular interest to this review of the literature was the feedback regarding the importance of a support system as part of the women's career path to the superintendency, most notably with a mentor. These mentors were people that had

identified the women as potential leaders, and supported and encouraged them to pursue such a role. These mentors included administrators, college professors, and principals; all of whom in this study were male. Additionally, the women felt that the support of their family and spouse was very important. They also felt conflicted by responsibility to their own children due to the dedication of time required to be a superintendent. They viewed this conflict as a barrier.

Other barriers to the superintendency for women that were noted were lack of family support, caring for elderly parents, sex-role stereotypes, discrimination, gender bias, and the good ol' boy networks which favored male candidates over women for these positions (Montz & Wanat, 2008). Although the study by Montz & Wanat (2008) was done with female superintendents from one state, mostly rural in nature, it does highlight the differentiated experiences of women when reflecting on their careers as superintendents. Mentorship played a positive role, while gender bias was a negative obstacle that had to be overcome.

Lane-Washington and Wilson-Jones (2010) conducted a qualitative study of a purposeful sample of 270 women superintendents from northern and southern states in the United States during the 2007-2008 academic school year. This qualitative study used open-ended survey questions in order to obtain a narrative so that the barriers and challenges women experienced as superintendents could be identified. The results were collected and reoccurring words, phrases, themes, and patterns were identified as they related to their experiences encountered while pursuing a superintendent position. These were personal experiences that highlighted their commitment and perseverance, lessons that they had learned in their lifetime, having a positive attitude, and having a mentor or a

role model. The women also identified professional development as an area of importance, including obtaining a doctorate degree, attending national conferences, staying up to date with regard to the findings related to the progress of the school system, and creating networks. They also felt that they were encouraged at a young age to be leaders, were driven to be successful, considered themselves to think globally, and were willing to take risks (Lane-Washington & Wilson-Jones, 2010).

Although Lane-Washington and Wilson-Jones (2010) did not clearly delineate challenges and barriers women experienced when pursuing a position as superintendent as stated in the purpose of the study, they did identify some clear attributes and professional strategies that women superintendents identified as contributing to their success in attaining these roles. This is important for women to understand as educational institutions look to fill senior level leadership positions, and may help improve their candidacy for such positions. Additionally, schools can support some of the areas related to professional development in order to help create a culture that facilitates the growth of potential leaders within the schools.

Similarly, a qualitative study conducted by Wallace (2014) in May of 2013 surveyed 123 female superintendents from six states. The six states used in the study were chosen because these states most closely represented the national average of female superintendent representation. The survey consisted of 17 multiple-choice and two open-ended questions to help understand what influenced them in their careers and what advice they would give as a female superintendent. The sample size of completed surveys was 63, all of which were anonymous. The results included advice related to learning as much as possible before applying for a superintendent position, being prepared,

understanding the role gender bias can play, understanding the long hours and how this may impact family life, and finding a female mentor to help understand how to achieve work-family balance. Also, personal factors like being committed to education, wanting to have an impact on student achievement, and serving the community, influenced their decisions to become superintendent. In order to help attract more female candidates to fill these roles, the participants suggested equal pay for female superintendents (Wallace, 2014).

The study by Wallace (2014) provided a narrative of the collective experience of female superintendents. The design of the survey with both multiple choice and open-ended questions yielded some descriptive statistics related to the career paths the women had prior to attaining a superintendent position, and what influenced them to pursue a superintendent position. The open-ended questions focused on advice for women considering a superintendent position as well as suggestions regarding improving the representation of women in this role. This study categorized responses and related the trends to prior research. It added to the body of research related to women in school leadership and highlighted areas such as gender bias, stress on family, and the importance of having a mentor.

Munoz et al. (2014) looked to further understand the path to superintendency experienced by women in an analysis of data from two previous studies, a qualitative study conducted in 2000 and a mixed methods study conducted in 2006. The studies' transcripts were re-examined. The qualitative study and the qualitative portion of the mixed-methods study consisted of interviews with women in Texas who were either aspiring to obtain school superintendent positions or were already in that role. The

original studies had interviews that looked at the careers of the women, their desire to become a superintendent, and the role of mentoring in their lives. The new study focused on the transcripts of 10 of the participants to identify factors contributing to their motivation to pursue a superintendent position in Texas. The subjects in the study by Munoz et al. (2014) were purposely selected with six and four subjects respectively from each of the prior studies. The transcripts of these participants were coded and themes were developed. The new analysis revealed documented obstacles and barriers experienced by the women. The researchers stated, "As we analyze the participants' accounts through the framework of power, it is clear that the barriers of gender, sexism, discrimination, and gender structuring are alive and well" (Munoz et al., 2014, p. 779).

When looking at the role a mentor played in the lives of the women, those who had already obtained the role of superintendent identified a mentor that encouraged them to develop their leadership skills and also played a role in encouraging them and helping them to take the position. Three out of the four who were not serving as superintendent looked at their mentors as gatekeepers who did not have the power or networks needed to help them to gain access to the position of superintendent (Munoz et al., 2014).

The study by Munoz et al. (2014) re-examined interviews from previous studies. The use of coding and the emergence of themes identified barriers and the importance of a mentor related to the pursuit of a superintendent position. The barriers such as gender, sexism, and discrimination identified were not the intention or purpose of the original research, but are barriers that are commonly noted as those that need to be overcome by women to pursue leadership positions in schools.

A qualitative study published in 2014 by Klatt consisted of an in-depth case study of two superintendents. The study included interviews with the two individuals, their children, and other professionals who worked with them including members of the board of education. The superintendents were found through snowball sampling. There were a total of 42 semi-structured interviews that were narrative, recorded, and coded using inductive and deductive coding placed into themes and subthemes. Other documents such as the superintendent's calendars were analyzed as well. The study looked at balance in the life of the superintendent as being either integrated or compartmentalized, and the role of gender as seen through archetypes.

Both superintendents, one male and one female, had children, were younger than age 50, and were part of a rural school district that required them to live within the district. Member checks and comparison of data were used in order to establish trustworthiness. The results found that the male superintendent fit under the archetype of a male leader/ruler, and that descriptors used by people such as "strong" and "commands respect" within the district supported that archetype. Conversely, the female superintendent fit the archetype of women as mother/nurturer, and descriptors such as expecting a "passive leader" or "collaborative" were used by people to describe her. The male superintendent had difficulty compartmentalizing his family and work roles and became withdrawn and angry, while the female superintendent viewed superintendency as a way of life. In both cases, the rural aspect of the district and living in the community made it difficult to make social connections. However, it appeared that the female superintendent was more widely accepted as a parent with home responsibilities than the male (Klatt, 2014).

This study by Klatt (2014) is important because it tells the story of the perception of the superintendent both as a gendered experience, and as a parent. This study was also interesting because the information gathered went beyond self-reports, and included interviews with both personal and professional connections to the superintendent. This yielded a more complete picture of the experiences this man and woman had in the role of the superintendent. More research needs to be done in order to understand the demands of this role and how to navigate it while maintaining balance in life. Preparation programs and district expectations need to consider these areas in order to continue to fill the vacancies in these roles.

Women as Leaders in Independent Schools

Research related to independent schools is sparse. Research focused on women in K-12 education and school leadership is more prevalent in the public school sector. In order to add to the body of work related to independent schools, Ostos (2012) conducted a mixed method study: a national quantitative study of independent school leadership styles and a qualitative study of the experience of female heads with regard to their headship positions. The quantitative portion of the study consisted of a survey that was sent to all heads of school in the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), with a possible 1,260 participants. The initial response rate was 36% (458), and of those 30% (381) were fully completed (Ostos, 2012). A sub-set of eight female heads was selected for interviews for the qualitative portion of the study from those that responded. Interviews were recorded, coded, and organized thematically (Ostos, 2012). The results of Ostos's (2012) study found that the leadership style for all heads of school was generally transformational, with females being more so than men. Additionally, the men

had completed a higher level of education and led schools with a larger population than women. The men had fewer years of teaching experience than the women prior to their roles in leadership (Ostos, 2012).

The qualitative portion of Ostos's study (2012) noted that women as heads of school valued collaboration as well as developing solid relationships with the board president and other trustees. The issues they faced were handling school finances and personnel issues. The things they felt were valuable in relation to their pursuit of a head of school position were collaboration and working as part of a team, networking, having a mentor, and having a *can do* attitude while taking advantage of opportunities presented to them. Finally, 6 of the 8 women interviewed felt they experienced gender bias and believed a glass ceiling still exists for women.   Further research in this area was suggested by the author.

It was also noted that studies were more prevalent in the United Kingdom than in the United States dealing with research in the field related to independent schools, suggesting a need for more research related to private and independent schools in the United States (Ostos, 2012). Understanding factors like leadership style, gender bias, and the role of the board of trustees or a mentor could help create access to these leadership roles.

Coleman conducted an analysis of data on surveys given to school head teachers in England in 2004 and compared that to data collected in the latter part of the 1990s. The study focused on the perceptions of those who were already in a head of school position and included both men and women. The data revealed that there was an increase in women as heads of secondary schools, especially in larger cities. Also reflected was a

decrease in women reporting that they experienced sexism and gender stereotyping. However, the structure of power within the schools were still perceived to favor men, which put women at a disadvantage on the basis of gender alone. Some women did report experiencing being judged differently than men and having been the recipient of sexual innuendo, gender-related negative comments, and being treated unfairly due to gender (Coleman, 2004).

Understanding the structure of power within schools and school systems is important. This needs to be considered objectively so changes can be made so as not to perpetuate a gendered perception and experience. More studies like this need to hold a place in the United States within the private and independent school sectors.

A qualitative study by Smith, published in 2011, interviewed 30 female secondary school teachers and 10 female head teachers in the UK. The sample was collected via snowball sampling, and the interviews consisted of two open-ended questions. Follow-up questions were asked, if needed, for clarification. The head teachers interviewed had a positive view of being a school leader and viewed their role as being able to effect change for students and carry out the mission of the school. The school teachers, however, had very negative viewpoints regarding becoming a head teacher. The teachers felt dissuaded by feelings of isolation, having to develop a tough demeanor, not having a life outside of school, and jeopardizing workplace relationships. Twenty-eight of the 30 teachers emphatically stated they had no desire for a head teacher position. The commonality both teachers and head teachers shared was their desire to make students successful (Smith, 2011).

An area to be considered further as suggested by the research was to culturally frame the head teacher role more positively, perhaps resulting in more candidates to fill the pool. This could possibly contribute to an increase the number of females in head teacher positions (Smith, 2011).

Research has specifically identified some barriers and perceptions as deterrents to school leadership. Strategies that women found to be successful when advancing their careers into the realm of school leadership were also identified and could serve to help further the cause of increasing the number of women as educational leaders.

Female Teachers as Potential School Leaders

Since teachers are often considered to be possible future candidates for school leadership roles, it is important to gain a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of these positions. Reviewing research related to woman in educational leadership may add to the understanding of why there is a gender gap in these roles.

Lumby (2011), in her paper published in *Gender and Education*, took a critical look at the existing research in Commonwealth countries. She identified some of the challenges found with regard to gender and educational leadership. The first was that the term *representation* was framed in different ways depending on the focus of the study. In some instances, representation of gender meant 50% male and 50% female. In other cases, representation meant a proportional relationship to the total number of females, for example, 84% female educators would imply that the leadership should also have an 84% percent representation of females. Another challenge identified was the need to understand the numbers of female leaders, specifically principals. Also noted was the need for more qualitative research in order to understand women's perceptions of these

roles as well as how to attain them. An additional challenge that she found was how to compare the numbers of women and their experiences to that of other countries without it being compared to a White, male experience. Another identified need was for researchers to agree upon a single term to collectively and consistently identify school leaders so the right people (and women) are included in these studies. Also, there was a call for countries to increase their data reporting and accuracy of such data with regards to women and their positions held in educational settings. There was a call for reporting information related to the structures of the individual schools in order to accurately capture comparability in studies.

Another area identified was a need for more longitudinal studies as well as mixed-methods studies to help contribute to the understanding of women in education. The over-arching theme of the paper was for researchers in The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management was to further consider these problems and find ways to move forward consistent with the research. This paper referenced a pilot research project that began and had a template questionnaire to begin the reporting of some of this much needed data. The intent was to utilize the template questionnaire in multiple studies (Lumby, 2011). This research identified the inconsistencies that are embedded in the research related to school leadership. The impact of consistent terminology within the field when conducting research could help advance the field with data that could be reliably compared.

According to Galman and Mallozzi (2012) in their literature review of U.S. elementary school teachers, research regarding the role of gender in elementary school teachers in the United States is lacking. Galman and Mallozzi (2012) set out to find more

insight from their study of current literature. "To be eligible for inclusion, works had to be published during or after 1995, study elementary preservice or practicing women educators, take place in the United States, focus on gender, and be empirical" (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012, p. 1). This review resulted in only 12 articles that were relevant, and were mostly qualitative studies with small samples. The general findings were that the research related to female teachers focused on their perceptions of the profession as one that marginalizes women and their reflections in selecting teaching as a profession. Conversely, there was also research that supported women selecting the profession due to its history of being strongly feminized and how teaching is considered to be a spiritual and nurturing experience (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012). Furthermore, the research regarding women in school administrative roles was concluded to be from the viewpoint that women were put into roles that were considered to be masculine, and that men were encouraged more than women to pursue leadership roles within schools (Galman & Mallozzi, 2012).

This literature review supports the need for further studies to examine the experience of both women educators and leaders in schools in the United States. Additionally, it calls for more research in understanding these roles absent of a gendered definition. The study further emphasizes the need for current, local research related to gender and leadership. The problems need to be properly examined through effective research in order to consider solutions.

Trying to understand what is preventing a large potential pool of candidates consisting of female teachers to pursue leadership positions in schools is important. Burton and Weiner (2016) conducted a phenomenological comparative case study of two

participants, one male and one female, in an educational leadership training program for principals at the University of Connecticut. The participants had backgrounds and demographics that were comparable. The purpose of this study was to examine the principal preparation program to determine if the program had a more masculine definition of principal. According to the study ". . . we contend that stereotyping a principal as a masculine role (i.e., suggesting agentic characteristics) shapes the construction of leadership development within principal preparation programs and subsequently the experiences of men and women enrolled in them" (Burton & Weiner, 2014, p. 2). The participants were interviewed for approximately 1 hour every 3 months over the course of a year, totaling four interviews. The data from the interviews were coded and inter-rater reliability was achieved by the researchers meeting to discuss and compare their initial codes. After, decisions were made about future coding based on the interpretation of the data.

Throughout the study, the female's reflection on her experience and feedback in the program encouraged her to be less vocal and more open to listening, while the male's reflection was to be more aggressive. The findings showed that the feedback and support experienced by the candidates in the program were different based on their gender, which then shaped their understanding of what effective leadership was. The two, although in the same program, walked away with very different experiences. The male was clearly favored over the female. Given that the program consistently has a higher ratio of men than women, leadership needs to be consistently conceptualized without the influence of gender (Burton & Weiner, 2016).

This research by Burton and Weiner (2016) is limited in its ability to be generalized as there were only two participants studied from one specific principal preparation program. More research related to leadership preparation programs needs to be conducted to fully understand the possible gendered experience of the participants, in addition to the leadership roles for which they are training.

Another study conducted by Myung, Loeb, and Horng (2011) researched teachers' experiences related to the possibility of becoming a principal. This study surveyed teachers and principals from the 2007-2008 school year in the Miami-Dade County School district in Florida. The goal of the study was to determine if participants were approached or encouraged to become a principal (called being tapped) by a school principal during their career. This study was unique in that the data set included teachers from a large district, not just those interested in a leadership position. Therefore, all educators were considered as potential candidates in the pipeline for the role of principal (Myung et al., 2011). Since historically the teachers that do consider school leadership have an average of 11 years of teaching experience, the sample used for this purpose was reduced to those having 10 years experience or less.

Overall, the results found that teachers who have demonstrated, expressed, or desired leadership positions are being tapped by their principals, and therefore, further encouraged to pursue a leadership role. Male teachers were tapped more than female teachers and those with the same ethnicity as the principal had an increased likelihood of being tapped. This was true regardless of prior leadership experience and positive leadership self-ratings by women (Myung et al., 2011).

This study by Myung et al. (2011) highlighted the need to have a better understanding of how principals are groomed and selected from the teacher pool of candidates, and how there is a need to emphasize competencies as opposed to the personal traits of future school leaders. Once a school understands what an effective leader would be, then those qualities can be grown and encouraged in the teachers. The study by Myung et al. (2011) did a factor analysis on the quantitative data that was collected, and reported on the themes that emerged. It is from these themes that these data resulted in a narrative (Myung et al., 2011). This research helps to understand what is happening with regard to teachers when considering a leadership position, and what factors might influence or deter a potential candidate. This study was valuable in its ability to be replicated and the large data pool it represented. The data support the results of some qualitative studies that have had far fewer participants.

An exploratory study by Joan Smith published in 2015 studied a cohort of student teachers at a university in the UK. The study utilized both questionnaires and interviews of male and female student teachers ranging in age from 22 to early 60s and looked to understand their perceptions of their own leadership as well as potential future aspirations. The students were administered questionnaires and asked to complete them on a voluntary basis at the start of the school year with a total of 185 participating, and then again at the end of the school year once they had obtained Qualified Teacher Status, with a total of 169 participating. Of these, 105 and 85 respectively were returned. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 10 students, five male and five female at the start of the year, and then eight students, five male and three female at the end of the year. These students volunteered to participate in the interviews at the end of the

questionnaire. All participation was voluntary, and the participants' identity remained anonymous. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed. The results from the questionnaire and the interviews were triangulated and descriptive statistics were used to identify key trends. The results were reported with respect to trends that emerged according to gender. Aspirations for middle leadership positions such as a department head or assistant head of school showed no gender difference.

These middle-level leadership positions were looked at as a continuation of the work from the classroom. These aspirations were stronger at the start of the year than at the end for both men and women. Another trend that emerged was that women showed a greater aspiration to attain a leadership position within the area of special education than men. The biggest gender difference that appeared was with respect to senior positions, such as head of school. The position was looked at as more managerial and less related to the children and classroom experiences. Men showed a greater interest in these positions, and 2 of the first 5 women interviewed would not even consider becoming a head of school, and only 5% of the women indicated a desire to consider this position in the end of the year questionnaire (Smith, 2015).

This study by Smith (2015) looked only at gender as a causal factor to influence career aspirations. Other factors such as age, prior work experience, and family responsibilities might also influence people's career aspirations. The study had differing number of participants at the beginning and end and the reliability of the same participants could not be guaranteed. Understanding why there are gender differences is important and needs to be researched further. Gaining insight as to why the student's

perception of leadership changed after a year of student teaching would help to determine if schools themselves are creating a culture that does not encourage school leadership.

Identifying what is deterring teachers from pursuing higher leadership roles within schools is important. The research suggests that there are common barriers experienced by women when considering a leadership role.

Barriers to School Leadership Perceived by Women

Barriers to leadership women experience in education occurs globally, and at all stages of women's educational careers (Adams & Hambright, 2004; Burkman, 2011; Coleman, 1996; Derrington & Sharratt, 2009; McGee, 2010; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014; and Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). It is important to understand what these barriers are so that teacher training programs, organizational structures, school culture, and individual experiences can change. A further look at research related specifically to barriers as it related to women in educational leadership positions follows.

In a 1996 study by Coleman, five head teachers from co-educational secondary schools from an English shire were interviewed to gain an understanding of their perceptions of their leadership experience. At the time of this study, only 20% of secondary headships were held by women. The data were collected and organized into five categories: overt and covert discrimination, constraints experienced within the work situation, constraints experienced through socially defined roles outside the work situation, and early career influences. Although the interviews documented the barriers these women experienced and their reflections on them, there was no definitive conclusion on how barriers influenced their career paths. The study did recommend

additional research in this area as well as research that considered younger professionals who were considering leadership positions (Coleman, 1996).

Another study examining the barriers women faced in the under-represented leadership role of superintendent was conducted in 1993 and replicated in 2007 by the same researchers, Derrington and Sharratt, using the exact same survey. Both studies surveyed females who were superintendent hopefuls and subscribed to the Washington Association of School Administrators. There was an 80% completion rate from the 200 questionnaires sent in the first study, and a 67% completion rate from the 140 questionnaires sent in the second study.

The results found that, "Barriers according to the 1993 survey appeared to be more likely perceived as institutionalized and rooted in societal discrimination practices. For example, sex role stereotyping and sex discrimination headed the survey report back then" (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008, p. 9). The survey administered in 2007 found that barriers to seeking superintendency that had previously ranked the lowest were now ranked the highest, one of which was self-imposed barriers such as motherhood and obligations to the family. Other items ranked highly were associated with the good ol' boys network which was perceived to favor and help men over women, and the lack of knowledge the school board had with regard to the qualifications of female candidates (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008).

The Derrington and Sharratt (2008) study was valuable since it was replicated by the same researchers, using the same survey, and the same criteria for subjects. The sample sizes in both studies were also larger than other research that pertained to gender and school leadership. The research is important as an understanding of current barriers

can help create better training and certification programs and help improve culture within organizations as it relates to gender.

Understanding why women are not pursuing leadership roles is important. In the article *Encouraged or Discouraged? Women Teacher Leaders Becoming Principals* (Adams & Hambright, 2004) two instructors from a teacher leadership program in Ohio surveyed the females in their class who were pursuing a master's degree in educational leadership. The survey was in response to the lack of interest by females in the program to apply for a posted principal position. The instructors wanted to find out why these women were not interested in becoming a principal despite being in a leadership program. The surveys highlighted factors such as love of teaching, not wanting to deal with difficult parents, time constraints, and dealing with the politics of dealing with staff, as reasons they were not interested in pursuing a position as principal. The areas noted as reasons why they might be encouraged to apply for a principal position were compensation, the desire and ability to make change, and support from staff (Adams & Hambright, 2004).

The results revealed a lack of real interest held by women in becoming a principal despite their enrollment in a leadership program (Adams & Hambright, 2004). There did not appear to be any more information related to the design of the study, other than the use of a questionnaire. This topic would need to be researched further with more valid, research-based methodologies to add to the understanding of this identified phenomenon.

A 2010 study by Janet M. McGee studied elementary, middle, high school, and district office positions held by women in the public school system in Florida. First, the

study used descriptive statistics to identify administrative positions at the varying school levels with respect to gender. Additionally, the study explored barriers perceived by these women. Then an electronic survey was given to the 21 districts that had a female superintendent and purposeful non-proportional quota sampling was used to survey women in specific leadership roles. Women who held administrative roles were administered an electronic survey consisting of 11 questions looking at career aspirations and barriers. The results were analyzed to understand their perceptions of the barriers they experienced or had self-imposed, which delayed or prevented them from achieving an administrative position (McGee, 2010).

The sample selection used by McGee (2010) was purposeful, and surveyed females who currently held administrative positions. The surveys were anonymous. The results identified barriers such as anxiety related to balancing career with family, politics, the good ol' boy network, and lack of a network to help with the advancement of their careers (McGee, 2010). The results not only identified the barriers, but reported that women were finding ways to successfully navigate their way around them. The themes that emerged from the research were: women focusing on families first, and then focusing on their careers; preparing and planning ahead before pursuing administrative roles; understanding the importance of social networking; willingness to move; avoiding isolation once in a leadership role; and understanding the importance of a mentor. Additionally, acknowledging the barriers that are "self-imposed" and learning how to establish the balance of both the personal and professional life were also themes that emerged (McGee, 2010).

A 2011 study conducted by Burkman examined the challenges women principals face as educational leaders. The quantitative study had surveys distributed to five female elementary school principals randomly selected from each of the 20 randomly selected districts in Texas, resulting in a total of 100 surveys. There was an 83% response rate. The principals surveyed were asked to identify issues encountered as a female leader from a list of 12 issues. From this, the top five issues were identified by at least 20% of the respondents. The top five issues identified were, the male dominant culture of leadership, the cultural stereotype of professional roles, the lack of support from higher administration, the lack of support from parents, and sexual innuendo made by male coworkers (Burkman, 2011). The issues used in the survey by Burkman were based on a review of literature related to women in educational leadership positions that yielded gender-related issues.

The Burkman (2011) study appeared to have a qualitative aspect to it, as comments from the participants were also included in the results. This study used descriptive statistics by reporting the percentages of responses to given statements. A study that used the same sample but with a better designed survey could have yielded more rigorous data.

Sanchez and Thornton (2010) reviewed literature related to gender issues in K-12 education with a focus on the roles of superintendent and principal. Both barriers and strategies to face barriers were noted in the review. The barriers noted were, unseen gender inequities; male dominance; sexism, bias, and discrimination; role-conflicts, low salaries and high job demands; family obligations; and confidence, aspirations, and risk-taking. Practices seen to break these barriers were effective practices, having a mentor,

balancing work and family, and obtaining an advanced degree (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Additionally, the researchers made a call for more research on gender issues in educational leadership. The researchers also suggested that federal and national organizations improve data collection procedures and examine additional variables, such as gender in their studies about educational leadership (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). This review of the literature is important in that it not only emphasizes the research related to barriers to women in educational leadership, but gives suggestions on how to overcome them as well.

A study by Paustian-Underdahl et al. published in 2014 was a meta-analysis of research pertaining to gender and the perception of leadership effectiveness. This was a quantitative study that looked at 99 independent samples reviewing years of research through 2011. A coding method was utilized with respect to certain key words that were being examined in the study as well as criteria from the meta-analysis conducted by Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani (1995). A coding manual was developed, and at least two researchers coded the studies. If the researchers did not agree on the coding there was discussion until consensus was met.

The study found that when taking various leadership contexts into consideration, there was no gender difference in leadership effectiveness. The study did find that certain contexts lend themselves more to a female leader, with school principal being identified as one such role. Additionally, when examining self-ratings, women tended to rate themselves more poorly overall with respect to leadership than men (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Although these are just a few findings from this study, women's

own self-perceptions when it comes to their leadership capacity may be interfering with roles that are completely suited for them.

Perceptions are not the only barriers to women in school leadership. Another quantitative study published by Nichols and Nichols in 2014 took the results of school climate surveys from 847 teachers, 88% of whom were female, from 33 elementary schools during the 2008-2009 school year in a large, midwest, urban school system. The study also looked at required annual standardized test scores. The study then isolated and compared and disaggregated scores based on the gender of the principal at each school. A significant difference ($p < 0.5$) in the perception of the effectiveness of a male principal as opposed to a female principal was found using a t-test comparison of the items on the school climate survey that related to principal effectiveness. In either case, the students within the schools passed the exams at an equal rate. This showed that the schools performed at a comparable rate regardless of the gender of the leader. However, the perception of the teachers with regard to the gender of the principal was significantly less favorable when it comes to a female as a principal (Nichols & Nichols, 2014).

This study contributed to the body of knowledge related to gender and school leadership on a larger scale using quantitative methods. The setting, however, was very specific. Regardless, this research indicated that the perceptions of the teaching staff could be negative when considering a female as school principal.

Organizational Structure

Since the role of a top administration position in school leadership is considered in this research study, it is important to include research related to organizational

structure. This may further add to understanding the gender gap related to these key leadership roles.

Understanding how an organization works is a complex task. An oftentimes made error is that of looking the organization from a singular perspective. Bolman and Deal, have authored the book *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, & Leadership*, now in the fifth edition, to provide those in management and leadership an approach to looking at an organization, or an aspect of an organization in four different ways, called frames. According to Bolman and Deal (2013),

> A frame is a mental model--a set of ideas and assumptions—that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular "territory." A good frame makes it easier to know what you are up against and, ultimately, what you can do about it. Frames are vital because organizations don't come with computerized navigation systems to guide you turn-by-turn to your destination. Instead, managers need to develop and carry accurate maps in their heads. (pp. 10-11)

The four frames of Bolman and Deal (2013) are as follows: the structural frame, the human resources frame, the political frame, and the symbolic frame.   The structural frame "…depicts a rational world and emphasizes organizational architecture, including planning, goals, structure, technology, specialized roles, coordination, formal relationships, and metrics" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 15).   A common interpretation of this frame is an organizational flow chart. Bolman and Deal use the human resources frame as a way to understand the feelings, abilities, and inabilities of the people within the organization, as if it were a family.   Words used as metaphors to describe the

political frame are contests and jungles and bring to light how people within an organization may be vying for power or resources within the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2013). This frame examines interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships within the organization, as well as their impact. The symbolic frame looks more at the culture of the organization. This frame is simply not about budget and staffing. It is understanding that "The essence of high performance is spirit" (Bolman & Deal, 2013, pp. 283-284). When organizations are viewed through these frames it allows for a further understanding of the organization, and the layers within as well. Using these frames as a tool through which to view an organization will show both areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement. This can speak to a whole organization, or a department within.

Bush has written extensively about the field of educational management. Bush presents the strengths and weaknesses of six intersecting models in a 2006 article. According to Bush (2006),

Educational management as a field of study and practice was derived from management principles first applied to industry and commerce, mainly in the United States. Theory development largely involved the application of industrial models to educational settings. As the subject became established as an academic field in its own right, it theorists and practitioners began to develop alternated models based on their observation of, and experience in, schools and colleges. (p 2)

Two of the models will be presented for the purpose of this literature review (Bush, 2006). The first model looks at the educational setting as a hierarchical system with a focus on structure. Authority is considered to be at the top in official positions

with little to no input from the contributions of the individuals within the organization. Those in positions of authority are responsible for reporting to an outside entity such as a government body or a board of directors. This type of structure falls under the overarching theme of a model that is considered to be formal (Bush, 2006).

The second type of educational model is a collegial model (Bush, 2006). This model emphasizes a shared model of decision making. The individuals within the educational setting are viewed as professionals who bring professional knowledge to the decision-making process. Both models can cause difficulties due to frustration lying between those within the organization and those in the position of authority (Bush, 2006). These two types of models vary and determine how decisions are made within the organization. What needs to be considered is whether or not one style is preferred more than the other when considering a position in a top leadership role.

In a subsequent article, Bush (2015) synthesized the research related to organizational theory and leadership theory and how it can be applied to a school setting. The article highlighted four main aspects of organizations gleaned from the research that would be applicable to a multitude of school contexts. The four main aspects are, goals, structure, culture, and context. The goals of an organization are determined by internal or external influences and may or may not be supported by the stakeholders. The structure of the organization can be vertical or horizontal, and further, can be *fixed* or *flexible*. Fixed structures tend not to be inclusive of the contributions of others within the organization, whereas flexible structures look to the abilities of the staff and change accordingly.

The culture of an organization is difficult to capture, but is based on values and beliefs. Culture is believed to be difficult to influence and change. Finally, the context of an organization brings to light the various types of schools and settings. It takes into consideration individual school settings, its stakeholders, and their relationships. Bush (2015), encouraged the use of these four constructs in order to better understand school leadership and schools as organizations.

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) conducted research related to a new concept that examined two different bureaucratic structures that can be applied to a school environment. The study examined the structures in order to determine which approach is a benefit or a detriment to the school environment. "Two salient aspects of bureaucratic organization are formalization (formal rules and procedures) and centralization (hierarchy of authority)" (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, p. 297). Hoy and Sweetland (2001) further contended that coercive formalization is more of a punitive approach related to the rules, whereas centralization of authority encourages problem solving and communication.

The Hoy and Sweetland (2001) study looked at 97 high schools in Ohio using a non-random sample. Questionnaires were used to collect data from two randomly selected groups of teachers at each school with one questionnaire related to enabling bureaucracy and the second related to trust. The study found that schools with a higher trust score had a higher score related to an enabling bureaucracy as opposed to those schools with less trust and a hindering bureaucracy (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). This study suggested that there are different structures that increase trust. A woman's perspective related to the type of a school's leadership structure may be influencing the decision as to whether to pursue a leadership role in an environment where there is little trust.

Angelle (2014) examined one middle school that practiced a distributed model of leadership. This study (Angelle, 2014) was a qualitative case study that was part of a larger study on leadership that examined one middle school in the southeastern U.S. and used teacher and administrator interviews to collect data. This middle school was found to practice distributive leadership by administrators, teachers, and staff on a daily basis. The interviews included two administrators and 25% of the faculty. The interviews were coded and three themes were found to be part of the daily distributive leadership at the middle school. These themes were, leadership practices, climate of trust, and positive relationship building. Collegiality was emphasized; teachers felt they could meet the needs of the students, and constituents had felt a high level of loyalty and ownership with the organization (Angelle, 2014). According to Angelle (2014),

> The complexity and size of school systems today are such that one leader cannot meet the demands of daily tasks and problems. Thus, a singular leader-centric school cannot operate as efficiently as one in which leadership roles are distributed. Those who study and those who practice the art of leadership are embracing a rethinking of leadership practice as a collective effort. (p. 2)

A distributed model of leadership may help share in the growing demands of school leadership. This may attract more candidates, including women, into top leadership roles.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture may be a factor when considering gender and leadership. Understanding the role of organizational culture is important as it too, may be contributing to the gender imbalance of leadership positions within organizations. The

research may further the understanding of gender as it relates to culture and cultural preferences.

Eagly (2009) wrote about the differing prosocial behaviors of men and women as being agentic or communal. The agentic tendencies of men lean toward a more strength intensive approach, while the communal aspect of women tend to be more relational. This is seen to influence the social expectations of gender roles as well as the gendered division of labor. This was evident not only on an individual level, but within societal institutions as well. Prosocial behaviors are those that are viewed to be helpful to others. Agentic prosocial behaviors were considered to be those that imply or gain a higher status, while communal prosocial behaviors were characterized as being relational. This is applicable to individuals and to groups such as an organization.

Culturally shared beliefs may influence how a particular gender responds in a given situation. Eagly (2009) examined the research related to the prosocial behaviors during interactions of people when interacting with strangers, in close relationships, within the workplace, and in other social settings. The workplace context found women enacting more communal prosocial behaviors such as helping complete the work of others. Men were found to be more agentic, such as attending a meeting that was not required in order to gain status. It is these culturally shared norms that may be influencing behavior. According to Eagly (2009),

Gender role beliefs are both *descriptive* and *prescriptive* in that they indicate what men and women usually do and what they should do. The descriptive aspect of gender roles, or *stereotypes*, tells people what is typical for their sex. Especially if a situation is ambiguous or confusing, people tend to enact sex-typical behaviors.

The prescriptive aspect of gender roles tells people what is considered admirable for their sex in their cultural context. (para. 4)

Gibson (1995) sought to understand the differences between national cultures with respect to gender and leadership style. The participants were 209 managers of varying sized companies and industries from four different countries: Norway, Sweden, Australia, and the United States. Of the participants, 55% were male and 45% were female. The study found leadership style and gender did vary according to national culture. However, the study also found that men and women had differing leadership styles regardless of the national culture. Men placed more emphasis on goal setting, which is considered to be more agentic, while women placed more emphasis on more communal interactions. Gibson (1995) concluded that these findings may indicate an area of challenge to equalize the work place for men and women. Although this study was done in the context of a national culture, Gibson did indicate that similar value orientations shared by a group that is distinct from others within the group, do constitute a culture (Gibson, 1995). Organizational culture is an area that needs to be considered further to understand this phenomenon.

Stelter (2002) reviewed literature related to organizations and leadership, and the role of gender as it related to leadership behavior and effectiveness. She also examined the role gender perception had on leadership effectiveness. Stelter (2002) noted that, according to her review, women may lead differently than men. Social role expectations may be influencing the perception of leadership effectiveness within the culture of the organization as it relates to women, as well as helping to create unfavorable evaluations of women. She identified the need for further research to be conducted related to

organizations, its culture, and human resources practices as this may be furthering the expectation of a leader to be male.

To date, research regarding the issues related to gender differences in leadership may leave something to be desired if organizations are to utilize the knowledge base to modify their practices and successfully incorporate the complexities of diversity in their human resource management strategies. (Stelter, 2002, p. 91)

Organizational culture may be impacting the gender representation of top leadership positions. Van Vianen and Fischer (2002) examined organizational culture and the glass-ceiling phenomenon related to managerial ambition of women in two studies. These studies included 480 employees in the Netherlands from 68 private sector employees. There was a 68% response rate, and those participants were divided into three groups based on length of employment as well as whether the individuals were a manager or not. Scales that had been validated in several other studies were administered to measure culture preference. Questionnaires were also administered. The first study found that employees valued feminine organizational values, but confirmed that managers rated their jobs as being more masculine with an emphasis on competition and effort and work pressure. This masculine cultural preference experienced in managerial roles may explain why more men pursue these roles than women. Further, this suggested a role within an organization may dictate a different culture that varies from the overall organizational culture.

The second study found that women did not have the same level of ambition regarding self-selection to pursue these managerial roles as men. Other factors that went into the decision for women not to pursue these roles included less of an emphasis on

status and salary, and work-home conflict (Van Vianen & Fischer, 2002).

Understanding the organizational and leadership culture within organizations is

important. More research in different settings, including the United States, needs to be

done. Schools may be of particular interest to research this topic as it relates to women

and their decision on whether or not to pursue leadership roles.

Chapter Summary

Women still outnumber men as educators in the classroom (Bitterman et al., 2013;

Chubb, 2015). However, despite the representation of women in the field of education,

leadership positions such superintendent in the public school sector and head of school in

the independent school sector remain dominated by men (Chubb, 2015; Kerr et al., 2014;

Wallace, 2015).

When examining the literature related to gender and school leadership there are

many barriers noted by women that they have experienced in their careers. These

barriers were identified in educator preparation programs, in the workplace, and outside

of work. However, some women did see positive avenues to pursue career paths, such as

having a mentor. These noted areas can be viewed as falling under the umbrella of role

theory with social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, 2009; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly &

Wood, 1988; Gibson, 1995; Stelter, 2002) providing a framework to these factors.

The research related to the context of gender and leadership yielded common

barriers that were related to social roles (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 1998). Prevalent

in the research were barriers related to sex-role stereotypes (Bjork, 2000; Klatt, 2014;

Montz & Wanat, 2008; Munoz et al., 2014), gender bias and discrimination (Coleman,

2004; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Munoz et al., 2014; Ostos, 2012; Wallace, 2014) and those

related to familial roles and responsibilities (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; McGee, 2010; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Wallace, 2014).

Barriers and other factors such as organizational structure and culture (Angelle, 2014; Bolman & Deal, 2013; Bush, 2006; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Van Vianen & Fisher, 2002) may be influencing women's access and desire to pursue top leadership positions as discussed in the literature related to gender and leadership. There is a gap in the research related to independent schools (Ostos, 2012). Research would add to the body of knowledge not only related to women in educational leadership, but more specifically within an independent school setting.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of the perspectives of female administrators in independent schools on the barriers, organizational culture, and structure of independent schools that might be limiting access to head of school positions for women. Only one-third of NAIS schools have women as head of school (Chubb, 2015). This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study. "Today, phenomenology is one of the major methods of qualitative research. It focuses on documenting how subjects experience a particular phenomenon" (Vogt & Johnson, 2011, p. 289).

A phenomenological study helps to understand why the representation of females in independent schools is low. This study sought to understand the lived experiences of female administrators who work in independent schools and their perspectives on the barriers, organizational culture, and structure of independent schools which might be limiting access to the head of school positions for women in independent schools.

The data collection and analysis explored the perceptions of female administrators in Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) schools regarding possible barriers to head of school positions for women, and perceived influencing factors resulting from the organizational structure and culture of independent schools. "A phenomenological study describes the common meaning of several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). This study

helped to understand the factors that may be influencing why women are under-represented in head of school positions in independent schools.

Research focused on women in K-12 education and school leadership is more prevalent in the public school sector. Research related to independent schools is sparse (Ostos, 2012). Understanding what deters female administrators from pursuing higher leadership roles in independent schools has implications for the NAIS to consider in meeting the needs of this potential pool of leadership candidates. The research suggests that there are common barriers experienced by women when considering a leadership role (Adams & Hambright, 2004; Burkman, 2011; Coleman, 1996; Derrington & Sharratt, 2009; McGee, 2010; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010).

Research Context

This study was conducted during the summer following the 2016-2017 school year. The study focused on a sample of female administrators (e.g., division heads, department heads, deans, and directors of admissions and advancement) working in an NAIS accredited CAIS day school. According to CAIS, there are a total of 65 independent day schools in Connecticut. Female administrators who worked at a CAIS accredited day school met the criteria for inclusion in this study.

Research Participants

A sample of 10 female administrators working in an NAIS accredited CAIS day school was used for the purpose of this study. Purposive sampling was used in order to acquire the targeted sample as it is believed by the researcher that the sample represents the population (Vogt and Johnson, 2011). First, an e-mail was sent to a database of

female CAIS school administrators. This database was obtained with permission from CAIS (see Appendix A) for the sole purpose of recruiting individuals for this study. As a measure of confidentiality, only the researcher viewed the e-mail list.

The e-mail contained an explanation of the study with a request to seek voluntary participants for the study (see Appendix B). Potential candidates who self-identified were contacted by the researcher to request basic demographic information, to ensure that volunteers were female, and were administrators in an accredited CAIS independent school. The researcher provided an explanation and intent of the study and that participation was voluntary. The researcher also explained the details of the interview process, including the recording of the interview, and the measures that would be put in place to help provide confidentiality of identities.

Within the first 2 weeks of the call for participants, 10 people self-identified, which was the targeted number for inclusion in the study. The researcher found them all to be eligible for participation in the study. After the 2 weeks, three more people self-identified, and were put on an alternate list as a first come, first serve basis, should any of the previously identified participants choose not to complete the study. Two alternates were used as a result of two participants opting out of the study, still resulting in achieving the targeted goal of 10 participants.

Once a participant was identified, the researcher e-mailed the participant a letter of introduction (Appendix C) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form (Appendix D) for their review, with a request that the consent form be signed and returned to the researcher prior to the interview. Participants were encouraged to ask questions prior to signing the consent form, and could have also done so by contacting

the researcher directly by phone or by e-mail on the day of the interview. The researcher also explained that should the subject wish not to participate, or opt out of participating in the interview at any time, she was able to do so without recourse. The researcher also arranged a date and time for the interview via teleconference.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

A qualitative study using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix E) was used to explore the barriers independent school female administrators in CAIS schools perceive regarding pursuing a head of school position in an independent school. The study also sought their perspectives related to the organizational structure and culture of these schools.

Once participants were identified, the phenomenological inquiry used semi-structured, teleconference interviews in order to understand the perspectives and lived-experiences of female administrators in independent schools. They were asked to consider the gender imbalance in head of school positions, as well as provide their perception of barriers related to organizational structure and culture of independent schools. The semi-structured interviews explored the research questions. What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a head of school? How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders? In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions? The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

The interviews were held at a pre-determined time utilizing teleconference interviews. The interviews were scheduled for 1 hr 30 min. The actual time planned for

the interview was 1 hour, but flexibility with time to explore responses was planned and built into the time allotted for the interview session. Once participants were ready to begin, the researcher reviewed the purpose of the study, procedures for recording the sessions, and the steps that were put in place for confidentiality. These measures included using pseudonyms for participants and their respective places of employment, as well as describing procedures for the reporting, storing, and disposing of the data. The researcher was the only one to know the participant's real name, and the name of the school for which the individual worked. At this time, the participants were asked to sign forms of consent if they had not done so already.

The researcher conducted one-to-one teleconference interviews using a semi-structured interview approach. A pre-designed interview protocol was utilized in order to allow for a consistent interview experience among the subjects, but questions were open-ended to allow for respondents to answer freely. The interview questions were derived from the research questions as well as the research related to woman and school leadership positions.

Research questions aligned with interview questions. Interview questions were aligned with each specific research question.

Research question 1. Research question 1 asked this: What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a head of school? The following interview questions related to research question 1.

How would you describe the top leadership in your school?

What attributes do you believe this person has?

Would you ever consider becoming head of school?

Can you expand on that?

How are you encouraged to grow professionally?

Is this true for other administrators?

NAIS states that there are only one third of women as heads of school in

independent schools. Why do you think that's the case?

Research question 2. Research question 2 asked this: How does the culture of

independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders? The following

interview questions related to research question 2.

How do you feel about working in an independent school?

How would you describe the culture of your school?

What kind of professional development is in place for teachers? For

administrators? For those aspiring to take on more leadership roles?

Who do you feel is encouraged in this area?

Research question 3. Research question 3 asked this: In what ways, if at all, does

the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access

top leadership positions? The following interview questions related to research question

3.

Can you describe the structure of leadership in your school?

What kind of support or constraints do you feel are in place for people who would

like to take on more leadership?

If the head of school were to leave tomorrow, who would be in charge? Why?

The researcher tested and reviewed the interview questions as a measure to ensure

reliability and validity. The researcher had two females who serve as independent

school administrators review the questions for completeness and appropriateness.

The interview sessions were recorded with two devices, one serving as the main device

and the second serving as a backup device. Throughout the interview, the researcher

asked for any clarification of points that were needed, which allowed for member

checking.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

The interview recordings were transcribed by a professional. The content of the

transcriptions were read and analyzed by the researcher. The transcriptions were coded

and reoccurring words, phrases, and patterns were categorized into themes. The coding

was done in three phases. In vivo codes were used in the first phase. These were codes

that come from the voice of the participants (Saldana, 2016). The research related to

women and school leadership yielded factors that served both as barriers and advantages

to leadership. These were used as a priori codes to assist during the coding of the

interview transcripts. The a priori codes were employed in the second phase of coding to

categorize and analyze the qualitative, narrative data. These were drawn from the

research. A sample of the a priori codes are as follows: The good ol' boys network

(Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; McGee, 2010; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Sanchez &

Thornton, 2010); gender bias and discrimination (Coleman, 2004; Montz & Wanat, 2008;

Munoz et al., 2014; Ostos, 2012; Wallace, 2014); and family responsibility (Derrington &

Sharratt, 2008; McGee, 2010; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010;

Wallace, 2014). The final phase of coding was emergent coding which was done in order

to capture the ideas and concepts that were different than the in vivo and a priori codes.

The coding was managed through the use of the online spreadsheet program, Google Sheets, in order to record recurring words, phrases, and quotations. Within the Google Sheets document was a tab containing the codes and definitions, individual tabs dedicated to each individual participant with the codes and supporting comments specific to that participant, and separate tabs related to each of the identified categories with all participant comments and coding relevant to that category. As an additional note, the categories were color-coded to facilitate ease of distinction.

Thematic analysis of the interview data of the 10 participants was conducted. To allow for trustworthiness, the coding was checked for intra-coder reliability by three other professionals in order to check for consistency of themes and coding. The coding document created in Google Sheets was shared in a view-only format with the three professionals checking for intra-coder reliability. The first professional was a female, and felt the coding and supporting comments from the participants were both accurate. She shared that she felt the coding and comments really told a story of the females' experiences related to gender and independent school leadership. The second professional, also a female, agreed on the accuracy of the coding with no further comment. The third professional was a male, who raised some questions related specifically to the coding of certain quotes as being cultural or structural (i.e., collaborative). A conversation between the researcher and the professional checking for the intra-coder reliability followed resulting in support from the research to make the decision to identify specific quotes to be coded as cultural. Additionally, this professional did agree with the themes initially identified. However, upon further review and follow-up conversations, the researcher and this professional felt there was another

theme (gendered expectation of leadership) that was more reflective of the majority of the participants than the other (tough conversation). As a result, "a gendered expectation of leadership" became one of the final themes. All recordings, transcripts, and coding will be kept secure in a dedicated safe and/or a password protected cloud-based account for digital material for 3 years, as described by the St. John Fisher College guidelines for doctoral dissertations.

The researcher is a female administrator in a CAIS accredited day school, therefore it was important to understand how her personal experiences and views may be introduced to and/or demonstrate influence in the study (Creswell, 2013). "The strength of a qualitative study is that its findings depend on the diligence and judgments of a researcher, not on adherence to a method. The person is the research tool" (Polkinghorne, 2006, p. 75). As a result, the researcher employed bracketing, "….considering an experience purely and apart from its prior associations and context" (Vogt & Johnson, 2011, p. 38). "Bracketing typically refers to an investigator's identification of vested interests, personal experience, cultural factors, assumptions, and hunches that could influence how he or she views the study's data" (Fischer, 2009, p. 583). The researcher communicated transparency throughout the study in order to demonstrate efforts made to ensure trustworthiness by the researcher (Polkinghorne, 2006).

The researcher took measures to employ bracketing. The researcher disclosed her background as part of the study. The researcher constantly checked to make sure coding and data collection were not influenced by the researcher's background and perspective. The researcher also participated in reflective journaling throughout the study. Having the

researcher explicitly communicate her perspectives throughout the process allowed for reflexivity (Creswell, 2013). Data was reviewed several times in order to make sure the coding and trends discovered were from the research, and not the researcher's perspective (Fischer, 2009).

Summary

The subjects were secured through purposeful sampling, and an introductory letter and invitation to participate in the research study were sent via e-mail through a professional database to potential participants. Once participants self-identified and were confirmed to be eligible for the study, final details related to the interviews were determined. Recording methods and protocols were reviewed prior to the interviews. Informed consent forms were also reviewed and signed by the participants. After the interviews, recordings were sent to be transcribed by a professional. Coding and thematic analysis was conducted by the researcher. Findings are reported by the researcher in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The current representation of women as heads of school in independent schools is far below that of men. Further, the representation of women in these leadership positions remains far below that of the representation of women in the profession. The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to increase the understanding of the perspectives of women on the barriers, organizational structure, and culture of independent schools that may be influencing a gendered expectation of leadership in independent schools. These barriers may be limiting access to head of school positions for women in independent schools.

This study used 10 female administrators from Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) day schools to study women's perspectives. The single method for data collection was semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. This allowed participants, female administrators working in independent schools, to be reflective of their experiences and perspectives.   Understanding their perspectives regarding supports and barriers related to pursuing a head of school position, as well as those related to independent school organizational culture and structure, will assist the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) in addressing the lack of women in head of school positions. This study adds to the body of knowledge related to gender and independent school leadership. This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the

semi-structured interviews conducted with female administrators in Connecticut

Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) day schools.

The chapter is organized by research findings and the major themes that were

identified by the participants. The female administrators' experiences and perspectives

give voice through their own experiences. Their stories convey the barriers to head of

school positions they perceive in their own words, as they describe their school's

organizational culture and structure, reflect on their work experiences in independent

schools, and share their thoughts regarding the lack of women in head of school

positions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools

   experience when considering becoming a head of school?

2. How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming

   independent school leaders?

3. In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent

   schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions?

Quotes from the interview were used to capture the perspective of the

participants, and provide major themes that surfaced during the interviews.

Participants

Ten female administrators from accredited CAIS Schools participated in this

study. A purposeful sampling of 196 female administrators in independent schools was

conducted. This was based on administrative title (e.g., division heads, department

heads, directors of education, directors of admissions, and directors of development, etc.) of potential participants in a CAIS day school. Since CAIS does not identify the gender of these administrators, the researcher eliminated traditionally male and gender-neutral names from the list provided by CAIS.   The study participants were contacted by e-mail by the researcher. The e-mail contained a voluntary participation request for participation in the study (see Appendix B). Descriptions of each of the participants is provided below.

Participant A. Participant A is an admissions director at a CAIS independent day school that serves students in grades PK-8. She has worked at her school for 10 years, and has worked in independent schools for 11 years. She is married with children.

Participant B. Participant B is a registrar at a CAIS independent day school that serves students in grades 6-12. She has worked at her school for 32 years, and has worked in independent schools for 37 years. She is married with children.

Participant C. Participant C is a dean at a CAIS independent day school that serves students in grades PK-8. She has worked at her school for 15 years, and has worked in education for 23 years, with 8 years in a public school setting and 15 years in an independent school. She is married with children.

Participant D. Participant D is a dean at a CAIS independent day school that serves students in grades 6-12. She has worked at this school for 8 years with a total of 13 years in education, all at independent schools. She is not married, nor does she have children.

Participant E. Participant E is an assistant director of student advancement at a CAIS independent day school that serves students in grades PK-12. She has 7 years of

experience in education, all at an independent school. She is not married, nor does she have children.

Participant F. Participant F is a head of lower school at a CAIS day school that serves students in grades K-9. She has 18 years of experience in education, and 8 years at a CAIS school. She has children from a previous marriage.

Participant G. Participant G is a head of upper school at a CAIS day school that serves students in grades 9-12. She has 22 years of experience in education, all at independent schools. She is married with children.

Participant H. Participant H is a director of enrollment and financial aid. She has 15 years of experience in education, all at independent schools. She is married with children.

Participant I. Participant I is an admissions director at a CAIS day school that serves students in grades PK-12. She has 12 years of experience in education, all at independent schools. She is married with children.

Participant J. Participant J is an assistant head of school.   She has 24 years of experience in education, all at independent schools. She is married with children.

Process

Ten respondents self-volunteered within the first 2 weeks of the call for participation in the study. After, they were sent a Letter of Introduction (see Appendix C) via e-mail. Interviews began, with three alternates self-identifying thereafter. Two of the original 10 participants withdrew from participating in the study. They were replaced by the alternates in the order by which they had volunteered for participation in the study. The researcher conducted 10 one-on-one semi-structured interviews via teleconference

with the study participants. These interviews were recorded using two recording devices and were conducted in a private office. Follow-up questions were asked throughout the interview to allow for member-checking.

Data Collection and Analysis

Informed consent forms (see Appendix D) were provided to participants by e-mail once their voluntary participation in the study was confirmed. Each participant read and signed the informed consent form (see Appendix D) prior to her interview. All recordings, coding, and related work will be kept in a safe marked with the name of the researcher and/or a password protected cloud-based account for digital material for 3 years as required by the Saint John Fisher guidelines for doctoral dissertations.

Each independent school female administrator participated in a semi-structured interview using an interview protocol (see Appendix E) via teleconference which ranged in length from 23 minutes to an hour and 10 minutes and was the sole instrument used for data collection.   The questions were open-ended, which allowed for the participant's responses to be conversational and flexible. The researcher used follow-up questions during the interview to understand the participant's perspectives, and to seek clarity if needed. Each interview was recorded using two digital recorders, and then transcribed by a transcription service.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section describes the processes used for data analysis. Findings will be discussed in detail.

Coding Process. The content of the transcriptions was read and analyzed by the researcher. The transcription was coded. The coding was done in three phases. In vivo

codes were used in the first phase. These were codes that come from the voice of the

participants (Saldana, 2016). These codes included words and phrases from the

participants. Examples of in vivo codes were terms such as "opportunities" and

"autonomy" which represented emerging themes generated from participants'

experiences and perceptions.

A priori codes were employed in the second phase of the transcript coding to

categorize and analyze the qualitative, narrative data. The a priori codes were drawn

from the research related to women and school leadership, organizational culture, and

structure that supported the research questions. These a priori codes included factors that

were barriers to, as well as those that encouraged becoming a head of school in an

independent school. A sample of the a priori codes that both the participants identified

and were supported by the research are as follows: The good ol' boys network, which

refers to the exclusion of women and the support of men within organizations

(Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; McGee, 2010; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Sanchez &

Thornton, 2010), the notion that the leadership role within an organization is more

masculine or agentic, and therefore not supportive of women in these roles (Burton &

Weiner, 2016; Galman & Mallozzi, 2012), and balancing the demands of work and

family being seen as a barrier to taking on more responsibility (Derrington & Sharratt,

2008; McGee, 2010; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Wallace, 2014).

The final phase of coding was emergent coding which was done to capture the

ideas and concepts that were different than the in vivo and a priori codes. The emergent

codes were reflective of the individual experiences of the participants, as well as their

responses. Examples of the emergent codes were "longevity" and "incompetence" when referring to administrators within the organizational structure.

The researcher separated the codes into categories. These were related to the participant's early careers, pathway to leadership, the professional development practices at their school, school culture, organizational structure, and thoughts regarding the barriers and supports related to the prospect of becoming a head of school. Reoccurring words, phrases, and patterns were categorized into themes (See Appendix F for a display of the categories, codes, and themes). Coding was checked for intra-coder reliability by three other professionals to check for consistency of themes and coding.

Themes. Several common themes emerged from the data and were reported by the female administrators who work in CAIS day schools that were interviewed for this study. The identified themes are associated with each particular research question concerning barriers, culture, and organizational structure.

Barriers. There were three themes that surrounded the participants' perceptions regarding barriers that women encounter when considering head of school positions in independent schools. The first theme was connected to work/family balance. The participants reflected not only on their own experiences, but included perceptions based on their observations and relationships with others as well. This also included comments regarding the demands of the role of head of school.

The second theme that emerged regarding women not pursuing head of school positions was the need for mentorship and encouragement. The women commented on the large amount of support and training given to the teaching faculty. However, many felt this to be lacking once in administrative positions. Many felt further training would

need to be self-initiated. Although they felt their efforts would be supported by the schools, they felt they lacked the encouragement to do so. Additionally, the schools were not prescribing specific workshops or training to bolster their leadership and administrative roles.

Finally, another theme that emerged as a barrier was a gendered expectation of leadership in independent schools. Throughout the interviews, participants communicated their perceptions of independent schools as traditionally being run by men. The statements made by participants regarding independent schools having a good ol' boys feeling, a stereotypical young, male, head of school leading schools, and the recycling of male heads who move from one school to the next. The statements made by participants were indicative of barriers to women.

School culture. There were two themes that emerged related to independent school culture and its possible impact on women's decisions to pursue a head of school position. The first theme was that women value the collaborative nature of independent schools. The participants felt that collaboration was valued and encouraged for the teaching staff. However, once in administrative positions, the women felt their roles to be more autonomous. Additionally, there was feedback from some of the participants that independent schools may attract more candidates for head of school, and more specifically women, if the model of leadership was non-hierarchical and more collaborative.

The second theme was a cultural shift where women perceived that the schools were increasingly being run more like a business. Participants felt they lacked specific knowledge of business related issues including finance, fundraising, and strategic

planning. Some of the participants commented on their awareness of independent

schools actively seeking leadership from people with business backgrounds. The women

did not feel they had the requisite skills to support the role of head of school.

Organizational structure. The most common theme related to organizational

structure that emerged was the model of independent schools and the working

relationship with the board of directors. Heads of independent schools work with a board

of directors to oversee both the academic and the business aspects of the program (Dolin,

2012; Lumby, 2011). Boards of directors are often tasked with hiring heads of schools.

Participants noted that businessmen who often serve on boards sought leadership who

looked like them. Others referenced the work the head of school does with the board and

the related challenges managing that including reporting to a board.

These themes reported by the participants are included in the analysis and

discussion as they pertain to each of the three research questions.

Research question 1. Research question 1 asked, What supports and/or

constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a

head of school? There were three major themes that surfaced when considering the

supports and/or constraints that women in independent schools experience when

considering becoming a head of school: work/life balance, mentoring and

encouragement, and a gendered expectation of leadership. These themes are displayed in

Figure 4.1. The figure displays the major themes that emerged from the participants'

responses related to the first research question. Some of the participants' comments are

provided in Chapter 4. The following quotes have been edited for readability. For the

complete transcript of participants comments, see Appendix G.

Theme	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	PG	PH	PI	PJ
Work/Life Balance	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	
Mentoring & Encouragement	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Gendered Expectation of Leadership	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√

Figure 4.1. Supports/Constraints - major themes reported by female administrators in CAIS schools.

Work/life balance. The interviews with the participants revealed the barrier for women related to maintain/secure/obtain a work/life balance. This was not only noted in their own personal experiences as leaders, but they also felt it to be a possible barrier for women in pursuing head of school positions in independent schools.

Participant A commented,

> The struggles that . . . women might face if she were also, depending on her family structure, if she were also raising a family at the same time. The demands of a head of school are great far outside the hours of the school day.

Participant B commented,

> I think from my perspective, I think that some of it is cultural. And I think that in our society, in our country, I think that women still bear the burden of family life, or feel like they do, right?

Participant G noted that although she does not view work/family balance as a barrier for herself, she noted that it may be for others:

> The demands on the head are, I think appear to many women to be totally incompatible with being a member of your own family, you know, having

children, and I certainly have experienced those challenges. I don't actually see it as–for me that's not a barrier.

   Mentorship and encouragement. The interviews with the participants conveyed the women's appreciation for mentorship and encouragement along their career path to their respective administrative positions, but some felt it lacking once in these positions. Participant E noted the lack of mentoring and encouragement in her leadership role: "We've talked a lot about like gender and race in terms of independent school leadership, I think that people don't recognize the need for specific mentoring and encouragement for different groups." She also stated, "you know, and one of the things that I would really like is more mentoring from women, but there's not a lot of examples of that in my current community to find that." Participant F also felt that mentoring and encouragement were lacking in her current leadership role:

> I think that, it's been interesting 'cause I have felt in my current position
> sometimes, I have been hungry for a mentor. Somebody to say, "Hey, hey," and I,
> and that's not the case, I mean, we, there are good conversations about
> professional development and things to pursue, but I feel like the onus is more on
> me in this setting than it was in my previous setting.

The comments from Participant G were similar regarding the lack of mentoring and encouragement:

> I actually, I mean I complained to (the headmaster) at the end of my second year
> that I felt like I didn't get enough critical feedback. And, but I said, you know, I
> said, "Look, I think I'm doing a good job, I think you think I'm doing a good job,

(laughs) but I don't think, like no one's saying to me, [name of participant], here's

something you could improve on.

Participant I did find the support of her mentor helpful and has experienced the

encouragement to take on a head of school position: "Yeah. I have aspirations to become

head of school one day. I thankfully have a head of school who supports that

wholeheartedly."

    Gendered expectation of leadership. The perceptions of the female

administrators regarding their explanation of a lack of women in head of school positions

highlighted gender-related barriers for women. Participant A reflected, "I think certainly

there's still a bit of a glass ceiling even though education is so predominantly female."

Participant B commented, "I think the other piece is that I do think that a lot of

independent schools still have sort of an old boy feeling to them."

Participant C shared her thoughts, "I think it is tough for women in many ways. Whether

it's in the school administration or in business. I think that people do judge women or

think about women in a different way than they do men."

Participant D shared a personal experience: "I think there are times where women aren't

necessarily afforded those opportunities because for whatever reason, a man seems,

seems to be more qualified to a hiring group." Participant E commented on the current

leadership in her school: "So a lot of the conversations have been, you know, why are,

why is it so many men in these positions?" At this point the interviewer asked a follow-

up question: "And you said the students are commenting on this as well?" Participant E

then continued,

"Yes, yes, the teacher asked the students, like, well, they were having a conversation about gender and they, the teacher said, you know, how do you think that plays out here at our school, and the kids were like, commenting on the fact that their perception of how the structure works was that all the men were in charge.

Participant H discussed her perception as to why women are lacking in head of school positions:

I actually think that's the case because, there remains rampant sexism in this country. And, people's image of leadership is rarely aligned with components of women …But I still feel like what people are looking for in a head of school, is a 40-year-old hands- I joke about this. A 40-year-old handsome man, and really, beyond that, my sense is that there is very little that distinguishes all those people, but they seem to be getting hired in, in numbers, I think, in this profession.

Participant I shared her view as well:

Oh, I think that's the case because I think independent schools were built on exclusion and on the real old traditions, and as much as our country continues to change and progress, I do think that we're still set in some old ways.

Participant J discussed her opinion:

I think a lot of, there's a lot of recycling of heads of school–there are a lot of White male heads of schools, and, I think that it's somewhat of a network that feeds itself with openings. And I think it's slowly changing.

Research question 2. Research question 2 asked, How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders? There were

two major themes that surfaced during the interviews when considering how the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders. These themes are displayed in Figure 4.2. The following quotes have been edited for readability. For the complete transcript of participants comments, see Appendix G.

Theme	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	PG	PH	PI	PJ
Collaboration is highly valued	√	√	√	√	√		√			√
Increasingly run like a business	√	√		√	√	√		√		√

Figure 4.2. Culture - major themes reported by female administrators in CAIS schools.

Collaboration is highly valued. A consistently identified cultural piece by the participants was the collaborative nature of independent schools. The women valued the collaborative and collegial nature of not only the culture, but how it influenced decision making. However, some felt that this cultural piece was missing in certain administrative roles, inclusive of head of school.

Participant A worked in a school with a leadership structure that is shared, non-hierarchical, and comprised of women. The result was a more collaborative culture. Participant A said,

> I think the bodies of this school have had much better, much more consistent communication, which is always a good thing, [a] non-hierarchical model, really requires a lot more communication, a lot more, diplomacy, a lot more, it's a lot more relationship building.

Participant B commented on the lack of collaboration once assuming a leadership position:

You know you, you're on your, it's sort of that weird structure that, that sort of we fought so hard to get rid of for teachers, like we've said to teachers, you know, "We're not gonna let you be alone in your classroom anymore. We're gonna make you collaborate." But we don't do that, certainly at my school, for administrators yet, which is fascinating.

Participant E reflected on the need for a more collaborative work environment:

So there's not a sense that like faculty input is really valued in terms of decision making. And faculty frequently express to each other that it feels like there's kind of like this disconnect between the people running the school and the people teaching in it, and that there might be some individual kinda collaboration in work, but it's not happening like on an institutional level.

Participant G viewed a shared (distributive) leadership model as one that may be more attractive to women:

So I mean I kind of question the whole model of headship. I feel like why aren't we challenging the notion that there has to be this one head of school, like would it be impossible to run a school with like a more distributed leadership model? I think that if schools were willing to say there's gonna be, you know, someone whose like an assistant head of school for finance and operations, and advancement, and, you know, whatever, and that you had kind of a person on the money side, and a person on the teaching and learning and division side, I think you'd get a lot more people of my generation, including a lot more women-. that would step forward into those roles.

Participant J appreciated the collaborative culture of independent schools in comparison to public schools:

> I think the number of hoops needed to jump through to bring about change, or to get an idea to fruition is much simpler, and I think very much it is a much more collaborative process; we have a really collaborative faculty. We're not siloed at all, and that is done both, sort of, culturally as in like the way we do things, and also deliberately.

Independent schools are increasingly being run like a business. Across the span of the interviews with the 10 participants, a majority of the women commented on the cultural shift of independent schools increasingly being run as a business and the related requisite skills. Participant A shared her insight:

> I think what happens sometimes is the intersection between, very smart, well meaning, business leaders who might be on the board, but yet don't have the day to day experience in the school. And sometimes that clash, like how it, how you know, there's areas where we can get great ideas from them and then there's areas where it's just not quite the same as in the business world or it's just not quite the same, there's a lot, there's not a great understanding of the day to day running of the school.

Participant B emphasized the priority for her head of school: "The fiscal sort of sustainability of the institution is a priority." Participant E also commented,

> I think the financial part of it is also very intimidating. Just like managing an entire school budget and, obviously you have like, you know, a CFO for that, but,

at this point in my career, I don't feel confident engaging with all of those

different challenges.

Participant E and furthered this with: "Our school right now feels very much like a

business."

Participant F commented on what might be influencing her decision to pursue a

head of school position. Participant F said,

That's partly why I'm taking this aspiring heads course, because I want to answer

that question. Am I not doing it because I'm so accommodated, and I'm used to

people like pushing me along, and I don't want to take the risk? Or is it because I

genuinely think I don't have a skill set?

Participant G shared, "Well it's a lot obviously, on the money side of school,

which, you know, I, I know that I could learn, but I don't know now, so it's, you know, it's

thinking about the budget, it's thinking about fundraising." Participant J shared her

perspective:

I think that's an example I think that's something that came about after the

economic downturn. Is you had boards look around and say, "Oh my gosh, we

need to run this place more like a business, tighten things up a little bit. Schools

are hiring people from colleges, they're hiring from the business world for heads."

Research question 3. Research question 3 asked, In what ways, if at all, does the

organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top

leadership positions? There was one major theme that surfaced during the interviews

when considering how the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers

for women to access top leadership positions. That theme was identified as the

challenges and opportunities of working with the board of directors. All participants but

one expressed this as an area to be aware of when considering head of school

responsibilities. This theme is displayed in Figure 4.3. The following quotes have been

edited for readability. For the complete transcript of participants comments, see

Appendix G.

Theme	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	PG	PH	PI	PJ
Board	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√

Figure 4.3. Organizational structure - major theme reported by female administrators.

An aspect of organizational structure identified by the participants was the

independent school's model of the head of school working with the board of directors.

The women commented on the influence of the board, the importance of working with a

board, and the need to maintain good relationships and communication with the board.

Participant A relayed,

…but I think really, mainly I think, I don't know, you know, at least in our case I

think boards of directors are often made up of businessmen. And so, I think it's

the, the glass ceiling that women face. You know, I think businessmen often

choose other businessmen.

Participant C discussed her view regarding the work with a board:

I've never had to report to a board the way a head of school has to report to a

board. Now I have reported to the board, but it doesn't mean to say I attend board

meetings and give reports on various parts of my job. But, having gone through a

couple heads of school and having some who didn't stay for too long, I do know

that the personality mix you get on a board can make or break your career at that

particular school.

Participant D reflected on the prospect of her head of school leaving and commented:

> [It would] be a hiring process, I don't think they [the board] would want to hire
> internally. Our current head of school was hired internally, and I think should he
> leave either on his own terms, or because they don't, re-up a contract, I believe
> that they would look externally for someone to replace him.

At this point the interviewer asked a follow-up question: "Why do you think they would
not consider an internal candidate?" Participant D responded,

> I think that they would be wanting someone fresh, a fresh perspective on the
> school. This is a school that's done a lot of, hiring and shifting of positions
> internally, and I think that as a leadership group the board of trustees would want
> to entertain more closely the possibility of someone to come and take a fresh look
> at this school.

Participant D continued this thought related to the board by saying, "But I think that they
do sometimes appropriately and sometimes beyond their preview express concerns about
different things programmatically or, or in terms of hiring." Participant G commented on
the head of school's need to work with a board:

> I think a lot of it ends up being really working with your board, and cultivating
> board members, and you know, it's, it's much more the 30,000 foot view of
> school- and I kinda like the work on the ground, you know?

Participant I commented on the work the head of school conducts with the board of
directors:

> But as head, I know the pressures from the board and from other places, so I think
> she has to balance that pretty heavily. But I would still say, even though I think

she [the head of school] has to appease the board at times, that her heart is still

with the children.

Participant J discussed the influence the board has on the school: "I hear it from our

board, that the place should be run more like a business."

Themes related to barriers, culture, and organizational structure emerged based on

the research questions and the feedback from the participants. Perceptions of both

barriers and supports for women were noted when considering the lack of women in head

of school positions in independent schools.

Summary of Results

The results of this research identified factors that influence women as they

consider head of school position in an independent school. The interviews with female

administrators in CAIS day schools revealed major themes related to the barriers,

organizational structure, and culture of independent schools that might be contributing to

the lack of women in head of school positions.

Three major themes were identified related to the barriers perceived by women to

advance to a head of school position: work/life balance, mentorship and encouragement,

and a gendered expectation of leadership. Two major themes related to the culture of

independent schools were found: collaboration as a valued approach, and independent

schools being increasingly run more like a business. One major theme emerged with

regard to the organizational structure of independent schools; this was the work with a

board of directors. Chapter 5 will make connections from the findings of this study to the

literature. There will also be a discussion of the study's limitations as well as the

implications and recommendations for future research and best practices for National

Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) schools.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This research identified factors that might be influencing why women are not pursuing head of school positions in independent schools. The interviews with female administrators in Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) day schools revealed major themes related to the barriers, organizational structure, and culture of independent schools that might be contributing to the lack of women in head of school positions. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings, limitations of the research, suggestions for future research and recommendations.

Research related to gender and leadership has been conducted over the last several decades. Research supports the fact that that women still outnumber men as educators in the classroom (Bitterman et al., 2013; Chubb, 2015). However, despite the representation of women in the field of education, leadership positions such as superintendent in the public school sector and head of school in the independent school sector remain dominated by men (Chubb, 2015; Kerr et al., 2014; Wallace, 2014). The existing body of literature concerning gender and school leadership focuses primarily on public schools in relation to the roles of principals or superintendents, or the consideration of these roles by female educators. Barriers and supports that are both impeding and facilitating women's access to the top level of administrative positions in the public school sector have been discussed in the literature.

There is a gap in the research related to independent schools (Ostos, 2012). Even though women fill the majority of teaching positions, women only represent one-third of the heads of schools in independent schools (Chubb, 2015). This research adds to the body of knowledge not only related to women in educational leadership, but more specifically, within an independent school setting.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to increase the understanding of the perspectives of women on the barriers, organizational structure, and culture of independent schools that may be influencing a gendered expectation of what leadership looks like in an independent school. These perspectives provide insight into the issues that possibly limit access to head of school positions for women in independent schools.

The phenomenological inquiry for this study used semi-structured, teleconference interviews in order to understand the perspectives and lived-experiences of female administrators in independent schools. They were asked to consider the gender imbalance in head of school positions, as well as provide their perception of barriers related to organizational structure and culture of independent schools. The semi-structured interviews explored the research questions:

1. What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a head of school?

2. How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders?

3. In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions?

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Implications of Findings

As heads of schools step down in independent schools, there is a need to fill these roles. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) has identified a need for people to fill leadership positions in independent schools; however, they have not addressed the reasons why women have not pursued these roles. Independent schools have an organizational structure and culture that is distinct from public schools which may be creating barriers to women to consider or even pursue a head of school position in an independent school. The findings from this research study have implications in reviewing current practices in independent schools as well as informing training programs to increase access for women to head of school positions.

The research related to women and top school leadership positions was primarily in the context of a public school setting due to the scarcity of research related to independent schools, and even more so, to gender and head of school positions. When examining the literature related to gender and school leadership, there were many barriers noted by women that they experienced in their careers. These barriers were identified in educator preparation programs, in the workplace, and outside of work. However, some women did see positive avenues to pursue career paths, such as having a mentor. These noted areas can be viewed as falling under the umbrella of role theory with social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Wood, 1988) providing a framework to these factors.

The research related to the context of gender and leadership yielded common barriers that were related to social roles (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 1998). Prevalent in the research were barriers related to sex-role stereotypes (Bjork, 2000; Klatt, 2014;

Montz & Wanat, 2008; Munoz et al., 2014), gender bias and discrimination (Coleman, 2004; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Munoz et al., 2014; Ostos, 2012; Wallace, 2014) and those related to familial roles and responsibilities (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008; Montz & Wanat, 2008; Sanchez & Thornton, 2010; Wallace, 2014).

The participants in this study identified similar supports and constraints related to the research in a public school context with respect to gender and school leadership. The interviews with the participants and subsequent findings through the identification of major themes also revealed a correlation with the theoretical framework of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 1998).

Barriers. This first research question addresses the supports or constraints women perceive when considering a head of school position in an independent school. Three major themes were identified related to the barriers perceived by women to advance to a head of school position.

Major theme 1: work/family balance. The participants mentioned the challenge women have balancing the demands of work and raising a family. Some reflected on their own experiences of taking time off during their careers to focus on their family. Others commented on seeing the need for co-workers to leave their jobs due to family obligations. One participant did not view this as a barrier for herself. The demands of both working in an independent school, and those specific to the role of head of school were discussed. The head of school is responsible for many constituencies related to the school, and the time to do so extends beyond the school day. The women spoke of wanting to preserve the work/family balance they currently had, and taking on more responsibility as a head of school would not allow for that. The demands of balancing

work and family responsibilities that were noted by the participants were also supported in the research related to public schools. Montz and Wanat (2008) found women superintendents felt conflicted by the time required to be a superintendent and the time needed to be dedicated to their families. Wallace (2014) conducted a survey of female superintendents regarding the advice they would give to prospective female superintendents. The advice included understanding the long hours of being a superintendent and the impact it would have on families. Derrington and Sharratt (2008), in their survey of superintendent hopefuls, also found the women identified barriers to their pursuit of the role of superintendent that included motherhood and obligations to the family. Sanchez & Thornton (2010) also found in their review of the research, that family obligations were considered to be a barrier to women pursuing roles such as principal and superintendent. The demands of time and responsibility on a head of school may be a barrier to women pursuing these roles in the context of an independent school.

Major theme 2: mentorship and encouragement. The participants also felt that being supported and having a mentor was important, but felt it lacking once in their leadership roles. Participants commented on the value and impact of having a mentor in their early career. However, many noted an absence of mentorship in their current roles as leaders. One woman was actively seeking mentorship to support her in her current role. It is important to note that one participant in the study did identify having a mentor, which was her female head of school, who was fully supportive and encouraging of her pursuit of a head of school position.

The role of a mentor was noted and supported in the research as being important for women to further their careers. Burkman (2011) found in her study of women, that female principals felt support was lacking from fellow administrators. Munoz et al. (2014) examined transcripts from two previous studies of aspiring or current female superintendents. They found that the women who were superintendents identified the role a mentor played in developing their leadership skills, encouraging them, and helping them to take the position.

Wallace (2014) found the importance of having a mentor in her survey of female superintendents regarding the advice they would give to prospective female superintendents. Montz and Wanat (2008) found in their study that women superintendents identified the importance of a mentor as part of their career paths. These mentors were people that had identified the women as potential leaders, and supported and encouraged them to pursue such a role. Sanchez and Thornton (2010) in their review of literature of issues related to K-12 education and gender (with a focus on principals and superintendents) found that having a mentor was seen as a way for women to break the gender barriers and provide access to school leadership positions.

The importance of having a mentor was noted in the research related to women and leadership within the context of public schools including the roles of principal and superintendents. Although research related to independent schools is limited, the qualitative portion of a study by Ostos (2012), interviewed eight female heads of school in independent schools. A support identified as being valuable in their pursuit of a head of school was that of having a mentor (Ostos, 2012). The need for mentorship and encouragement identified by female administrators in independent schools could be a

contributing factor to the lack of women pursuing higher leadership positions, such as head of school.

  Major theme 3: gendered expectation of leadership. A barrier noted by the participants revealed a highly commonly shared belief that there is a gendered expectation of leadership in independent schools. Each participant discussed their own perspective regarding what was contributing to this which included good ol' boys network, the recycling of male heads going from one school to the next, the foundation of independent schools as being exclusive, and a commonly accepted stereotype of a young, male, educated head of school. The gendered expectation of leadership was also found in the literature. Galman and Mallozzi (2012), in their literature review of women's gendered experiences in U.S. elementary schools, the researchers found that men were encouraged more than were women to pursue leadership roles. Burton and Weiner (2014) found in their comparative case study, that a principal preparation program encouraged practices reflecting a more masculine expectation of the role of principal. Montz and Wanat (2008) found in their study, that female superintendents identified sex-role stereotypes, discrimination, gender bias, and ol' boy networks favoring male candidates over women for these positions. Munoz et al. (2014) in their examination of transcripts from two previous studies of aspiring or current female superintendents, found sexism, discrimination, and gender structuring as barriers to these roles. The participants in the current study feel there is a preference to have males in head of school positions in independent schools. This can be a contributing barrier to women wanting to pursue this role.

Culture. The second research question addresses the culture of independent schools. Two major themes were identified related to the culture of independent schools and how they may be impacting women's decisions to pursue top leadership roles in independent schools.

Major theme 1: collaboration as a valued approach. The participants overall spoke highly of the collaborative nature of independent schools. However, in some settings, collaboration seemed to wane once women were in administrative positions. Collaboration also appeared to contradict the role of headmaster as the top position in a hierarchical model. It is important to note that two participants did comment on a more shared, or distributive model of leadership. Two participants felt that independent schools should consider the distributive model of leadership due to the high demands of headship. The collaborative model may assist in attracting not only women but men to independent headship

Working collaboratively was identified as a valued cultural piece for the participants and is in alignment with communal characteristics being favored by women. This is supported in the research. Bush (2006) wrote about an educational model that is a collegial model and emphasizes a shared model of decision making. Both Gibson (1995) and Eagly (2009) found women to emphasize more communal interactions with others. A qualitative study published in 2014 by Klatt consisted of an in-depth case study of two superintendents. The results found that people used the term "collaborative" to describe the female superintendent. In research related to independent schools, the qualitative portion of Ostos's study (2012) noted that women, as heads of school, valued collaboration as well as developing solid relationships with the board president and other

trustees. One of the things they felt was valuable in relation to their pursuit of a head of school position was collaboration and working as part of a team (Ostos, 2012). The participants in the current study felt collaboration was emphasized for the teaching faculty, but some felt siloed once in a leadership position. The lack of collaboration in head of school positions may serve as a deterrent to women seeking these positions.

Major theme 2: increasingly run more like a business. Another cultural aspect that was identified by the participants, but was not supported by the research related to public schools, was that independent schools appear to be increasingly run like a business. The specific skillset now required to be a head of school may be the biggest barrier of all. Women in this study noted the need to understand finance, fundraising, and strategic planning. All but one of the participants started as educators in independent schools. The rest of the participants indicated that their training and education was focused on teaching. The qualitative portion of Ostos's study (2012), in the context of independent schools, noted that women as heads of school faced issues related to handling school finances. Independent schools may now require a head of school to be educated in a very specific area such as business and related training. As a result, former educators may not be the ones prepared to fill these roles.

Organizational structure. The third research question addresses the organizational structure of independent schools. One major theme emerged with regard to the organizational structure of independent schools. Working with the board of directors could serve as a possible constraint to women becoming a head of school.

Major theme: board. Finally, with respect to organizational structure, participants felt that demands placed by the board, as well as the board acting as a

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gatekeeper, could serve as deterrents to pursuing a leadership role. Participants

commented on the relationship a head of school must have with the board. Also

mentioned was the board's power over the contract of the head of school, and their

involvement in decision making in selecting a head. An impression shared was that

boards have many businessmen on them and increasingly, board members want the

school to be run like a business with a head of school who looks like them.

Another concern discussed by the participants was their not fully understanding

the role of the head of school and its related process in reporting to the board. Working

with the board was kept separate from the day to day operations of the school for most of

the participants. One participant was invited as an observer to all board meetings and

found it helpful to not only understand the role of head of school, but how the board

works in decision making for the school. Educational research supports these

perspectives regarding a board as well. The public school research is related to the model

followed by public school boards of education. Derrington and Sharratt (2008), in their

two studies found superintendent hopefuls felt school boards did not have a full

understanding of the qualifications of female candidates. Therefore, this lack of

knowledge was considered to be a barrier by the participants surveyed.

A study published in 2008 by Montz and Wanat looked at women superintendents

in one Midwestern state and the results highlighted the importance of board relationships.

Unlike public schools, independent schools have a tuition driven model and the head of

school works closely with the board of directors for both the educational, and business

aspects of the school (Dolin, 2012). The qualitative portion of Ostos' study (2012)

relating to independent schools, indicated that women, as heads of school, noted the

importance of developing solid relationships with the board president and other trustees. The participants in the current study indicated the board may be a barrier to hiring women into the role of head of school. Additionally, women's lack of understanding of how a head of school works with the board may also be serving as a barrier.

The findings of this study were consistent with the findings of previous studies related to both public school leadership and gender, as well as the limited research related to independent schools. This research serves as an addition to the scholarly work related to independent schools. There is limited research related to women and independent school leadership. The findings that emerged from this research may assist NAIS schools in understanding how to support the hiring practices of female school leaders, as well as, how to nurture the professional growth of females within their schools.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. The first limitation was the demographic representation of the participants. The participants in this study were all recruited from a CAIS accredited day school. Including participants from other NAIS accredited schools, inclusive of a representation of participants from other states, may provide different perspectives and add to the body of research related to independent schools.

A second limitation of this study was that the timing of this research coincided with the end of the school year and the beginning of summer. Due to this timing, the preferred method by participants was interviews via teleconference. In-person interviews may have been more robust.

The researcher for this study works as an administrator in a CAIS school. It is important to note that this aspect of being an insider did serve as a strength in the study and was advantageous in conducting the interviews with the participants and throughout the coding process. The benefits included a having knowledge of the general operations of independent schools. Additionally, there was an understanding of how independent schools vary and are influenced by factors such as mission, vision, enrollment numbers, student population, and financial stability. Further, the researcher understood how these factors may shape faculty roles, responsibilities, and related titles. This knowledge served the researcher during the interview and coding process. However, the positionality of the researcher as a female administrator in a CAIS school can also be viewed as a limitation. The researcher employed bracketing throughout the study, and disclosed to the participants her role within a CAIS school. Future research in this area conducted by someone outside NAIS schools may be valuable.

Recommendations for Practice

This section contains a discussion of recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research. As a result of this study, several recommendations have been proposed. The recommendations include providing mentorship and leadership development inclusive of the needs of female administrators working in independent schools, encouraging more training related to the work with the board and understanding finance, and conducting climate surveys in independent schools. Training and support are provided by independent schools both on a local, and a national level. NAIS, as well as the local state chapters, should look to their members as well as the research, to determine what areas of training need to be made available for individuals to bolster their

administrative skillset to better prepare for the changing culture of independent schools and the demands of a head of school.

Mentorship. Although the participants felt that independent schools were highly supportive of their teaching faculty, they felt a lack of support in their administrative roles. The findings of this study revealed a need for female administrators to be supported with mentorship and encouragement. Through participant responses and support by the research in the context of both independent and public schools, there is a call for mentoring for women. NAIS schools need to establish mentoring programs if they want to see women take on more leadership roles, including that of head of school. NAIS should look to the research and actively seek feedback from administrators in NAIS schools to better establish and/or support mentoring programs with professional standards, as a goal to create future leaders.

Mentorship programs must be specifically designed to meet the needs of women and help women bolster and further develop their leadership skills in a safe and supportive way. For example, caring, successful women, in the form of sitting or retired female heads of school could serve in these roles. Mentoring programs and training should be made available both on a national and local level. These mentoring programs need to be accessible in terms of location and time.

In my own experience in mentoring an upcoming female leader, I found there was a need to provide support and guidance to help her carry out a project she designed after attending an NAIS leadership workshop. The project was focused on providing more leadership opportunities and a voice for faculty for the sake of improving the school experience for both the faculty and school as a whole. One of the results from her project

was that the teaching faculty identified a need for a more formalized mentorship program for first and second year teachers. This further supports what the research states regarding the need for women to have mentorship programs. Schools should consider a "chain of command" mentality with regard to mentorship. Similar to veteran teachers mentoring new teachers, administrators should mentor veteran teachers, senior administrators should mentor newer administrators, and heads of school should mentor senior administrators. This will not only serve to benefit women, but all faculty of NAIS schools. NAIS schools should also require heads of school to be pro-active in encouraging people to attend locally and nationally sponsored association of independent school workshops, training, and mentorship programs.

Leadership development inclusive of the needs of female administrators. NAIS should look to determine if their Aspiring Heads Program is designed to include and address leadership challenges and styles specific to women, or if this program is perpetuating a gendered definition of leadership. A good leadership development program should be inclusive of all perspectives. Therefore, a program evaluation of the NAIS Aspiring Heads Program is recommended to determine its effectiveness for women. Thought should then be given to redesigning aspects of the Aspiring Heads Program to specifically target the needs of women. Additionally, NAIS should consider a more active recruitment process for this program. One participant from the current study referred to an e-mail from CAIS regarding this program, but there was no discussion on a school level promoting this program.

Training on finance and working with boards. Further administrative training for heads of school is recommended as it relates to understanding the financial aspects of

running a school and working with a board of directors. This suggestion could serve both men and women in the development of their leadership skills. Assessment of these areas should be done on a national level to determine specific areas in need of development. NAIS could create and provide workshops designed to further educate administrators in these two specific areas. These needs were identified by the participating administrators. Ostos (2012) also supported the need to focus on finance and Derrington and Sharratt, (2008) and Montz and Wanat (2008) proposed that greater attention be given to working with boards. Having personally gone through a doctoral program in executive leadership, I found the coursework related to shared governance, as well as finance and resource development, furthered my understanding in both of these areas.

Therefore, it is suggested that partnerships with local universities be developed to provide professional development in these areas. Additionally, to further assist heads of school in understanding how to work with the board of directors, administrators should attend board meetings, which could serve as additional training. This may also better position female administrators by establishing a relationship with their current board of directors. Furthermore, an effort can be made by individual schools to provide a deeper understanding of how the finances tie into the operations of the schools by arranging specific mentoring and training by the business manager and/or the chief financial officer. Support of individual heads of school and boards of directors is critical in these areas.

Climate surveys. Independent schools should consider evaluating the perception that their schools have a gendered expectation of leadership. This could have an impact on school culture, faculty, and student learning. NAIS needs to further investigate this

perceived aspect of independent school climate by employees and school constituents. A school climate survey used across state, regional, and local independent schools may provide insight into the factors influencing the perceptions related to gender and school leadership. This would be a proactive way to identify areas that may be supporting discriminatory behaviors and practices within independent schools. Once the needs are identified, school policies to address specific discriminatory behaviors and practices should be reviewed, updated, and employed. NAIS should require policy be put in place in individual schools and verification of such policies should be a part of the individual school's accreditation process. NAIS should also provide sensitivity training to local chapters as a proactive measure. These measures could help NAIS schools to support and promote a climate that is fair and accessible to all.

Recommendations for Future Study

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of women regarding the lack of women serving as heads of school in independent schools. While there are numerous studies related to gender and leadership in the context of public schools, further research related to independent schools and its leadership should be considered.

This study examined the perspectives of female administrators to identify the barriers women perceive regarding the pursuit of a headship position, as well as the influence of the organizational structure and culture of independent schools. There are independent schools that have women serving as heads of school. Further research can be conducted by examining the perspectives of women who have already attained the head of school position in independent schools. Understanding their perspectives regarding their supports and barriers will also add to the body of knowledge related to

gender and independent school leadership. This proposed study would provide more insight for NAIS schools to increase female representation in the role of head of school.

Boards of directors play a significant role in independent schools. This includes the selection process of a head of school. Future research is recommended regarding the selection process of independent school boards in seeking a head of school. Additionally, understanding the perspectives of board members as they search for qualified candidate for the position of head of school, should be included. This research may inform aspiring female candidates as well as NAIS provided preparation programs and training.

Future research should be expanded to include participants from other NAIS accredited schools, inclusive of a representation of participants from other states. A qualitative study would allow for a larger number of participants, and may serve to capture this phenomenon using qualitative measures. A broader geographic reach may also provide different perspectives and add to the body of research related to independent schools.

Conclusion

The majority of research related to school leadership has been in the context of a public school setting. This study has identified factors that might be influencing a gendered expectation of a head of school position in independent schools based on the perspective of the participants. This research is important to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) as the findings of this study has resulted in implications for future research and may assist in the development of training programs to address specific barriers, inclusive of aspects of organizational structure, and cultural aspects of

independent schools that might be serving as a deterrent to the pursuit of head of school positions by women in independent schools.

The percentage of women in head of school positions remains far below their representation in the profession of teaching. It is important that we learn from the research and listen to the voices of the women as we seek to change the imbalance and fix the inequities. In the words of Gloria Vanderbilt, "I always believed that one woman's success can only help another woman's success."

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Consent to Database Use by CAIS

-------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Rose Conley** ████████████████████
Date: Friday, March 17, 2017
Subject: Question regarding a research study for my Ed,D.
To: "Gallagher, Kathleen" ████████████████████████

Hi Kathleen,

I'm happy to give you a list of the CAIS Schools and their Heads. It is attached in an excel spreadsheet.
Please feel free to contact me if you need anything else.

Best of luck with your dissertation!

Rose

On Fri, Mar 17, 2017 at 1:19 PM, Gallagher, Kathleen
████████████████████████████ wrote:
Hello, I am Kathleen Gallagher, and I am the head of lower school at Eagle Hill Southport School. I am in an EdD program at Saint John Fisher College at their New Rochelle satellite campus. My dissertation is focused on the disproportionate representation of men as head of schools in independent schools. I am writing to see if there is a database of e-mails of CAIS administrators, and if so, would I be able to have one time access to it in order to execute my study. I look forward to any support or guidance that can be given to me in order for me to complete my study. Thank you in advance for your consideration. -Kathleen Gallagher ████████████ Please see the proposed abstract below:

The current representation of women as head of schools in accredited National

Association of Independent Schools schools is significantly less than that of

men. Further, the percentage of women in these top positions remains far below their

representation in the profession of teaching. This study will examine the perspectives of

female administrators from the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools on the

under-representation of women as heads of school in independent schools. This

qualitative study will be framed through social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 1988) and

will be guided by three research questions: What supports and/or constraints do women in independent schools experience when considering becoming a head of school? How does the culture of independent schools affect women becoming independent school leaders? In what ways, if at all, does the organizational structure of independent schools create barriers for women to access top leadership positions? To understand the barriers, a sample of 10 female administrators working in an NAIS accredited CAIS day schools will be interviewed.

--

Kathleen Gallagher
Head of Lower School
Eagle Hill Southport School
214 Main Street, Southport, CT 06890

██████████████████████████████████████

Appendix B

Voluntary Participation Request for Participation in Study

Dear CAIS Administrators,

I am a doctoral candidate at St. John Fisher College, enrolled in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. I am conducting a study focused on the gender representation of head of schools in independent schools. The purpose of the study is to increase the understanding of the perspectives of women on the barriers, organizational culture, and structure of independent schools, which might be limiting access to head of school positions for women in independent schools.

You are being invited to participate in this research because of your role as a female administrator in a CAIS school. While the field of school leadership is largely written about, independent school leadership is vastly underrepresented in the literature. I believe that you can provide valuable insight through your participation in this study. This study will consist of a semi - structured interview. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes, with 90 minutes reserved for the total meeting. The interview will be recorded so that it can be transcribed and analyzed for trends.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will not be asked to provide any identifying information outside of the research team as a measure of confidentiality. Reports or publications generated from the data collected will not include any information which will identify you as a participant. The findings from the study may be shared with the CAIS and NAIS for the purpose of providing more information related to this topic.

The researcher is a doctoral candidate enrolled in Executive Leadership (Ed.D.) program at Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY. This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the completion of the dissertation. No identifying information outside of the research team will be shared during any dissemination of any data. There is minimal risk to you from participating in the interview, no more than might be encountered in an everyday situation.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider being part of this research, and indicating your willingness to do so by (2 weeks from date of e-mail). If you are interested in participating or have any further questions, please e-mail me at: ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Gallagher
Doctoral Candidate
St. John Fisher College
▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆

Appendix C

Letter of Introduction

Date:
Dear Participant:

Hello and thank you for your participation in the research study.

The researcher is an Educational Doctorate (Ed. D) candidate at St. John Fisher College. I believe your input will be valuable to this research study. As part of the study, you will assist with uncovering the phenomena of why there are limited numbers of women in head of school positions in independent schools.

The purpose of the research study is to identify the barriers women perceive regarding the pursuit of a headship position as well as the influence of the organizational structure and culture of independent schools. Studies have shown there are common barriers to leadership for women in the public school sector. If the barriers can be identified in the independent school sector, then independent schools can be informed and make the changes needed in order to increase the number of women represented in these roles.

Currently there are limited research articles that discuss women and leadership in independent schools. In this study you will be asked semi-structured questions in the interview. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be recorded so that I can collect the results of each interview and combine for analysis. There is minimal risk to you from participating in the interview, no more than might be encountered in an everyday situation. If you decide to end the interview early, there will be no repercussions to you. To encourage a quality conversation, I have the option to ask follow up or clarifying questions related to the research questions. This will elicit valuable data to use in the study.

All interviews will be confidential outside of the research team and you will decide on a false name for you as well as the school in which you work to be called during the interview. All notes and recordings of the interviews will be locked and stored at the researcher's home for three years.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the completion of the dissertation. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail the researcher, Kathleen Gallagher, at ███████████████, or my dissertation chair, Dr. W. Jeff Wallis, at ████████████.

Best regards,
Kathleen Gallagher
Ed. D. Candidate and Researcher
St. John Fisher College
███████████████

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

St. John Fisher College
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study: Barriers to Pursuing the Role of Head of School as Perceived By Female
Administrators in Independent Schools
Name of researcher: Kathleen Gallagher
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. W. Jeff Wallis
Phone for further information: █████████
Purpose of study: To increase the understanding of the perspectives of women on of the barriers,
organizational structure, and culture of independent schools that may be influencing a gendered
expectation of what leadership looks like in an independent school and possibly limiting access to
head of school positions for women in independent schools.
Place of study: Location to be determined or via electronic teleconference.
Length of participation: 90 minutes

Risks and benefits:
The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:
Participating in this interview will provide minimal risk to you. Although this dissertation will be
published, none of your identifying information will be included.
Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:
Your rights: As a research participant, you have the right to:
1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you
before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that
might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above
named study.
Print name (Participant)
Signature
Date
Print name (Investigator)
Signature
Date
If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above.
If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please
contact your health care provider for appropriate referrals.
The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project.

Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. This interview is being recorded and will be kept confidential. I am interested in learning about your experiences as a female administrator working in an independent school.

Rapport:
Personal:
Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Are you married? Do you have any children?
Professional:
How long have you been in education? How long have you been working in independent schools?

School Culture:
Tell me a little about your school.
How long have you been at your school?
How do you feel about working in an independent school?
Can you elaborate?
How would you describe the culture of your school?

Professional:
What kind of professional development is in place for teachers? For administrators? For those aspiring to take on more leadership roles?
Who do you feel is encouraged in this area?
How long have you been in administration?
Tell me about your career path and how you attained this position? or What factors have shaped your leadership development?
What challenges have you faced in your position as a leader?
How are you encouraged to grow professionally? Is this true for other administrators?

Leadership Structure:
Can you describe the structure of leadership in your school?
Can you tell me your impressions of your head of school?
If the head of school were to leave tomorrow, who would be in charge? Why?
How do you define successful leadership?

Head of School:
Would you ever consider becoming a head of school? Can you expand on that?
What are your career goals?
What kind of support or constraints do you feel are in place for people who would like to take on more leadership?
NAIS states that there are only ⅓ of women as heads of school in independent schools. Why do you think that's the case?

Closing:
I have no further questions. Do you have anything more you want to bring up, or ask about, before we finish the interview? Thank you for your participation.

Appendix F

Descriptions of Themes

Category	Code	Theme
Early Career	Lt--Loves teaching Pe--Previous Experience Yi--Years in Independent School Ye--Years in education Ya--Years in administration	
Pathway to Leadership	Lon--Longevity Inc--Incompetence T--Tapped SL--Servant Leadership Op--Opportunities Nop--No Opportunities	
Professional Development	Ment--Mentor Enc--Encouraged Nenc--Not encouraged S--Supported Ns--Not Supported SI--Self Initiated GS--Goal Setting Pd--Professional Development	Mentoring and Encouragement - A lack of this is creating a barrier to women to pursuing more leadership opportunities, training, and seeking head of school positions
Organizational Culture	Aut--Autonomy Sil--Silos Cty--Community Com--Communal Agn--Agentic Ff--Family Friendly Coll--Collaborative	Collaboration is valued and was missed in administrative roles Independent Schools are increasingly being run like a business

	Sup--Supportive Mis--Mission Trad--Traditional Mh--Many hats Rlb--Run like a business Fin--Finance Budg--Budget Reln--Relationships	
Organizational Structure	Bd--Board of Directors BdRep--Reporting to Board Gk—Gatekeeping Hr--Hiring H--Hierarchical Nh-non--Non Hierarchical Sl--Shared Leadership Lr--Leadership Roles	Board of Directors, including working with and reporting to a board, and the responsibility a board has in hiring a head of school
Barriers to Head of School	Gc--Glass Ceiling Wfb--Work/Family Balance Gr--Gender Roles Gd--Gender Discrimination Gob--Good Ol' Boys Mmq--Men more qualified Mel--Male expectation of Leadership Sism--Sexism Sks--Skillset Tc--Tough Conversations Bw--Business World Hos-Head of School	Work/Family Balance, including the demands of the head of school, the hours outside of school, and the time away from family Gendered Expectation of Leadership, the sense that independent schools feel men should be in charge

Larger Context of Interview Transcripts

Work/Life/Family Balance

Participant A.

"I think certainly there's still a bit of a glass ceiling even though education is so predominantly female. Um, also um, the struggles that might, that women might face if, if she were also um, depending on her family structure, if she were also raising a family at the same time. Um, the demands of a head of school are great far outside the hours of the school day."

Participant B.

"I'm in a place in my life where I have loved being a division head, but I am ready to sort of have my life back. And, um, 'cause I think I, and maybe this is professional development too, like I didn't ever learn how to leave my job at school. I think that is an enormous part of administrating in that when you're a teacher, you know, you're working at 150% for nine or 10 months out of the year and then you walk away, and then you walk away at vacation. You know, most teachers don't walk away at night or on the weekend anymore but you know, you have a whole piece of your life that's, that's separate from your work life. And when you become an administrator that is no longer the case. And nobody teaches you how to navigate that. Um, and so, and I think that I don't know whether men are taught that or whether it's something innate in sort of, you know, gender characteristics or they watch their fathers do it, I don't know, but I think that's a really interesting piece of it that nobody talks about and that I think I didn't even realize until well into it, I think from my perspective, um, I think that some of it is cultural. And I think that in our society, in our country, I think that women still bear the burden of family life, um, or feel like they do, right? Um, and I also think that I'm interested watching like my children, you know go, come into adulthood and are they, do they look at their work like, life in a different way? I mean they certainly do right now and it'll be interesting to see because I think

for me, you know, women my age who were coming into education, we didn't have models for that, you know, we didn't have models really, a lot of models for women working full time throughout their career."

Participant G.

". . . the other thing, and certainly not the first person to, you know, uh, make this observation, is that, you know, the demands on the head are, I think appear to many women to be totally incompatible with being a- a, a member of your own family, you know, having children, um, and I certainly have experienced those challenges. Um, I don't actually see it as, for me that's not a barrier, b- I, um, I-I feel like I'm through the hard part, like I became a head of upper school with a four year old and a one year old, so (laughs) I'm like it's fine, like (laughing) nothing will ever be as hard as that was. So, uh, I don't, you know, but- but I- I do know that that's a reason that people give often."

Mentorship and Encouragement

Participant E. (Comment 1):

"We've talked a lot about like gender and race in terms of independent school leadership, I think that people don't recognize the need for specific mentoring and encouragement for different groups. And when I talk to our, my head of school about even hiring women and hiring people of color, that we need to go out of our way to do that, he tends to believe that those people will just find us naturally. And I think it's very similar for women in leadership, that we like, we're swimming upstream. And so instead of just saying, keep swimming upstream, good luck, there needs to be more active support and active opportunity creation for us to be able to go against that, you know 70%, or whatever it is, of male leadership, I think that if anyone on my senior administrative team sat down with me and said I think you'd be a really cool Head of School someday, that sentence alone would go a long way. Um, just like a communication of a belief that that's something that's possible would be awesome. I think that, and then, you know, what could follow from that. So like, Hey [name of participant], I think you would be a great, um, Head of School, you know, how, how is that something you'd wanna do and how could we help you make that happen."

Participant E. (Comment 2):

"It's pretty much what I initiate. I can't think of any examples where someone has been like, hey, I saw this thing and thought of you, or um, I would really, you know, and one of the things that I would really like is more mentoring from women, but there's not a lot of examples of that in my current community to find that, and so I've tried to find that outside of the school, but that's, yeah that's all pretty much me. There's no, there's nobody coming by saying hey, did you, have you ever thought about this?"

Participant F:

Researcher: "Well it sounds like you've had a lot of factors that have shaped your leadership development. That was going to be one of my questions, but I think you were pretty thorough, unless there's anything else you want to add."

Participant F: "Yeah, I think um, like, early mentorship, even if it was for their own purposes, you know what I mean, it wasn't necessarily about me and fostering growth in me. I think that, it's been interesting 'cause I have felt in my current position sometimes, I have been hungry for a mentor. Somebody to say, "Hey, hey," and I, and that's not the case, I mean, we, there are good conversations about professional development and things to pursue, but I feel like the onus is more on me in this setting than it was in my previous setting."

Researcher: "Mm-hmm [affirmative]."

Participant F: "Um, which has been kind of interesting."

Researcher: "So what kind of professional development is in place for teachers at your school?"

Participant F: "We have um, we have money set aside that every faculty associate and staff member has access to. Um, they're supposed to go through a process where they get endorsement from their division head, and the head of school just to sign off on, yeah, this is an appropriate use of the, the resources. I believe it's between $1,000 and $2,000, um, and that's on an annual basis.

Um, we also have 2 full-day professional development days. We have a mentorship program for new faculty, um, where they have monthly seminar meetings as well as a mentor that they meet with um, kind of at their own agreement. Um, what else? We've brought in, you know, the professional development days that we've had vary from having uh trainings come in and lead sessions to having more like, home grown, professional development or [inaudible 00:23:05] days where people, you know, write a proposal for how they want to spend their time, and the work that they want to do.

Um, and then I am very intentional in the faculty meetings to make sure that that's professional development time, so whatever business you need to take care of, we do that quickly, and then we either are working on writing rubrics or talking about students work samples or doing some other kind of professional development."

Researcher: "Mm-hmm (affirmative). And what kind of professional development is in place for administrators?"

Participant F: "It's pretty much the same. Like, we do- there's not a lot of um, it's not like we get a special package where we have the same constraints around how much money we can spend in a given year. Um, there are sometimes l- little exceptions to that, meaning, you know I wanted to go to um, this Diversity Institute this summer, and so, uh, you know, my head endorsed that, but what we found was that we could use the New Haven grant um, money that we have for professional development to pay for it, so um, it, it's pretty much the same framework. It's, it's homegrown, you kind of look into what might suit your interests and needs and then make a, you know, proposal, and the head signs off of it, or, signs off on it, or, or does it."

Researcher: "And is that the same for those who are aspiring to take on more leadership? They kind of self-select these uh, professional development opportunities?"

Participant F: "Yeah, definitely."

Researcher: "And who, do you think um, there's encouragement in this area for people to take on more leadership roles?"

Participant F :   "I, um, there's the space to do it. I'm not s- I don't think there's encouragement or coaching."

Participant I:

Interviewer:	"And I think you said it, but can you tell me again how long you've been in administration?"
Participant I:	"Sure, so I have been in administration for three years as just a general administrator, and then one year in senior admin".
Interviewer:	"Okay. And can you just tell me about your career path?"
Participant I:	"Yeah. I have aspirations to become head of school one day. I thankfully have a head of school who supports that wholeheartedly, although she is definitely one to say, "Hang tight. Wait, get as much as you can now," since I do have young children, and I'm still relatively new to this level of work and culture at the school. So, down the road, I have no idea what that looks like. I do hope to eventually apply for an associate head or head of school position."
Interviewer:	"Great, and how did you get to this position?"
Participant I:	"That's a good question. I think I've always kind of had it in the back in my mind, and then I've always had a desire to lead. I've always been really passionate about my education and independent schools. I love to learn, and have, I don't know, I just find that the roles I've taken in my life have kind of always landed me in sort of leadership-like positions, so to kind of aspire to be a head of school for me has been really an exciting goal down the road for me."

Gendered Expectation of Leadership:

Participant A.

"Um, um, I think it you know, head of schools, women in the school system face as many you know, the same pressures working women do. I mean I think it could be a number of things. I think certainly there's still a bit of a glass ceiling even though education is so predominantly female. Um, also um, the struggles that might, that women might face if, if she were also um, depending on her family structure, if she were also raising a family at the same time. Um, the demands of a head of school are great far outside the hours of the school day. Um, but I think really mainly I think, I

don't know, you know, at least in our case I think boards of directors are often made up of business men. And so I think it's the, the glass ceiling that women face. You know, I think business men often choose other business men."

Participant B.

Participant B: "And I think that's that piece of that, like how do you manage to have a l- a personal life and a professional life throughout your career, is something that I think women have not been taught. And I, and I, and I hope that we're doing that now, I feel like, um, I did it with my kids but I don't know that society is doing it. So I think that's one piece, I think there's a piece that's cultural. I think the other piece is that I do think that a lot of independent schools still have sort of an old boy feeling to them."

Researcher: "Mmm."

Participant B: "Um, especially the, the high schools. Um, I think the prep school, the whole prep school model, especially boarding schools, um, can still feel very male dominated. I think that's, that's, I mean I still see the vestiges of that at my school. Um, and I don't think that if my school's any of the indication and any, and, and certainly wasn't true was through the other schools I worked at, so it was a while ago that there are things in schools in place to develop leadership in the faculty, whether or not they're interested. I mean there, you would think it should just be part of general professional development."

Participant C.

"We had a female head of school that I think was a great head and is a good visionary. Might have been judged by, in a snobby way, if I can think back on her time here, by people on the board at that time. I don't know. I wasn't privy to all the ins and outs of how she moved on.

I think it is tough for women in many ways. Whether it's in the school administration or in business. I think that people do judge women or think about women in a different way than they do men. I don't know if that's why in NAIS that the numbers are lower. I don't know if women–I think about a woman who is just retiring after 30 something years of teaching here and she just loved that

job. Never wanted to move. She certainly had a wealth of information, but she never desired to move up and to run the corporation, so to speak.

It would be too easy for me to say, (name of researcher) that it's sexist, you know. But I wonder if there's a certain role that sometimes gender plays in either women feeling respected or frankly being respected at the same level as a male head"

Participant D.

Participant D:	"In many ways it's similar to, to- to how, um, how things look in, in big business. I think that there are times where, um, I think women haven't, haven't–I think there are times where women have perhaps chosen a family rather than pursuing a career. I think there are times where women aren't necessarily afforded those opportunities because for whatever reason a- a, a man seems, seems to be more qualified to a hiring group. Um, I was a part of the former school I was at, I was a part of, um, focus groups when we were hiring a new head, and we had two males and one female. And, um, we ended up going with the female surprisingly, but, um, it felt to me in those focus groups like the consensus was with, um, the male, and it was really from a sort of, um, a very gender stereotyped reason. Sort of the strength of a man ki- so to speak was sort of the, the vibe I got from that. Um-"
Interviewer:	"Can you elaborate on the strengths of a man?"
Participant D:	"Yeah, sure. So I mean i- it di- It was the, again this is part of a, a focus group I, I was in, but, um, I think people feel like i- the, uh, again those traditional stereotypes where men are perceived as the bread winner, the caretaker, the, you know? Um, those, those really do tend to come out whether you're, um, speaking with adults or whether you're speaking with, with students sometimes. And, and I–An- and being a part of that group in that conversation albeit it was ei- uh, eight years ago, um, probably nine years ago. Um, that really did feel present, um, or at least an undercurrent of presence. Um, I, I was actually very grateful to work with that head of school, um, that, that female head of school I worked with her for a year, um, and she, she struggled. Um, she struggled, um, it was her first headship, and I think that in and of itself was a struggle."

Participant E.

Participant E: "I think the students generally feel–I think we're much better at taking care of the students emotionally than we are taking care of the faculty, so I think students here feel really safe, I think they feel really taken care of, they feel free to express themselves and be themselves, and I think that's one of our strong suits and why families choose our school is that they–it's really a non-competitive environment for students, but I do know that they pick up on some of the stress of the faculty around what I was talking about before and some of the–especially the gender dynamics. I've, I've heard students talk about, like who has power and how they perceive the power of the administration at our school."

Interviewer: "So what, what do you perceive to be the gender dynamics that you speak of?"

Participant E: "Um, our senior administrative team each year has gotten more male and the–So in terms of the hierarchy, we have the Head of School, who's a man, we have the Assistant Head of School, who is a man, we have a Director of Divisions who oversees lower school, middle school, and upper school, which is actually a new position. We used to have a female lower school Head, and she left at the end of this year and we're looking to fill that position, but the Director of Divisions is also going to take over the lower school and he didn't used to oversee the lower school, so that was perceived as a, um, male dominated moment, I guess. Um, we also have a Director of Student Life who's a man, our upper school dean of students is a man, um, our, my boss is a man, um, who is the Director of Student Advancement, our admissions team just got, our Director of Admissions just got replaced, she left, and we have a man filling that position. So a lot of the conversations have been, you know, why are, why is it so many men in these positions."

Interviewer: "And you said the students are commenting on this, as well?"

Participant E: "Yes, yes. So, um, when we–I think it was in the (specific name) class, um, the teacher asked the students, like, well, they were having a conversation about gender and they, the teacher said, you know, how do you think that plays out here at our school, and the kids were like, um, commenting on the fact that, like, their perception of how the structure works was that all the men were in charge. Even in the situations where women have power, the kids thought, you know, oh, I thought that she was his assistant instead of, you know, she's alongside him in the role."

Participant H.

"I actually think that's the case because um, because there's, there remains rampant sexism in this country. And um, people's image of leadership is rarely aligned with uh, components of women that um, I'm not saying this well. When someone looks at Hillary Clinton, they don't feel comforted as her as a leader. Yet they can look at Donald Trump and, and feel like he's more of a leader than Hillary Clinton.

And for me, it's all about the fact that she's a woman, and basically there is sort of this raw, sexism that kind of is at–is at the base of a lot of what we do. Now clearly there are exceptions. 'Cause I've had three experiences where there are exceptions. And I actually think women have an easier job getting leadership positions in schools than they do in corporations or foundations or certainly in politics. But I still feel like what people are looking for in a Head of School, is a 40-year-old hands- I joke about this. A 40-year-old handsome man with a wife named (***), and two children named (***), and a [type of dog], who went to Hotchkiss, Yale, and Klingenstein.

And really, beyond that, my sense is that there is very little that distinguishes all those people, but they seem to be getting hired in, in numbers, I think, in this profession."

Participant I.

Interviewer: "As you know, I'm doing this because NAIS states that there are only one third of women as heads of school."

Participant I: "Right, it's crazy."

Interviewer: "Why do you think that's the case?"

Participant I: "Oh, I think that's the case because I think independent schools were built on exclusion and on the real old traditions, and as much as our country continues to change and progress, I do think that we're still set in some old ways. I also think that a lot of the heads

who are still in place have been here for–I just celebrated my former head's 37th year retirement, and that's the old way, is that you stayed, and you stayed until you retired. So, I do think that as NAIS, as in a trend book, and as everyone's talking about, as the Baby Boomers retire, there are going to be a lot more opportunities and things popping up, which is kind of scary and exciting all at once."

Participant J.

Participant J: "Um, I, I think, I think a lot of, there's a lot of recycling of heads of school. Um, that, um, there are a lot of, there are a lot of white male heads of schools, and, I think that it's somewhat of a, um, a network that feeds itself with openings. Um, and I think it's slowly changing."

Researcher: "And why do you think that's changing?"

Participant J: "Um, I think its changing because there is a group of people um, who, recognize that there need to be, needs to be more diversity in heads of school. Both gender and race."

Collaboration is Highly Valued

Participant B.

                   "I think the other thing that's missing is not only sort of training for people who either want to be a leader or, you know, are new to being a leader, but the people who are continuing to lead, and this isn't true for me right now but [00:33:30] certainly when I, um, was the associate director of the middle school and, and was gonna s- and went to the head of school and said, "I'm gonna step down because I can't, I can't do this anymore," there was nothing in place to say, "You know, why don't you collaborate with, you know this other administrator who's managed that already." Like there isn't even that."

Researcher: "Mm-hmm [affirmative]."

Participant B: "Um, sort of, it's sort of this, you know you, you're on your, it's sort of that weird structure [00:34:00] that, that sort of we fought so hard to get rid of for teachers, like we've said to teachers, you

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know, "We're not gonna let you be alone in your classroom anymore. We're gonna make you collaborate." But we don't do that, certainly at my school, for administrators yet, which is fascinating."

Researcher: "And how do you feel about that?"

Participant B: "I think it's horrible."

Participant E.

Participant E: "Um, but there's a little bit of like a–and I've felt it in terms of the things that I push about with like race and, um, gender that I am always coming really close to a line that I am aware of and I kinda walk right on it, um, but it's not like we don't have faculty meetings for example, like ever, we only have them at the beginning and end of the year. So there's not a sense that like faculty input is really valued in terms of decision making. Um, and faculty frequently express to each other that it feels like there's kind of like this disconnect between the people running the school and the people teaching in it, and that there might be some individual kinda collaboration in work, but it's not happening like on an institutional level. And if people, I mean, in the time that I've been here there have been many people that have been asked to leave in–in connection with things like, you know, voicing really strong opinions about curricular decisions."

Interviewer: "Mm-hmm [affirmative]."

Participant E: "Or voicing a concern that they weren't being evaluated in any way. Um, so that kind of thing."

Interviewer: "Um"

Participant E: "And there's actually, there's actually a group–I've heard that there's a group of women who were, who just left at the end of this year, who are writing letters to our Board of Trustees about their concerns about not, not being adequately communicated with about what their feelings were before they were asked to leave. If that makes sense."

Interviewer: "Yes."

Participant E: "And I think they believe that there's a gender piece there."

Interviewer: "They feel they're being discriminated against? Is that what–"

Participant E: "Yeah. Yeah."

Participant G.

"I think it's a couple of things. Um, one thing is I think the headship just does not look like a very appealing job to a lot of people, and I'm not even sure it's, to me, and I- I talk to men my age who are like that looks like no fun. Um, and so I mean I kind of question the whole model of headship. I feel like why aren't we challenging the notion that there has to be this one head of school, um, like would it be impossible to run a school with like a more distributed leadership model? I think that if schools were willing to say there's gonna be, you know, someone whose like an assistant head of school for finance and operations, and advancement, and, you know, whatever, and that you had kind of a person on the money side, and a person on the teaching and learning and division side, I think you'd get a lot more people of my generation, including a lot more women."

Participant J.

Participant J: "Um, I have never worked in a public school, so I don't have anything to compare it too. Um, but I do have a lot of friends, I do have a fair amount of friends who do work in public schools, or have worked in public schools, and um, I would say that I really enjoy working in an independent school."

Interviewer: "Is there something in particular they've said that made you feel.."

Participant J: "Um, I think the uh, I think the number of hoops needed to jump through, um, to bring about change, um, or to get an idea to fruition is much simpler, um, and I think very much it is a much more collaborative process."

Interviewer: "Um"

Participant J: "Um, in all levels of sort of, work, and decision making."

Interviewer: "And how would you describe the culture of your school for the students?"

Participant J:	"Uh, I would say that we have a culture that is very open, and very supportive, both among the students as well as between students and faculty."
Interviewer:	"Great, and what kind of professional culture would you say you have?"
Participant J:	"Um, I would say that we have a really collaborative faculty. We're not siloed at all, um, and that is done both cult- both sort of um, sort of, culturally as in like the way we do things, and also, deliberately."

Increasingly Run Like a Business

Participant B.

Researcher:	"So what does your head of school value the most?"
Participant B:	"Mmm, [00:30:30] wow that's a good question. I mean certainly relationships are very high on the list. With parents, with alumni, with the board, with the faculty, with the student body. Um, the fiscal sort of sustainability of the institution is a priority.."

Participant E (comment 1).

Interviewer:	"So what kind of, um, challenges do you think are the biggest obstacles to you?"
Participant E:	"I think that, um, certainly the managing people seems really hard. Having seen it up close I don't, I don't know how to handle a whole faculty or an administrative team. It seems like a lot. And I think specifically the parent interactions seem really difficult. So there's a lot of just talking to people who are never gonna be satisfied with what you're doing or who are always going to disagree. And I think the financial part of it is also very intimidating. Just like managing an entire school budget and, obviously you have like, you know, a CFO for that, but, um, at this point in my career, I don't feel confident engaging with all of those different challenges."
Interviewer:	"And you talked about the skills you would need and obviously the finance piece is one of them."
Participant E:	"Yeah."

Participant E (Comment 2)

Interviewer: "And who, who do you think your current Head values the most and why?"

Participant E: "Um, he certainly values parents. So our, our business–our school right now feels very much like a business. And when he came in, we were not doing well financially, so he had to, he had to make a lot of decisions to rescue the school financially. So, um, I think that, we went from being a school that was very like alumni focused in terms of development and, um, just where we were putting our resources to parents and that has made it feel a little bit more like we need to do well so that the parents feel like their investment is worth it so that we can keep running, which is absolutely a viable model for schools, but I don't think that, um, I–I think faculty feel pretty disposable here in terms of like what they're bringing to the table and if they speak up against, you know, what his ideas are, they're gonna get cut."

Participant F.

Researcher: "Right. Right, so with that said, would you ever consider becoming a head of school?"

Participant F: "I, you know, it's funny, that's partly why I'm taking this aspiring heads course, because I want to answer that question. Am I not doing it because I'm so accommodated, and I'm used to people like pushing me along, and I don't want to take the risk? Uh, or is it because I genuinely think I don't have a skill set?
It's interesting, 'cause at the first session that we had, they were talking about women and leadership, and how there are so few women in leadership and in heads positions, and that when they talk, when the look at, by gender, who seeks out headships, women will add up all of their qualities, and say, "Oh I'm falling short, I can't do these things." When they talk to men, men will say, "Oh I don't have these qualities, but I think I'm good enough. Let me go ahead and try." So I, I don't know if there's a something about who I am in being afraid of taking a risk, and, and falling, feeling like I fall short or limited on all the skills that are required when in fact, I shouldn't let that get in the way."

Participant G.

Researcher: "Mm-hmm (affirmative), okay. And, um, we talked, we already talked about this question, I'm gonna skip that one. Um, I'm just gonna go right to it. Have, would you ever consider becoming a head of school?"

Participant G: "I would consider it but not right now."

Researcher: "And can you expand on that?"

Participant G: "Um, I think, I mean similar to how, you know, when I said I wasn't ready to leave the classroom. Like I, I feel like, um, this is a difficult, being the head of upper school, like it's as hard I thought it would be, like (laughing) this is really hard job. Um, and, and I can tell, I can–I see myself getting better at it, and so that feels good, um, but there's a lot I don't know how to do yet well in this role, and I, I feel like want a greater sense of mastery over this challenge before I were to take on another challenge. Um, I mean I think it also depends, you know, at large school, I mean even larger than my school, the head of school has so little contact with students and even with teachers, um, that it- it seems to me like a skill set that's, I don't wanna say it's unrelated, but only marginally related to what I do now, um, or what I've done before.
And while I'm sure that I could acquire those skills it just, it, it's not something that appeals to me right now I guess is what I would say."

Researcher: "And what do you think that skill set, m- some of the things in that skill set needs to be?"

Participant G: "Uh, well it's a lot obviously, um, on the money side of school, um, which, you know, I, I know that I could learn, but I don't know now, um, so it's, you know, it's thinking about the budget, it's thinking about fundraising. Um, I think the vision of the school, that piece of it, you know, setting the direction, um, figuring out what the strategic plan is, I mean that part of it, uh, is appealing and interesting. Um, but I just think, uh, I think a lot of it ends up being really working with your board, and cultivating board members, and, um, you know, it's, it's much more the 30,000 foot view of school."

Participant J.

Interviewer: "Right. Um, and, can you tell me just your impressions of your
                          current head of school?"

Participant J: "Yeah. Um, I work really, really well with our current head of
                          school, who is, um, who came the traditional track, was a teacher,
                          and then um, a, joined administration, and then worked, and upped
                          through um, division head, to assistant head of school to head of
                          school. Um, and, became head of school right before the economic
                          downturn. Um, and I think that, I think that is sometimes how he's
                          an incredible listener, um, and, I think sometimes the challenge is,
                          um, I think a lot of heads of school before the economic downturn,
                          and then all of a sudden are faced with these realities that they
                          have been well prepared for."

Interviewer: "Mm-hmm [affirmative]."

Participant J: "I don't think anybody, um, I don't think anybody who was being
                          mentored to be head of school close to 2010 had any idea how
                          difficult it was going to be."

Interviewer: "That's a very interesting perspective."

Participant J: "Um, you know this, and I am glad this is anonymous, and so, I
                          think there, and so I think there are a fair amount of heads of
                          school out there, whose skill set is not necessarily, um, I think
                          they've had to acquire skills, but I don't think they came naturally
                          to them. In that post economic downturn."

<u>Board</u>

Participant A:

Researcher: (laughs) "That's great. So I'm actually at my last question. Um, or
                          pretty close to it I think, yeah. So the National Association of
                          Independent School states that there are only one third of women
                          as heads of school in independent schools."

Participant A: "Mm-hmm [affirmative]."

Researcher: "Why do you think that's the case?"

Participant A: "Um, um, I think it you know, head of schools, women in the school system face as many you know, the same pressures working women do. I mean I think it could be a number of things. I think certainly there's still a bit of a glass ceiling even though education is so predominantly female. Um, also um, the struggles that might, that women might face if, if she were also um, depending on her family structure, if she were also raising a family at the same time. Um, the demands of a head of school are great far outside the hours of the school day. Um, but I think really mainly I think, I don't know, you know, at least in our case I think boards of directors are often made up of business men. And so I think it's the, the glass ceiling that women face. You know, I think business men often choose other business men."

Participant C

Interviewer: "No. That was great. Thank you. Would you ever consider becoming a head of school?"

Participant C: "I think so. I would consider it. Yes. I've never had to report to a board the way a head of school has to report to a board. Now I have reported to the board, but it doesn't mean to say I attend board meetings and give reports on various parts of my job. But, having gone through a couple heads of school and having some who didn't stay for too long, I do know that the personality mix you get on a board can make or break your career at that particular school. But I could see myself moving in that direction at some point."

Participant D

Interviewer: "And if the head of school were to leave tomorrow who would be in charge?"

Participant D: (laughs) "Uh, probably those two assistant heads."

Interviewer: "And they're both female you said?"

Participant D: "Yeah, they are, yep."

Interviewer: "Mkay."

Participant D:	"Yeah, I mean here- here's the thing, if he were to leave tomorrow the, the immediate piece would be one of those people. Um, however I believe that if he were to leave tomorrow our board of trustees would look for, for a replacement."
Interviewer:	"Of course."
Participant D:	"I think that would–"
Interviewer:	"Of course."
Participant D:	". . . be a higher process, I don't think they would want to hire internally."
Interviewer:	"N"
Participant D:	"Our current head of school was hired internally, um, and I think, um, should he leave either on his own terms, or because they don't, um, re-up a contract, um, I believe that they would look externally for someone to replace him."
Interviewer:	"Why do you think they would not consider an internal candidate?"
Participant D:	"Um, I think that they would be wanting someone fresh, a fresh perspective on the school. Um, this is a school that's done a lot of, um, hiring and shifting of positions internally, um, and I think that, that as a, as a leadership group the board of trustees would want to entertain more closely the possibility of someone to come and take a fresh look at this school."
Interviewer:	"How many people are on your board, do you know?"
Participant D:	"Um, 16."
Interviewer:	"And do you know what the gender breakdown of your board is?"
Participant D:	"It's more heavily male I know that, um, but specifically no, I don't."
Interviewer:	"Kay, and, um, so one of the constraints that you just identified for people who'd want to take on more leadership roles in that sense would be the board of directors?"

Participant D:	"In some ways, yeah, perhaps. I mean the hiring is, is left to the head of school, um, he reports to the board."
Interviewer:	"Mm-hmm [affirmative]."
Participant D:	"Um, but I think that they do, um, sometimes appropriately and sometimes beyond their preview express, um, concerns, um, about different things, um, programmatically or, or in terms of hiring."

Participant G

Participant G:	"Uh, well it's a lot obviously, um, on the money side of school, um, which, you know, I, I know that I could learn, but I don't know now, um, so it's, you know, it's thinking about the budget, it's thinking about fundraising. Um, I think the vision of the school, that piece of it, you know, setting the direction, um, figuring out what the strategic plan is, I mean that part of it, uh, is appealing and interesting. Um, but I just think, uh, I think a lot of it ends up being really working with your board, and cultivating board members, and, um, you know, it's, it's much more the 30,000 foot view of school."
Researcher:	"Mm-hmm [affirmative]."
Participant G:	"and, um, I kinda like the work on the ground, you know?"

Participant I

Interviewer:	"What do you think your head of school values the most?"
Participant I:	"About–"
Interviewer:	"Anything."
Participant I:	"Anything? The well-being of the kids is her number one priority. It's always about what's best for the child, no matter if it's coming out of the parent who's arguing with us, if it's a teacher, if it's anything. Her number one is the kids."

Interviewer: "Who do you think she values the most?"

Participant I: "Well, I think she values the kids the most, but as head, I know the pressures from the board and from other places, so I think she has to balance that pretty heavily. But I would still say, even though I think she has to appease the board at times, that her heart is still with the children."

Participant J

Participant J: "Which is good, but, um, and schools are doing that. Schools are hiring people from colleges, they're hiring from the business world for heads. It would have to be the right school."

Interviewer: "And why do you, and why do you think they're doing that?"

Participant J: "I think because, um, I mean, I hear it from our board, that the place should be run more like a business."

Interviewer: "Yeah. Yeah."

Participant J: "Um, and I think that's an example I think that's somethingthat came about after the economic downturn. Is you had boards look around and say, "Oh my gosh, we need to run this place more like a business, um, tighten things up a little bit." Um, sometimes out of necessity, a lot of times out of necessity, and sometimes out of, um, I don't want to say fear, but sometimes out of-unsettled."