

TO SPEAK, OR NOT TO SPEAK: FEMALE SECONDARY ADMINISTRATORS  
AND COMMUNICATION GENDER BIAS

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is an examination of female secondary administrators in education and gender communication bias. The advancement of female administrators acquiring secondary administrative leadership roles is significantly less than that of males. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary female administrators and analyze the effects of gender bias in communication and leadership in promotional practices of female leaders in secondary administrative positions in education. This study also attempted to identify trends of promotional practices of aspiring female administrators in relation to their communication styles by shedding light on the true communication styles of secondary female administrators, rather than society's perception. This qualitative study utilized a critical feminist perspective in order to highlight the impact of gender bias in communication and leadership on promotional practices of secondary female leaders. A target of ten secondary female administrators was sought to participate in this research study. Each participant in this study participated in a survey, gender implicit association test, as well as a face to face semi-structured interview with the researcher. A significant portion of this research outlined gender bias situations that female secondary administrators endure or witness. The focus of this study was female change agents, communication, gender bias, and perceptions. This research added to the body of knowledge available regarding female secondary administrators and gender communication bias. This study laid the foundation for women to build upon the other female accounts and experiences, so that they may attain success in the educational leadership sector.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

My reasoning for investigating the experiences of aspiring female administrators in secondary administrative roles and gender communication bias begins with my own personal journey of a female on the road to becoming an administrator. I have been an Assistant Principal for the past four years at both the elementary and secondary levels. I begin my fifth year as assistant principal at the secondary level, where I examine overt and subtle message gender messages in my workplace environment and leadership in schools. Coleman (2003) asserts studies of women and leadership remain a central theme and the growing impact of women in the workforce continues to stimulate research on the leadership styles of women.

I am a meek and mild individual, but when issues arise and need to be addressed or directed, I will not hesitate to be a leader and be direct when I communicate. There have been countless times that my quiet nature and disposition have been the topic of discussion in regards to how I am perceived as an administrator by my superiors. As I proceed with my growth as a researcher and school leader, I reflect on these observations and conversations which have perhaps kept me from possible promotions or consideration for a principalship, despite my strong leadership abilities. Oplatka & Beer-Sheeva (2006) document the low representation of women in leadership positions in education systems in their research. They conclude; culture and socialization structures where society is highly patriarchal and seem to bifurcate into gender defined roles and responsibilities and low female participation in primary and secondary education make it

less plausible for many women to acquire skills, training and competencies necessary for professional and management positions.

My professional experiences and continued journey as a secondary female administrator lead me to research and discover the experiences of aspiring female administrators in secondary administrative roles and their experiences with gender communication bias. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), a national statistical review of principal demographic data, there were an estimated 115,540 principals of K-12 private and public schools during the 2011-2012 school year (NCES, 2013). Among 89,810 public school principals, females accounted for 52 % of the total. More specifically, females accounted for 64% of primary school, 42% of middle school, 30% of high school, and 40% of combined school principals (NCES, 2013). A key observation however, is that education sector is numerically dominated by women but leadership in the same is predominantly male (Oplatka & Beer-Sheeva, 2006). The movement of women into highly sought secondary administrative positions is still a slow going process. Although a small increase of female administrators can be observed in national statistical averages as previously discussed, it has not been commensurate with the overall percentage of women in the educational profession. The non-representative number of females in secondary administrative positions depicts an underutilization and untapped leadership source. Secondary administrative roles in the study refer to individuals that currently hold a principal position of a middle, junior, or high school level campus.

This chapter begins with the background and rationale for the study followed by the study's purpose and significance. Middle or junior high schools in this study refer to

campuses identified as housing a variation of grades 5-8, whereas high schools refer to campuses identified as housing a variation of grades 9-12. Study research questions will also be presented, as well as the limitations and assumptions of the study. The chapter will conclude with definition of terms used in this study and a summary of the following chapters.

### **Overview of Women and Gender Bias in Educational Leadership**

There is little information regarding gender bias in communication in regards to the effects or impact on the promotional practices of female administrators in the secondary educational arena. Gender bias are societal beliefs about the pre-determined attributes of women and men. Communication styles are a key component to the essential characteristics of a successful school administrator; as a result I saw a need for exploring the effect of communication styles of females in relation to the promotional advancement of aspiring female administrators. Common misconceptions regarding communication and gender bias occur in regards to strong female leaders who exhibit a take-charge and direct communication style, as opposed to the normally associated nurturing, compassionate, and delicate female nature. Northouse (2010) states that “the increasing numbers of women in leadership positions and women in academia, brought about by dramatic changes in American society, have fueled the scholarly interest in the study of female leaders” (p. 301).

Northouse (2010) goes on to state that:

“The culture of many organizations is changing; gendered work assumptions such as the male model of work, the notion of uninterrupted full-time careers, and the separation of work and family are being challenged. In addition, many

organizations are valuing flexible workers and diversity in their top echelons.

These organizations can augment women's career development by involving them in career development programs and formal networks, and offering work-life support. In addition, assigning more women to high-visibility positions and developing effective and supportive mentoring relationships for women are key strategies for reducing the leadership gap" (p. 314).

Northouse (2010) continues with:

"Gender biases have a detrimental impact on the perception and evaluation of women and they limit the range of leadership behavior deemed appropriate for women. In addition, awareness of these biases can threaten women in the leadership role. The changes needed to overcome these problems within organizations and society can occur only when we are aware of these often subtle and disguised prejudices" (p. 317).

Research reveals that women administrators experience slight effectiveness disadvantages in masculine leader roles, whereas roles that are more feminine offer them some advantages. Robertson and Webber (2002) note that authors from several countries have issued repeated calls for women's voices to be included in the theory and practice of leadership but much remains to be done to facilitate full scale participation of women in education leadership. According to Eagly & Jonson (1990) differences in leadership styles in males and females can be traced to various sources that include socialization, cultural stereotypes, ingrained sex differences and, personality traits and behavioral tendencies. Additionally, women tend to utilize more of the democratic or participatory style of leadership in comparison to men, and they are more likely to use transformational

leadership (i.e serving as role models for the people they lead, respecting employees and being attentive to each individual's needs, and motivating and inspiring individuals to take on new tasks) behaviors and contingent reward, or styles that are associated with contemporary notions of effective leadership (Northouse,2010).

Northouse (2010) goes on to describe gender stereotypes as being pervasive, well documented, and highly resistant to change. Gender stereotypes both describe stereotypic beliefs regarding the attributes of women and men, and dictate how men and women should be. Men are usually stereotyped with agentic characteristics, such as having confidence, being assertive and independent, possessing rationality and decisiveness. Women, on the other hand, are stereotyped with communal characteristics such as having a genuine concern for others, being sensitive, having a warm personality disposition, being helpful, and exuberating nurturance (Northouse, 2010).

### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Critical feminist and phenomenological theoretical lenses will be utilized in this research study to explore the influences of gender communication bias on the promotion of aspiring female administrators into secondary administrative positions. A critical feminist approach will be utilized in this study, as it centers on diverse outcomes and situations as well as issues that women face, and the institutions that enveloped them (Creswell, 2013). A critical component to this study is the feminist perspective, because the researcher will attempt to explore gender bias in regards to communication styles. "Feminist organizing reflects an entrenched feminist commitment to do more than talk within the walls of an ivory tower; it embodies the desire for tangible forms of justice that enhance the lives of real people. Although critical organization theorists share this

dedication to social change, feminists arguably have done more to implement it” (May & Mumby, 2005).

A phenomenological approach will also be utilized in this research study to explore the influence of direct and indirect communication styles of female administrators in relation to how direct or indirect communication styles affect promotional opportunities for aspiring female administrators. Phenomenological research focuses on investigating the actual lived experiences of the people being studied. These lived experiences assist the researcher in identifying the core essence of human experience through descriptive testimonies of the research participants. Phenomenology allows for the researcher to rely and draw upon his or her own personal experiences to comprehend the experiences of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The advancement of female administrators acquiring secondary administrative leadership roles is significantly less than that of males (NCES, 2013). Contributing factors to this lack of advancement of females are gender and communication bias. Further research and analysis needs to be conducted in order to determine how this problem can be addressed to ensure equal advancement for all educators aspiring to be secondary school leaders.

Despite the influx of women acquiring administrative roles in education, there are still significantly fewer women than men that hold top administrative positions in secondary and superintendent roles. Secondary and superintendent administrative positions boast the most responsibility and garner the highest paid salaries (Huff & Mitchell, 2008). However, women only represent a total of 18% of the nation’s

superintendents, yet account for roughly 75% of the total national percentage of teachers (Grogan & Brunner, 2005).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore gender bias communication and the promotion of aspiring female leaders in secondary educational administration roles. This study will also attempt to identify trends of promotional practices of aspiring female administrators in relation to their communication styles by shedding light on the true communication styles of secondary female administrators, rather than society's perception. Finally, this study will augment the available resources and information regarding communication styles of female administrators and the significance and impact on promotional advancement.

### **Significance of the Study**

Although all administrative leadership positions are important, the focus of this research will be female secondary administrative leaders. Past studies suggest that an influx of female leadership can be attributed to the instructional knowledge and strength associated with females, as they tend to teach in a classroom for a longer period of time when compared to their male colleagues (NCES, 2013). Numerous leadership characteristics have been researched and identified, however the primary characteristics that will be evaluated in this research study will be gender and communication bias, and if direct communication skills exhibited by an aspiring female administrator can affect the possibility of promotion.

This study will highlight past studies and include literature that is related to the misconceptions that occur in regards to strong female leaders who exhibit a take-charge

and direct communication style, as opposed to the normally associated nurturing, compassionate, and delicate female nature. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011), discuss that for a plethora of reasons, women are likely to see situations differently from men, thus resulting in the decisions and thought process of women to deviate from the norm. This 3-D view is most likely attributed to the fact that women are viewed as outsiders and utilize approaches necessary for addressing personal and professional issues as women. This study will also utilize a Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test (IAT) assessment. Each participant will be administered the IAT to ascertain an examination of gender stereotypical associations that contribute to the bias against women as leaders. The process of the IAT involves measuring automatic associations by examining reaction times when people classify pictures of words.

With the influx of female residency in administrative roles in education, studies focusing on female leadership roles and characteristics of women are hot commodities. In a 2008 study conducted by Montz&Wanat, it was reported that “most women became superintendents in small districts. Of 31 surveyed respondents, 19 (61.2%) led districts with fewer than 1000 students; seven (22.5%) led the smallest districts with fewer than 300 students. Interestingly, five (16%) women led districts with 2000 to 2999 students, the second largest enrollment category” (p. 32).

Regarding the performance of males and females in an organizational setting, research indicates that the relationship between gender equity and the organizational role expectations is consistent and complicated, therefore curtailing the possibility of attaining a balanced evaluation of women as effective employees (Aguinis& Henle, 2001). In a 2008 study conducted by Knopik&Moerer, it was stated that excellent leaders are

entrepreneurial and successful entrepreneurs are leaders, essentially making them one and the same. The authors also contended that business administrative programs should encompass a combination of the two disciplines to build strong leaders and effective output. Furthermore, the authors concluded that the focus of a successful program should be on women because it could offer women an opportunity to attain a successful level that would have otherwise not been presented to them (Knopik&Moerer, 2008).

An augmented awareness of gender bias in leadership will assist in how leadership is viewed by focusing on the characteristics of successful leadership rather than the phenotypical components of being male or female.

### **Research Questions**

These research questions were developed to answer questions perceived as existing gaps in literature related to gender bias communication and the promotional advancement of females in secondary administrative roles.

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?
2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?
3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

### **Limitations**

1. The focus of the study is on secondary female administrators. Although there have been increased amounts of females in administrative roles in education, the majority of

those roles are not at the secondary level. Therefore, availability of secondary female administrators may affect the results of this study through a restriction of sample size.

2. Due to time constraints associated with the high-pressure nature of the job, school administrators may be taxed for available time and energy to participate in research studies that involve a survey and a personal interview. Therefore, the pool of willing participants in this research study could be affected.

3. Due to proximity to qualified research participants and time constraints, the researcher chose to limit the pool of potential research participants to secondary female administrators in the Region 15 and Region 17 Education Service Centers. Therefore, this study could yield a small sample size of research participants.

### **Assumptions**

1. Secondary female administrators that elected to participate in this study are assumed to be valid and reliable sources to assess.
2. The sample of female secondary administrators obtained from the Region 15 and Region 17 Service Centers are assumed to be valid and reliable indicators of qualified and certified participants.

### **Definitions**

Definitions utilized for this study are as follows:

- Gender: Biological classification of being male or female.
- Gender Bias: Societal beliefs about the pre-determined attributes of women and men
- Indirect Communication: A type of communication that is characterized as not outgoing and candid

- Direct Communication: A type of communication that is characterized as being firm, authoritative, and to the point.
- Administrator: An individual that has held the rank of principal or assistant principal.
- Implicit Association Test (IAT): Measures automatic associations by examining reaction times when people classify pictures or words. The Gender IAT test is a modified version that examines gender stereotypical associations that contribute to bias against women as leaders

### **Summary**

Chapter one presents the background information revealing the gender bias in communication in regards to males vs. females in leadership positions, and the potential impact of gender bias in relation to the promotional practices of aspiring females to leadership positions. The conceptual framework for this study is stated, as well as the need for an augmented awareness of gender bias in communication. Awareness of gender communication bias displays how leadership is viewed by focusing on the successful leadership characteristics, rather than the phenotypical components of being male or female. The need to fully understand gender bias in communication and how it affects promotional practices of aspiring female administrators is outlined in the statement of the problem and supported through the purpose and potential significance of the study. Chapter One is concluded with a description of limitations and assumptions of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of Related Literature and Research**

#### **Introduction**

Charol Shakeshaft (1989) was perhaps one of the individuals who ignited the revolution for analyzing women represented in educational leadership when she posed the question, “Are women represented in administration in equal proportions to their representation in teaching?” Shakeshaft goes on to answer her own question by analyzing numbers to determine “Females are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration” (p. 100). According to Glass, Bjork, & Brunner (2000), “Women think board members believe women lack certain leadership skills, seeing women as weak managers, unqualified to handle budgeting and finances, and allowing their emotions to influence administrative decisions.”

In regards to the performance of males and females in an organizational setting, research indicates that the relationship between gender equity and the organizational role expectations is consistent and complicated, therefore curtailing the possibility of attaining a balanced evaluation of women as effective employees (Aguinis & Henle, 2001). An expanded awareness of gender bias in secondary school leadership will assist in further understanding how school leadership is viewed by female secondary administrators and what roles gender bias plays in leading secondary schools. More specifically, this study attempts to identify the challenges and successes of aspiring female administrators in secondary schools in relation to their communication styles and perceptions of gender bias. This study intends to expand the available resources and information regarding

communication styles of secondary female administrators and the significance and impact on promotional advancement.

Furthermore, through qualitative inquiry, this research will explore common misconceptions that occur in regards to strong female leaders who exhibit a take-charge and direct communication style, as opposed to the normally associated nurturing, compassionate, and delicate female nature. The literature review will explore the resources regarding gender bias in educational leadership and explore critical feminism resources and its relation to this study. The literature review will also include resources regarding gender differences in communication and leadership. The chapter will conclude with a summary review. Northouse (2010) states:

“With changes in organizations and the developmental opportunities for women within them; greater gender equity in domestic responsibilities; greater negotiation power of women, especially regarding the work-home balance; the effectiveness and predominance of women-owned businesses; and changes in the incongruity between women and leadership, we will likely will see more women in leadership roles” (p. 316).

Gender bias is a prevalent part of society, and shapes many things beyond the realm of the educational setting. Heliman (2001) describes gender bias to be expectations about what women are perceived to be like (descriptive) and how they should behave (prescriptive). Heliman goes on to state that these expectations can affect their work performance, curtail credit or merit for success, and lead to a penalization of their performance. Because gender bias influences evaluations in the work setting,

competence does not guarantee that a woman will advance in the ranks in the organizational setting that is equivalent to that of men.

Eastman and Billings (2000) shed light on the power of gender bias in sportscasting and sportsrecruiting in their study regarding the comparison on sportscasting of ESPN and CNN sports networks and sports reporting in The New York Times and USA Today. Their study revealed a high degree of favoritism towards men's sports and men athletes, and further revealed that the quantity of gender bias occurring was significantly greater on ESPN's SportsCenter network than on CNN's Sports Tonight. Their study also showed that The New York Times far exceeded gender bias than USA Today. In a study conducted by Fay and Williams (1993), gender bias in relation to the availability of business loans made to women was highlighted. The study utilized a Goldberg-type procedure to perform two experiments to test the assumption that women are unfairly discriminated against when they are seeking a financial loan to establish a new business. The results from their study indicated that women can experience gender discrimination when seeking a financial loan to embark on a business venture. In a riveting study conducted by Hetheron (1999), the idealization of women and its role in the minimization of child sexual abuse by females is analyzed. The study presented the notion that with what is known about child abuse, cultural beliefs tend to idealize women and minimize their potential harm to children. Through evaluating evidence, providing a theoretical account of psychological processes, and illustrating that professionals working in professions that are highly populated with children are not immune to sexual abuse, the research yields the conclusion that society should suspend their disbelief regarding female perpetrated sexual abuse. Continued denial poses the

potential for child sexual abuse to go under-reported and trivialized, and the price will be paid by victims of on-going abuse.

### **Gender Bias in Educational Leadership**

Gender bias in this study refers to societal beliefs about the pre-determined attributes of women and men. According to research conducted in 1987 by Deaux & Major, the process in which gender perception is dependent on many cognitive and contextual factors, includes (a) the beliefs, expectations, and motivation of the target and the perceiver; (b) whether gender schema are primed by factors such as the organizational context, the nature of the task, or the characteristics of the target; (c) whether differential expectations are conveyed to men and women; and (d) whether these result in changes in the target's self-presentation. According to Glass et al. (2000), women perceive that their fellow board members feel as though women lack in certain leadership skills, are weak managers, are not able to balance a budget and finances, and allow their emotions to influence their administrative decision making abilities. Northouse (2010) further discusses gender stereotypes in his leadership text;

Gender stereotypes are pervasive, well documented, and highly resistant to change. Gender stereotypes both describe stereotypic beliefs about the attributes of women and men, and prescribe how men and women ought to be. Men are stereotyped with agentic characteristics such as confidence, assertiveness, independence, rationality, and decisiveness, whereas women are stereotyped with communal characteristics such as concern for others, sensitivity, warmth, helpfulness, and nurturance (p. 311).

Northouse further asserts that the culture of organizations is an ever-changing and inevitable facet that individuals must acknowledge and face. One of the components that must be addressed is that of the male model of work. Under this model, it is perceived that careers are full-time, interrupted events, and the separation of work and family is being questioned. Organizations are now shifting their focus towards workers that are more flexible and diverse, and placing them in top positions. In order to maximize on the leadership potential provided by women, some organizations are furthering career development opportunities for women by involving them in career development programs, allowing them to participate in formal networks, and providing work-life support. Organizations that are trying to reduce the leadership gap are assigning women to high-visibility positions, as well as fostering effective and supporting mentoring opportunities and relationships for them. (Northouse, 2010).

Northouse also contends that gender biases have somewhat of a detrimental impact on the career advancement opportunities for women, as they skew the perception and evaluation systems that are utilized to rank work performance. These gender biases also limit the leadership behavior of women in top roles, and cause potential problems for organizations alike. Overcoming these problems that are ever present in the leadership sector of organizations can only occur if individuals are educated about gender bias and become aware of the issue and prejudices that plague leadership positions in organizations. (Northouse, 2010). Young & Skrla (2003) poetically describe the emergence of female administrators by verbalizing that the best approach for changing the gender stratified situation in the public school superintendency relies on replacing the

standard portrayal of the superintendency with a more diverse view of the superintendency.

### **Critical Feminism**

A critical feminist and phenomenological theoretical lens will be utilized in this research study to investigate the experiences of gender and communication biases and perceived influences which impact the promotion of aspiring female administrators into secondary administrative positions.

A phenomenological approach will be utilized in this research study to investigate the influence of direct and indirect communication styles of female administrators in relation to how direct or indirect communication styles affect promotional opportunities for aspiring female administrators. Phenomenological research focuses on investigating the actual lived experiences of the people being studied. These lived experiences assist the researcher in identifying the core essence of human experience through descriptive testimonies of the research participants. Phenomenology allows for the researcher to rely and draw upon his or her own personal experiences to comprehend the experiences of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

A feminist approach will be utilized in this study, as it centers on diverse outcomes and situations as well as issues that women face, and the institutions that enveloped them (Creswell, 2013). A critical component to this study is the feminist perspective, because the researcher will attempt to explore the degree of gender bias in regards to communication styles in secondary schools. May & Mumby (2005) contend that:

“Feminist organizing reflects an entrenched feminist commitment to do more than talk within the walls of an ivory tower; it embodies the desire for tangible

forms of justice that enhance the lives of real people. Although critical organization theorists share this dedication to social change, feminists arguably have done more to implement it” (p. 145).

Landman (2006) states, “The aim of feminist research to gain a clearer and better understanding of social reality by ending the marginalization of women’s lived experience in social science has served further developments elsewhere. These aspirations are generalizable and are reflected in some specific social research, informed by feminist methodology, by and for oppressed groups whose lives and experiences would otherwise be rendered invisible or only partially rendered” (p. 432).

The critical feminist theory is a pertinent theory and outlook to utilize when analyzing organizational communication, as it spotlights criticism and emancipation efforts of the perceived promotional constraints of females to top administrative positions (Papa, Daniels, &Spiker, 2008).

## **Gender Differences in Communication &Leadership**

### **Leadership.**

Northouse (2010) reports on Eagly, Karau, &Makhijani’s1995 research that women are more effective in leadership positions that are less masculinized. Some of these positions include leadership roles in education, government, and social service organizations. Women were also observed to me significantly more effective in middle management positions than men were. This was attributed to the fact that in middle management positions, communication and personal skills are highly valued. Men were observed to be effective in military positions. Additionally, men were more effective in

leadership roles where there were a large number of male subordinates or males rating the performance of the leaders. Hubbard & Datnow (2000) also state:

“Gender plays strongly into the teaching profession, particularly at the elementary level, where teaching has long been defined as women’s work. Teaching children has historically been regarded as an occupation suitable for women because traditionally the image of women has been as mothers who are family-centered and whose duty is to educate their children. These proclivities are based on an assumed natural order and may account for the fact that 87% of American elementary school teachers are women, and 67% of teachers overall are women” (p. 116).

Apple (1994) goes on to substantiate this claim by explaining that the role of elementary teaching positions are so often referred to or viewed as a female role, that it is virtually impossible to reform the role of elementary teaching positions without confronting the gender question.

Obvious differences in leadership traits and characteristics exist among male and female administrators in the educational arena. Studies have been conducted over time to analyze transformational and transactional leadership differences among men and women, along with numerous other studies disseminating the differences in leadership styles and communication patterns of males and females (Shakeshaft, 1989). Shakeshaft examined historical trends and events, and pinpoints seven periods that have had a significant impact on what she calls “the ebb and flow of women into school administration.” They are (a) the bureaucratization of schools, (b) the early suffrage movement, (c) the movement for equal pay and the economic depression, (d) World War

II and the postwar period, (e) the cold war, (f) societal expectations for women at odds with leadership and administration, and (g) the recent women's movement. Shakeshaft utilized Schuster and Van Dyne's 1984 research that resulted in six stages to conceptualize research efforts that have contributed to the struggle to include women in educational administration, whereas the majority of the research over the past decade falls into the first three stages. The six stages are;

- Stage 1: Documenting the lack of or absence of women in educational administration.
- Stage 2: Searching for women who have had a role as an administrator in educational administration.
- Stage 3: Showing women to be disadvantaged or even as being subordinates.
- Stage 4: Included women that studied on their own terms or conditions.
- Stage 5: Women were a challenged to existing leadership or gender theory.
- Stage 6: Transformation of the leadership theory and human behavior in organizations that include the experiences of women.

In Clisbee's 2005 study *Gender differences in leadership style: A literature analysis*, gender based differences in leadership style were found to be influenced by (a) characteristics of the rater, (b) research instrument and methodology used, and (c) position of the leader within the management hierarchy.

Northouse (2010) contends that "significant research illustrates that all four components of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and the contingent reward component of transactional leadership are positively related to leadership effectiveness"

(p.303). Northouse (2010) also references a meta-analysis by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) that:

Found small but robust differences between female and male leaders. These styles such that women's styles tend to be more transformational than men's and women tend to engage in more contingent reward behaviors than men. Although these styles predict effectiveness, recent findings suggest that the devaluation of female leaders by male subordinates has been shown to extend to female transformational leaders (p. 302).

Past empirical research shows that women show similar sentiments with men in regards to commitment to paid employment positions, and that both women and men view their work roles to be secondary, as they both make their roles as parents and partners their primary roles (Bielby&Bielby, 1988). Women are less likely to take on informal, as opposed to official, leadership roles, and use terms such as facilitator or organizer instead of leader (Fletcher, 2001). Women also have domestic responsibilities at home and with children, while the majority of men do not. These domestic and child-rearing expectations impose added burden on women that are aspiring to climb the ladder of leadership success, especially for women who cannot afford to compensate or employ individuals to assist with domesticated duties (Kaufman &Uhlenber, 2006). Women that share equal stressful or status careers with their spouses report to be satisfied with the minimal amount their male counterparts contribute, and are in fact more critical of their own domestic performance (Biernat&Wortman, 1991). In a separate study conducted in 2002 by Becker, Ayman, &Korabik, gender stereotype perspectives were evaluated by analyzing forty-nine male and forty-nine female leaders from industrial and educational

settings in a research survey. The study was designed to focus on how a leader's gender, the organizational context, and self-monitoring ability related to discrepancies between the leader's self-perceptions and self-monitoring abilities. The study yielded leader/subordinate discrepancies in initiating structure behavior were greatest for high self-monitoring women in industry. Additionally, the results also showed that high self-monitoring female leaders attend more to the organizational norms than to situational cues. An overview of statistics presented by Northouse (2010) shows that

Women are obtaining undergraduate degrees at a far higher rate than men, earning 57.5% of the bachelor's degrees in the United States (according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008) and women are graduating at a rate greater or nearly equal to that of men in most professional schools, earning nearly 60% of all bachelor's and master's degrees, and 48.9% of all doctorates(p. 306-307).

Furthermore, it is shown that women are attributed to attaining nearly 60% of both bachelor's and master's degrees, and nearly half of professional degrees awarded in the United States. Additionally, women are shown to make up nearly half of the U.S. labor force represented at 46.7% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008), but they are still underrepresented in the upper echelons of America's corporations and political system.

Women are among the leadership ranks in American organizations occupying more than half of all management and professional positions(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). However, leadership positions that are more elite show a different story. For example, women represent 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs, and hold only 15.2% of the Fortune 500 board seats and a mere 15.7% of the Fortune 500 corporate officer

positions (Catalyst, 2009). According to Glynn & Powers (2012), women in 2010 earned only 77 percent of what men earned, which was up from the previous percentage of women earning 50 percent of what men earned in the 1960s. The invisible barrier preventing women from ascending into elite leadership positions was initially dubbed the glass ceiling a term introduced into the American vernacular by two *Wall Street Journal* reporters in 1986(Northouse, 2010).The glass ceiling is a metaphor that is utilized to describe the inequalities that exist between men and women in the workplace. The image portrays that although women are able to walk through a door to a managerial position, they eventually experience hitting an invisible barrier that keeps them from ascertaining additional promotions or upward movement (Baxter & Wright, 2000).

### **Communication.**

Communication is a vital tool that is necessary for a leader to experience success in leading an organization in achieving goals. Determining the antecedents of perceptions of individuals with high or low power in the work place has expanded theoretical interest because of the perceived effect on an employee's effectiveness and advancement or promotion within the organization. According to Merchant (2012), three waves of the women's liberation movement led to political equality for men and women, an increase of women's participation in the workplace, as well as more females in leadership and managerial positions. These effects were crucial for women in gaining their independence and a unique voice to their gender, differentiating them from men. These gender differences have implications in communication styles and influence tactics and across leadership styles. Both academic and popular research in the intersection of

gender and communication styles support that men and women differ in the way in which they communicate.

Effective uses and harnesses of power and the perceptions of an individual's power by subordinates, peers, or even supervisors can be critical components to managerial and organizational success (Aguinis & Henle, 2001). Northouse (2001) cites research reveals that women administrators;

Experience slight effectiveness disadvantages in masculine leader roles, whereas roles that are more feminine offer them some advantages. Additionally, women exceed men in the use of democratic or participatory styles, and they are more likely to use transformational leadership behaviors and contingent reward, styles that are associated with contemporary notions of effective leadership (p. 310).

Northouse also contends that:

Women are no less effective at leadership, committed to their work, or motivated to attain leadership roles than men. However, women are less likely to self-promote than men are, and they are less likely to initiate negotiation, an important tool all leaders need in order to access the right opportunities and resources both in the professional and domestic spheres. Finally, although there are some trait differences between men and women, they equally advantage men and women in leadership (p. 310).

Advancement of aspiring female administrators is an uphill climb for all individuals pursuing the educational administration career path. Shakeshaft (1989) describes research frameworks that pertain to career advancement of females. One of the frameworks she discusses focuses on the individual woman as possessing internal

barriers that keep her from advancing in the ranks; socialization and sex stereotyping are observed as the guiding forces behind all her behavior. This perspective originates from a psychological paradigm and, essentially, blames the victim for her lack of achievement in school leadership. Its remedy for the issue is for women to be re-socialized so that they will better fit into the male world.

In a study conducted by Eagley, & Steffen (1984), it is highlighted that stereotypic beliefs about the sexes do in fact exist. These beliefs portray that women are more communal (selfless and concerned with others) and less agentic (self-assertive and motivated to master) than men. These beliefs were believed to have originated from perceivers' observations of women and men in differing social roles: (a) Women are more likely than men to hold positions of lower status and authority, and (b) women are more likely than men to be homemakers and are less likely to be employed in the paid work force. This study concluded that gender stereotypes stem from the distribution of women and men into social roles. In a separate study, the social role theory of sex differences was utilized to help the researchers investigate the differences in agentic and communal characteristics in letters of recommendation for men and women in academic positions, and whether such differences influenced selection decisions. The results indicated that women were described as more communal and less agentic than men and that communal characteristics have a negative relationship with hiring decisions in academia (Madera, Hebl, & Martin, 2009).

Women tend to utilize communication as a resource to enhance social interactions and foster relationships, while men tend to use communication to express dominance and to achieve tangible results (Mason, 1994). Women tend to exhibit a more expressive and

polite tone, whereas men are usually more assertive and power-hungry (Basow&Rubenfield, 2003). In John Gray's popular book, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus: a Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in a Relationship*, he identifies differences in communication styles of men and women. Gray suggests that men and women's approaches to communication are so different that he utilizes the metaphor that they are from two different planets. Men and women have different needs, goals, and values in regards to communication, and understanding these differences is the key to establishing and maintaining successful relationship. The differences that Gray (1992), identifies in regards to comparing the communication styles of men and women are that men tend to exhibit a more goal-oriented attitude, and they define their sense of self through their ability to achieve results. Women, on the other hand, are relationship-oriented and tend to substantiate their sense of self by how they feel and by the quality and meaning of their relationships. Men and women also cope with stress differently. Men are prone to coping by withdrawing themselves from the conversation or situation, whereas women cope by reaching out and tconversating about the cause or source of their stress. Men gravitate to their caves and women like to talk. Overall, men like to feel needed, appreciated, and admired, whereas women want to feel cherished, respected, and devoted (Gray, 1992).

Tannen (1990) goes on to substantiate that typically for the majority of women, the language of conversation is essentially a language of rapport or a way of establishing and negotiating relationships. For the majority of men, articulating is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchal social order.

Men approach conversations with the goal of transmitting information and offering advice, whereas women strive to foster interaction and seek control and understanding. Tannen (1990) continues to describe men as being adversarial (meaning having differing goals) and women as synergistic (having similar goals).

### **Summary Review**

There is little information regarding gender bias in communication in regards to promotional practices of female administrators in the educational arena. Communication styles are a key component to the essential characteristics of a successful school administrator; therefore the researcher saw a need for exploring the effect of communication styles of females in relation to the promotional advancement of aspiring female administrators. The body of the literature review of empirical and scholarly research presented suggests a need for further research to be conducted through a critical feminist lens to analyze gender bias in communication and its impact on aspiring female administrators at the secondary level. The following research conclusions have been deduced.

1. An expansion of empirical data analyzing the success of female administrators in education should be contributed to the limited information available on this particular topic. In regards to the performance of males and females in an organizational setting, research indicates that the relationship between gender equity and the organizational role expectations is consistent and complicated, therefore curtailing the possibility of attaining a balanced evaluation of women as effective employees (Aguinis & Henle, 2001). An increased awareness of gender bias in leadership will assist in how leadership is viewed by focusing on the successful leadership characteristics rather than the phenotypical

components of being male or female. More specifically, this study will identify trends of promotional practices of aspiring female administrators in relation to their communication styles, shedding light on the true communication styles of secondary female administrators, rather than society's perception. This study will augment the available resources and information regarding communication styles of secondary female administrators and the significance and impact on promotional advancement.

2. The availability of methods and resources that support young aspiring female administrators is limited. In a 2008 study conducted by Knopik&Moerer, it was stated that excellent leaders are entrepreneurial and successful entrepreneurs are leaders, essentially making them one in the same. The authors also contended that business administrative programs should encompass a combination of the two disciplines to build strong leaders and effective output. Furthermore, the authors concluded that the focus of a successful program should be on women because it could offer women an opportunity to attain a successful level that would have otherwise not been presented to them (Knopik&Moerer, 2008). Leadership traits of women were outlined by Boesch (2009), who believes that women are natural born leaders. Boesch outlines 5 lessons in leadership for women. Lesson 1 states that women are more than just visionary. Women are more inclined to recognize the significance in shared visions to build reliability in team members. In Lesson 2, Boesch claims that women not only have to embrace their intelligence, but should foster their abilities to be more perceptive. In Lesson 3, women are instructed on how to improve facets of their leadership on the path to getting "right" by empowering both women and men around that they surround themselves with. In Lesson 4, Boesch clearly states that respect is of the utmost importance, along with

competence. Finally, in Lesson 5 women are informed about the fact that it is no longer acceptable to just inspire individuals on their team just on an occasional basis. They have to aspire to set their standards for greatness, and not just good enough (Boesch, 2009).

In Taylor's 2012 dissertation, she highlights research conducted by Fraunheim (2007) by stating that in his study, he "found that if female business leaders act consistent with gender stereotypes, they are considered too soft and if they display characteristics that are not stereotypical, they are considered too tough or aggressive. He further relayed that when women exhibit stereotypical leadership behaviors such as assertiveness; they are viewed as capable but not liked. Women are viewed as "atypical leaders" with the perception that they violate accepted norms of leadership, no matter what the leadership behavior" (Taylor, 2012, p. 26).

Furthermore, the research will examine common misconceptions in regards to strong female leaders who exhibit a take-charge and direct communication style, as opposed to the normally associated nurturing, compassionate, and delicate female nature. Northouse (2010) contends that

"With changes in organizations and the developmental opportunities for women within them; greater gender equity in domestic responsibilities; greater negotiation power of women, especially regarding the work-home balance; the effectiveness and predominance of women-owned businesses; and changes in the incongruity between women and leadership, we will likely will see more women in leadership roles" (p. 316).

Because the secondary administrative position is commonly a vital step to attaining superintendency status, it is important that the promotion rates of aspiring secondary female administrators be examined.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Overview**

Chapter three will describe the methodology utilized in this study as well as the procedures used to collect data from research participants. The design for this research study will be outlined and the chapter will conclude with an analysis of the participant survey, as well as an interview analysis and its relevance in effectively answering the research questions.

#### **Research Design**

The purpose of this phenomenological approach was to explore the lived experiences of secondary female administrators and analyze the effects of gender bias in communication and leadership in promotional practices of female leaders in secondary administrative positions in education.

This qualitative study utilized a critical feminist perspective in order to highlight the impact of gender bias in communication and leadership on promotional practices of secondary female leaders. Due to bias and misconceptions regarding the promotion of females in secondary administrative positions in education, a critical feminist approach was utilized. In this case, one must know the history of the past to fully understand the present in order to significantly impact the future. Landman (2006) states that,

Feminist methodology is informed by feminist epistemology: in particular, who can be agents of knowledge, what can be known and how knowledge is validated, and the relationship between knowing and being (ontology). Feminists are concerned with the implications of the exclusion of women's knowledge and

experience of the traditional male constructions of knowledge (Landman, 2006, p. 430).

The feminist theoretical framework extensively addresses issues, concerns, or emerging trends that could possibly arise by supporting the study with significant findings, therefore providing the possibility for a solution to the gender bias in communication and leadership that secondary female administrators in education face. According to Landman (2006),

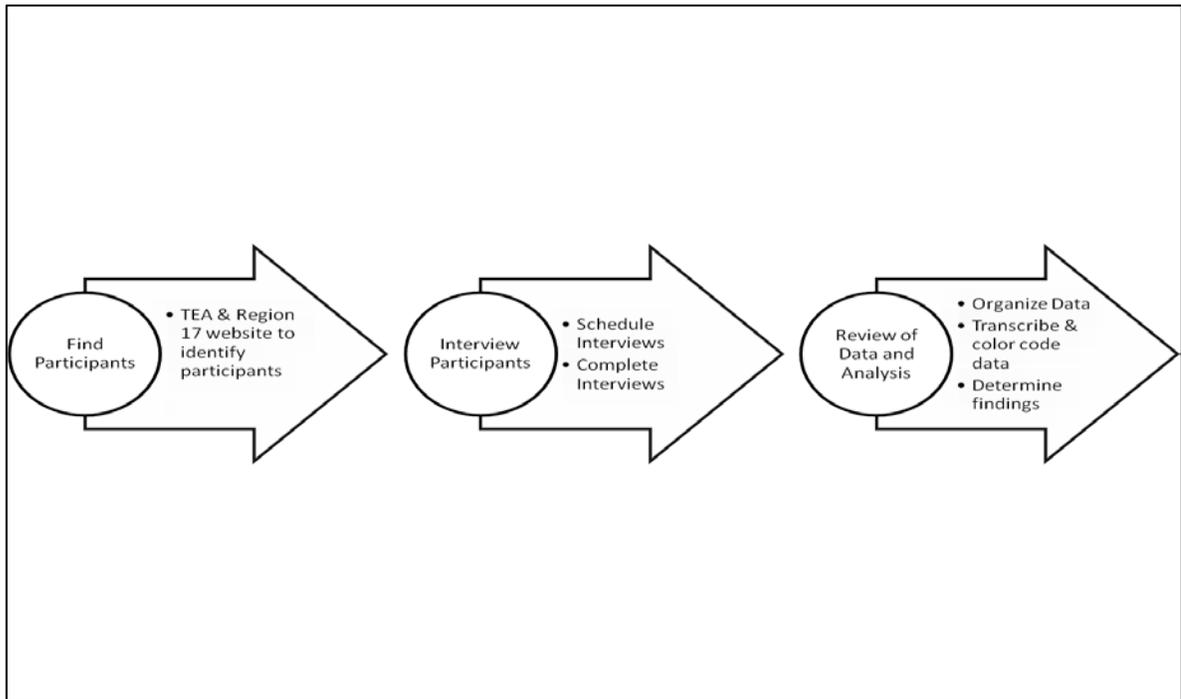
“Feminist methodology is specifically concerned with how, or whether knowledge produced about social life can be connected with the social realities of women in the context of any methodology that is dominated by men and that neglects consideration of the gendered nature of social life. Of particular interest, in the context of the present workshop, social practices associated with food and feeding are highly gendered as the literature shows. These methodological challenges encompass consideration of which research methods may be more effective than others in reflecting the lived experience of women (p. 430).

### **Participants**

A target of ten secondary female administrators was sought to participate in this research study to gauge the impact that gender bias in communication and leadership had on their promotion. A purposeful sampling of female secondary administrators that hold or have held the position of Principal or Assistant Principal occurred through an investigation via the Texas Education Agency website and through the Region 15 and Region 17 websites. Selection criteria for these ten female secondary administrators were current position in Region 15 and Region 17 school districts, years of experience,

and communication style. Participants were selected in Region 15 and Region 17 due to proximity to the researcher, and their participation was solicited through email, survey, and phone calls. The names of the research participants was changed to fictitious names to maintain confidentiality; however their positions are accurately identified.

Figure 3.0 Identification, interview, and data analysis schedule for this study.



### **Data Collection Procedures**

Research for this study began by compiling a list of female secondary administrators in Regions 15 and 17, via the Texas Education Agency website and Region 15 and Region 17 Service Center websites. The list of female candidates was utilized as a central database to distribute an inquiry of interest (via email and Survey Monkey) in regards to their participation in an interview, survey, and a gender-leader implicit association test. Once feedback was obtained from this process, specific

selection criteria was utilized to select six participants. Although a target of ten participants was sought, only six participants participated in this study. The criteria was based on their current position in Region 15 and Region 17 school districts, years of experience, and communication style. By evoking a set of selection criteria, the researcher ensured that the participants fit the scope and parameter of the research topic, and that a more diverse set of participants was established to curtail claims of bias.

A time was coordinated with each participant for a face to face interview, or phone interview if the participant wished to do so. The interviews were coordinated over a one month time frame, and were hosted at the participants' home campus or location of their choice. This was a significant factor in allowing for the interviewee to be observed in a comfortable environment that will hopefully contribute to elongated and forthcoming answers. The researcher will obtain written consent of the participants' consent to take part in the study. Table 3.0 gives an overview of the data collection procedures for the study.

Table 3.0

*Data Collection Techniques for Each Research Question*

Research Question	Method of Interview	Written Correspondence
1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the	Face to face interview or telephone interview. Digital recorder was used to	Survey

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Gender IAT?	record interview.	
2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?	Face to face interview or telephone interview. Digital recorder was used to record interview.	Survey
3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?	Face to face interview or telephone interview. Digital recorder was used to record interview.	Survey

---

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Each participant in this study participated in a survey, gender implicit association test, as well as a face to face semi-structured interview with the researcher.

#### **Survey.**

The compiled list of female secondary administrators in Region 15 and Region 17 via the Texas Education Agency website and Region 15 and 17 Service Center websites was utilized as a central database to distribute an survey that serves two purposes: a) inquiry of participant interest and b) a method of obtaining a set of selection criteria for the participants that will be utilized in the study. The survey obtained information such as:

- First and last name
- Current position
- Total number of years in education
- Age
- Number and ages of children (if applicable)
- Communication style (Direct or Indirect)

- Experience with gender bias
- Communication approach
- Type of personality

The survey was the most effective and efficient method of obtaining feedback in regards to interest and qualifications of potential participants.

### **Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test.**

Each participant was administered the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test to ascertain an examination of gender stereotypical associations that contribute to the bias against women as leaders. The process of the Gender IAT involved measuring automatic associations by examining reaction times when people classify pictures or words. Each participant was administered a practice trial and two test trials, Test Trial A and Test Trial B. In the practice trial and two test trials, the length of time it takes the participant to complete each task was recorded. The gender bias effect was calculated by subtracting the time it took to complete Trial A (the stereotype congruent task) from the time it took to complete Trial B (the stereotype incongruent task). Positive scores were reflective of Female and Supportive tendencies, whereas negative scores were associated with Male and Leadership. The logic behind the Gender IAT is that the longer it takes to categorize the words when the words have counter-stereotypical pairings, the more one will be associated with women that have supportive qualities as opposed to leadership qualities. The significance of the use of the Gender IAT in this study was to analyze biased associations favoring males and leadership that are potentially held by the female participants. The results of the Gender IAT are found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Gender IAT Participant Results*

Participant Name	Length of Time to Complete Trial A (stereotype congruent task)	Length of Time to Complete Trial B (stereotype incongruent task)	Gender Bias Effect	Result/Type of Qualities
Darla	51.7 seconds	27.98 seconds	-23.72	Male & Leadership
Jessica	72 seconds	70 seconds	-.02	Male & Leadership
Samantha	41 seconds	57 seconds	16	Female & Supporter
Summer	28 seconds	26.5 seconds	-1.5	Male & Leadership
Ashley	91 seconds	82 seconds	-.09	Male & Leadership
Cynthia	85 seconds	83 seconds	-.02	Male & Leadership

**Interview.**

The interviews were held on each individual leader's campus, or via conference call. The participants were given the opportunity to interview in a location that was the most comfortable for them. This allowed the researcher to observe the participant in an environment that is comfortable to them, therefore resulting in more honest responses. Each interview session was digitally recorded, and the researcher took notes and kept a folder for each research participant. Each folder contained information such as observations of participant during interview, survey, results of the gender implicit association test, and a transcription of the participant's interview.

An inductive analysis was utilized in this research study, as the information from the interviews was analyzed for patterns in data. The data from the interviews was organized, and then transcribed. The tape recorded interview sessions for each participant was transcribed verbatim, and then was analyzed for patterns in key words or phrases, or repeated concepts to give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the interviews. The data was color coded by key words and phrases. The researcher identified ways in which the coded key words or phrases can be grouped. The researcher utilized the software Coding Analysis Toolkit (CAT) for qualitative data analysis to curtail the risk of a human systematic error in analyzing the data collected by the researcher. An inductive analysis approach was the most efficient method in regards to analyzing data that answered the research questions of this study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The responsibility of this researcher was to maintain confidentiality of all participants and ensure that ethical considerations were ensued. There was a potential for emotional or personal bias to occur during this study, however the closeness of the researcher to the area of study was an asset. Extreme diligence, care, and safeguards were executed throughout this study for the protection and rights of participants. Cautionary measures were taken to secure the storage of research-related materials and information, and the only individual that had access to these materials was the researcher.

### **Trustworthiness, Validity, Member Checking, and Credibility**

This study and researcher were presented in a manner that supported a common goal and understanding so that valid outcomes would result.

1. Credibility- The standard that references whether or not the participants' perceptions parallel the researcher's interpretation of them (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).
2. Trustworthiness- Define efforts made by the researcher to address areas of validity and reliability in quantitative research to reduce the potential for bias in the design, implementation, and analysis of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).
3. Validity- "validation is a distinct strength of qualitative research in that the account made through extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study all add to the value or accuracy of a study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 250).
4. Member checking- The researcher's process of documenting feedback from study participants to ensure validity of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

### **Context of the Researcher**

Included with this chapter is an account of my personal and professional experiences that compelled me to explore this study. My tenure in the public school system so far totals seven years, with two of those years spent as a classroom teacher, two years as an assistant principal at an elementary school, and three years as an assistant principal at a middle school. My background in public education lends credibility to the experiences and reasoning to conduct this research study.

In regards to my personal life, I have a very supportive husband and two young daughters. My daughters are the source of my inspiration, as I want the best educational opportunities for them, and I want to set a nurturing and supportive platform for them to

grow into the individuals that they are destined to be. I grew up on a farm in the Panhandle of Texas. I was fortunate enough to have parents who taught my sister and I the value of hard work, dedication, and honesty. My parents are very hard working and successful individuals, although they did not attend college. They both had the opportunity to do so, but chose to embark on life's journey in another direction. I truly believe that that is one of the reasons they are advocates for education. When I was in elementary school, my dad served as a school board trustee. My mom strictly enforced the rule in which we were to immediately begin and complete homework when we got home from school before we engaged in other activities. As the years went by, my mom became a school board trustee, and still is to this day, even after my sister and I have long graduated. It is because of my parents' strong belief in education that my sister and I succeeded in attaining college degrees. My experiences growing up on the farm in the Panhandle taught me how to stand firm in my faith in God, stay true to my morals and values, and to set goals and work my hardest to achieve them.

My parents were married at a young age, and are still married to this day. My mother graduated from high school and enrolled in cosmetology school. She owned and operated her own salon, until she made the decision to be a full-time mom when my sister came along. My dad made the decision to follow in my grandfather and great-grandfather's footsteps and be a cotton farmer and raise cattle. Although he did not attend college, he is one of the smartest men I know. My parents instilled in us the belief that we can do anything we set our hearts upon and that they will be supporting us every step of the way.

I graduated high school and decided on attending Angelo State University, where I pursued my degree in Agricultural Business. I went on to obtain my Master's Degree in Animal Science. It was at that time that a long-time family friend approached me and inquired about my interest in teaching in the Career & Technical Education Program. I decided to pursue my alternative certification and taught at the high school level for two years. It was during my initial year as a teacher that I made the decision to obtain my Master's Degree in School Administration. At the end of my second year of teaching, I received the opportunity to be an assistant principal at an elementary school. I cannot deny that I felt like a rock star. I truly felt that people believed in me and that I was destined for greatness. After my first year of being an administrator, I began to receive feedback, and it wasn't all good. It mainly pertained to my communication style. I chose to utilize the feedback as constructive criticism, and try and improve in the area of communication. During my second year as an elementary assistant principal, I received the opportunity to attend Texas Tech as a doctoral student. After two years at the elementary level, I received an assistant principal position at a middle school. I was ecstatic, as I would be working with another great group of individuals like I had at the elementary level, and this was a new opportunity for me. During this time, I really began to ponder and analyze my communication tendencies and how they could possibly be affecting my principalship opportunities. While exploring gender communication bias empirical data, I noticed a trend in the percentages of female and male principals at the secondary level when compared to those at the elementary level. Since I was a middle school assistant principal, this sparked my interest. My personal experiences have driven me to focus on this topic of research since the beginning of my doctoral journey.

## **Summary**

Chapter three outlines the methodology and procedures utilized in this study. The chapter commences with a review of the methodology chosen for this research study as well as the design for the research. Participant selection and description of participants is reviewed and the chapter is concluded with the data collection and data analysis procedures.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PARTICIPANT STORIES**

#### **Contributions**

- This study provided insight to the issue of gender communication bias and its impact on female leaders at the secondary level of education.
- This study provided a means for comprehending the stereotypical gender associations that are prevalent in communication and how those affect women in the educational arena.
- This study addresses the issues in communication gender bias and how it curtails the potential pool of female leadership potential and utilization.
- This study expanded the current body of literature regarding communication gender bias and the effect on aspiring female leaders at the secondary level of education.

#### **Introduction to Participants**

The following chapter is an account of the stories of each of the six participants. Each participant was provided the opportunity to select a pseudonym of their choice, and if they did not elect to do so, the researcher assigned one to them. The researcher did not disclose the information regarding who did and did not choose a pseudonym, to maintain confidentiality. The accounts of the research participants are presented in the order in which they were interviewed. The following table provides a brief overview of each of the six participants within this study.

Table 4.0



*Information Regarding Each Research Participant*

Name	Time in Education	Current Role in Education	Important Points	Quote
Darla	27 years in education and 14 years in leadership	Associate Executive Director of a Region Service Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surround yourself with good leaders.</li> <li>• Find that group that is going to grow you as a leader.</li> <li>• Look at the situation and who you are dealing with. It will not always be the same.</li> </ul>	<p>“I think I am not afraid to have a difficult conversation. Because with kids or staff members, I always start out and say this is a difficult conversation, but we have to have it. But i am not doing my job if I don’t...if I avoid it. I would say that my strength is that I let them know that I care. “</p>
Jessica	11 years in education and 2 years in leadership	Assistant Principal, Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to listen and not automatically interject your opinion.</li> <li>• Do not look for empowerment in the way you communicate with individuals.</li> <li>• Be compassionate and caring towards teachers and listen to what they have to say instead of automatically dismissing them.</li> </ul>	<p>“If somebody wants to talk to me, I listen to them and try my hardest not to automatically throw my opinion in. I value what people say and how they feel. That is just important in anything to me.”</p>
Samantha	18 years in education and 5 years in leadership	Assistant Principal, High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a stand and do not forget what gets you to your leadership position.</li> <li>• Don’t forget the heart of teaching, and do not let anyone say that you can’t do it.</li> <li>• Education is</li> </ul>	<p>“I think when you speak openly, it could cost you. I personally will not agree with something just to make you feel better. I say what’s on my heart. I find that if you don’t play the game, it could cost</p>

Summer	24 years in education and 8 years in leadership	Director of Schools	<p>complex. But if you love it, don't let someone put you down, cause they try.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch your emotions at all times, and try to be honest at the same time.</li> <li>• Learn to deal with each person individually.</li> <li>• Learn to take care of yourself and always be available.</li> </ul>	<p>you. You can't have an independent thought. These are serious barriers"</p> <p>"I would not ask anyone to do anything that I would not do myself. I jump right in there and work with them. I feel like I make my time beneficial for my teachers and my students."</p>
Ashley	16 years in education and 9 years in leadership	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stick by your guns. Just get ready for the fact that you will get pushback from people.</li> <li>• It's not a popularity contest. You are not going to win it. Put your suit of armor on.</li> <li>• Be yourself and in the end you have to answer to you and look at yourself in the mirror. You can't compromise who you are.</li> <li>• Think about things before they come out of your mouth</li> </ul>	<p>"This is a people job. You are dealing with real people and real emotions. I am not out for myself. I am honest and forthright. I am funny and I have a sense of humor. I don't have any patience for people who do not want to do the right thing. I don't have a problem calling them out. Most people do appreciate it"</p>
Cynthia	12 total years in education and 2 years in	Assistant Principal, Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/staff having someone that they can communicate with or reach out to, is</li> </ul>	<p>"Always stand your ground and believe in yourself. Be confident in your decisions and abilities."</p>

leadership

extremely important in keeping them involved with the education of their children.

- Be a more positive individual rather than negative because you will get more out of a relationship if you are positive.
  - Strive to openly communicate with staff members to keep them aware of situations or events, so that feel more informed and valued.
- 

## **Darla's Story**

### **Educational Background.**

Darla has worked in the field of education a total of 27 years. She has been in a leadership position for the past 14 years. Darla transitioned into the leadership sector of education because she was sought out to be a leader by her former principal and superintendent. Darla was a cheerleading sponsor, student council sponsor, and was involved in multiple other activities that helped her to build leadership skills. Darla reflected on the moment that sparked her advancement into a leadership position:

I was teaching in the classroom and the superintendent came in and asked me to apply for the principalship at the high school, and at the time I was teaching at the middle school. So I asked him 'Why do you want me to apply I have not even

apply for my mid-management?’ I thought about it but I was still coaching. My son was in the first grade at the time. He said ‘I see some of your skills and things you do in the classroom and reports and I just feel like you would be a good leader and good administrator’ (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

Darla went on to explain how she reflected on her characteristics as a coach and teacher, and decided to apply. She ended up acquiring the high school principal position and stayed in that role for six years. The same scenario happened when she transitioned into the superintendency role. Darla recalled not even wanting to be a superintendent, or having that desire. The role just found her, and as she puts it “I really didn’t choose it. It kind of chose my style. So, I really don’t want to sound arrogant, but I really didn’t choose it. It kind of chose my style” (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

### **Communication Style.**

Darla described her communication style as being direct and to the point. She explained that if she had to choose between being direct or indirect, she tends to look at the situation itself and gauge her response or approach accordingly. She explains further by adding:

“There are some (individuals) that you have to be “Here is how it is.” I always say I can smile but say we’re not ever doing this again. But then there are times that I have to go around and know the situation...know the audience I guess. But if I had to choose between the two, I would say direct” (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

When asked about what her subordinates would classify her communication style as, she responded that they too would say that she was a direct communicator. Darla responds and gets to the point because as a leader, she finds herself with many tasks to accomplish, therefore she feels like she has to manage her time wisely and make the most efficient use of it.

In regards to communication style with staff, Darla indicated that she probably came across as negative, or very quick to respond, to the point, and direct. She further explained that she was very relational, but not when there is a task to accomplish. She states:

“If there is a task that needs to be completed, I am not very relational. My communication is quick. Give me the answer. I move on. If it is not, and I am trying to build relationships, I will slow down and talk to them about what was going on. Most of the time there is a task that needs to be done” (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

### **Experience With Gender Bias.**

Darla expressed that she has not experienced gender bias while embarking on the leadership path of education. She indicated that she went back and forth when she filled out the survey and that she had answered no, she had not experienced gender bias. She then followed up her statement with “not that I know of.” She explained that sometimes you tend to not want to ask too many questions, in fear that you might receive an answer that causes you to get a chip on your shoulder. She says with confidence that she was fortunate enough to never experienced it for myself, although she has seen other female colleagues experience it.

### **Communication Approach.**

As we were discussing Darla's approach to communication, she shared a personal story that exemplifies her communication approach. She indicated that when she interviewed for the high school principal position, there was a board member that was on the interview committee that was not a supporter of her acquiring the available leadership position. She further explained that his uncertainty about her approach to communication was a result of an event involving the an incident when her and her husband ran the little league association that her son was involved with. Darla explained that when you are in charge of those type of events, you have to assume all responsibility for it. She recalled a specific situation in which she had to get up and inform adults at a game that their behavior was unacceptable and that it was just simply not going to work. The male board member witnessed her directness and he was concerned about that. Darla Smith stated,

“So I think that told me, "Wow." I think everyone else on the committee was like that's a good thing. But his first initial response was a concern. Because I was that direct and forceful but you have to be sometimes. It depends on the situation. That was a time that it was needed. I was there and they knew what I was supposed to do. That may be the only time I was challenged on that type of situation” (personal communication, June 5, 2013).

In regards to her communication approach with students and parents, she recalls some parents not being fond of her direct communication approach with their children. She then went on to say that the type of communication that you utilize as a leader is definitely situations. There are some students that struggle with someone who takes a

very direct approach to communication, but in legal or ethical situations, you do not have a choice. There are other instances in which you may know about issues going on with students, that you may have to dial it down and take a softer approach.

### **Implications for Future Female Leaders**

In response to being asked about any advice that Darla would offer to aspiring female leaders, she offered encouraging words to surround themselves with good leaders. Whether they be male or female. She indicated that she has been surrounded by males in the coaching world, because there are a lot of male coaches at the secondary level. She saw them as being good leaders. Just surround yourself with good leaders.

She also offered advice in regards to making sure that you do not go into a situation or a position looking for problems. She further explained that when you go looking for problems that you think are present, there may not be any. But if there are problems present, do not be afraid to address them. Darla encourages aspiring female administrators to surround themselves with people or individuals who are going to grow you a leader.

### **Findings.**

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Darla's Gender Bias Effect was  $-23.72$ . The resulting negative score indicated that she is more likely to associate women with supportive qualities, and men with leadership qualities. The significance of her negative score reflects the biased associations favoring males and leadership that are held by the female participants.

When Darla was asked if her communication style had ever been compared to that of a male, her response was,

“Yes. It has. Which is, I don't want to say offensive, because it is a strong word. That would probably be the closest I have come to gender bias because I have seen gender bias but it really didn't affect me. Yeah I have, and it was because I was direct or on top of things. I know a lot of women who are that way” (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

Darla's response during the interview that best correlates with this research question is,

I used to have a teacher that would always say ‘we just need a big ole man in that classroom.’ I would say, ‘Wait a minute. What are you saying?’ Some of the best teachers, best disciplinarians I have seen are women. Some of the worst I have ever seen are men. It has absolutely nothing to do with your gender. I mean it touched a nerve because I would never say we need a woman in that counselor's position. Because there are some great counselors out there that are men. So you're saying every man is a better disciplinarian than you are? It just blew my mind. I would put my discipline up against any man's, and not because I am female, but because I wanted structure, discipline, and consistency. So that's where I have seen it [gender bias] at the secondary level. I was also questioned when I was a principal about how was I going to discipline the boys. We had corporal punishment. My response

was, 'I am going to discipline the same.' I knew that if I wasn't strong enough to make an impact, I had my athletic director do it (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

"...sometimes you tend not to ask too many questions. You don't want to get the answer and have a chip on your shoulder kind of attitude. I can't say that I have. Which is I don't want to say offensive, because it is a strong word. I would say I have seen gender bias but it really didn't affect me" (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

### **Jessica's Story**

#### **Educational Background.**

Jessica has been in education for a total of 11 years. Two of those years has been in a leadership position as an assistant principal at a middle school campus. Jessica was drawn to the leadership component of education because she aspires to ultimately teach in higher education, and she felt that they acquiring a leadership position in a public school setting would be an avenue of obtaining more experience for the higher education instructional opportunity.

#### **Communication Style.**

Jessica described her communication style as being more indirect. She further explained that she felt that communication is situational, and if needed be, she felt like she would be more direct if that is what needed to happen. She indicated that she felt as if she more willing to listen and to help teachers instead of automatically taking what the

students and parents say as face value for the situation. She believes in investigating things further, and getting the whole perspective of a situation.

### **Experience With Gender Bias.**

Jessica explained that she had not yet experienced gender bias in her quest for an administrative position, but that she could see the potential for it to occur down the road. Jessica offered that her perception of gender bias was basically being overlooked because of one's gender. She advised that she has seen gender bias occur, primarily with females.

### **Communication Approach.**

Jessica felt that if her subordinates were asked to describe her communication style, they would say that she was more willing to listen and help them instead of automatically interjecting her opinion about the situation and automatically taking the side of the parent or student. She further offered that she felt as if her subordinates would say that she investigates the situation thoroughly before offering her opinion.

"I am pretty indirect and open because to me, we are all part of the same team. I don't feel like unless something is happening and it warrants you to be more direct, I can communicate in a more indirect way. I feel just like they are, but I have a different title. I don't look for empowerment in the way I communicate with them" (J. Stevens, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

### **Implications for Aspiring Female Leaders.**

Jessica encourages aspiring female administrators to always have an "open door. If somebody wants to talk to you, listen to them and try your hardest not to automatically throw your opinion in. Value what people have to say and how they feel. That is just important."

### **Findings.**

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Jessica's Gender Bias Effect was  $-.02$ . The resulting negative score indicated that she is more likely to associate women with supportive qualities, and men with leadership qualities. The significance of her negative score reflects the biased associations favoring males and leadership that are held by the female participants.

2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

Jessica felt as if it were perceived that men administrators were more willing to listen and to help instead of automatically taking what the students and parents has to say to heart. She felt that men were perceived to have these characteristics of leadership more so than women.

3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

Jessica indicated that although she had not personally experienced any barriers to career advancement opportunities "that she knows of," she did think that a female's communication style could hinder advancement opportunities in the near future, depending on what position or what level she may be at.

### **Samantha's Story**

#### **Educational Background.**

Samantha has worked in the field of education for a total of 18 years. She has been in a leadership position for five years. Samantha feels that she did not choose the

leadership sector of education, but that it chose her. Samantha stated that she is the type of individual who looks ahead and prepares for the future, which motivated her to go beyond her bachelor's degree and seek a master's degree. Once she began work on her master's degree, Samantha was approached about becoming an administrator.

### **Communication Style.**

When she was asked about her communication style, Samantha offered that both written and verbal communication was a strength for her. In regards to written communication, Samantha delivers her message in a matter of fact format because she feels it is more time efficient and that people do not want to read a long email. Samantha provides very simple, perhaps a bullet list, to the point message. She indicated that she always starts any communication method with a positive attribute and always ends with a positive attribute. In regards to verbal communication, Samantha describes herself as being very open and approachable, and loves to listen to and share ideas.

### **Experience With Gender Bias.**

Samantha has experienced gender bias in both the educational arena, and other workforce areas as well. In regards to gender bias in education, she recalls a scenario just this past school year. She explains,

I work with all men. They started nick-naming me alpha dog. I thought 'what in the world' and I went home and looked it up to make sure I had a good understanding. It explained not only an alpha dog in the leadership role as being bold and direct, but it also mentioned how the alpha dog is also very sexual and open. I came to work and said 'Hey guys, I looked that up. Do you guys realize

that it means this?’ Since then, they [fellow male administrators] haven’t said a word (S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

Samantha recalls this incident as being the one that stands out the most to her. She shared that she often wondered why her male colleagues were calling her that, and remembers feeling that she had been compared. She concluded that there were probably more names, but she just hasn’t heard them yet. In another situation outside of education, Samantha shared that when she first set out to acquire a job when she was younger, she walked into an auto store to apply for a cashier/retail sales position. She recalls being told that she would not be hired because she was a girl and that girls do not know anything about automotives. Samantha stated that she will never forget that experience. She recounts the men in the store saying ‘Aw, you’re a girl. You don’t know anything about the automotive industry’ (S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014). She remembers thinking to herself that she was simply applying to be a cashier and not to be a mechanic.

### **Communication Approach.**

Samantha shares that her communication style is probably her biggest strength. Her communication policy involves having an open door, and spending her time listening to an individual(s), even if that means staying after hours to complete work or tasks. Samantha feels that her subordinates, if asked, would describe her communication style as being direct with soft edges, while still being approachable and open. They would say that Samantha lays it all out on the table. Samantha enjoys and wants to listen to what teachers, parents, and students have to say. She feels that communication is a vital aspect to healthy relationships, even when discussing herself. She states ‘I am that way. I want

to know. If it's a good thing then, yea, and if there is something that I need to work on just tell me. I think most people just want to hear what you have to say' (S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

### **Implications for Aspiring Female Leaders.**

When asked what advice Samantha would give to aspiring female administrators, she advised them to take a stand and do not forget what gets you to your leadership position. Don't forget the heart of teaching, and do not let anyone say that you can't do it. 'Education is complex. But if you love it, don't let someone put you down, cause they try.'

### **Findings.**

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Samantha's Gender Bias Effect was 16. The resulting positive score indicated that she exhibits Female and Supportive tendencies in regards to her view of leadership roles. The significance of her positive score disregards the biased associations favoring males and leadership that are held by the female participants.

2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

"If you want to consider being overlooked because of gender...you can look at the majority of teachers and they are women. The number of female teachers of course changes at elementary, middle, and high schools" (S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014). Samantha unfortunately experienced gender bias when she was assigned the stereotypical name of 'Alpha Dog' by her male

colleagues. Although they stopped after she informed them of the other interpretations of the name, it is still a prime representation of gender bias experienced by female secondary administrators.

3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

“I think when you speak openly, it could cost you. I personally will not agree with something just to make you feel better. I say what’s on my heart. I find that if you don’t play the game, it could cost you. You can’t have an independent thought. These are serious barriers”(S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

## **Summer’s Story**

### **Educational Background.**

Summer has been involved with education for a total number of 24 years. Eight of those years she has help a leadership role as an administrator at the elementary, secondary, and district levels. Summer found herself gravitating towards the principal role because she was fond of and appreciated the principals that led her when she was a teacher. She recalls ‘I just found myself gravitating towards the principals I had before and just found myself wanting to help them’(S. Davis, personal interview, June 11, 2014).

### **Communication Style.**

Summer describes her communication style as being both, direct and indirect in regards to how she communicated with individuals. She further explains that there are specific times that you have to choose a more direct approach to communication, and that

depends largely on the individual that you are dealing with. Some people have to be told exactly how to do a task or specifically how or why a scenario works best. At other times, you may be addressing a situation or topic with an individual that you can just merely mention something to and because of their self-motivating nature, they will accomplish the task without further discussion or prompting.

When asked about how her subordinates would describe her communication style, Summer responded that ‘probably say that 80 % of them would say that I am helpful and that I work with them. We solve problems together. Of course there are those few who you have to be more direct with and who would probably say that I was mean’ (S. Davis, personal interview, June 11, 2014).

#### **Experience With Gender Bias.**

Summer’s interpretation of gender bias was the potential or occurrence that there would be an unequal balance in all aspects in regards to gender, from roles that you could play to financial situations. When asked if Summer had ever encountered gender bias in her quest for an administrative position, she stated that she had not experienced any barriers in career advancement. She stated that if she had encountered gender bias, she was not aware of it.

#### **Communication Approach.**

Summer describes her approach to education as being self-motivating and willing to assist anyone with any task at any given time. She classifies herself as a learner, and she wants to learn all of the time. Summer recalls when she advanced to the role of high school principal, that she her leadership style was questioned and compared to that of a male counterpart. Summer remembers certain staff members, especially coaches, being

worried about how she would deal with certain situations. She felt as if these individuals expected her to handle situations a certain way.

Overall, Summer feels as if she is easy to get along with and approachable on most matters. She has the perspective that she would never ask anyone to do anything that she would not do herself. She likes to jump right in and work alongside the staff. Summer also feels that she makes her time beneficial for her teachers and students by doing work after hours and helping them accomplish tasks during the school day.

### **Implications for Aspiring Female Leaders.**

When asked what advice she would give to aspiring female administrators, Summer offered advice about learning to take care of oneself and to always make yourself available. She encouraged aspiring female administrators to always think about the students that school staff work for. She conceded that teachers do not always like being reminded that we do things for the kids, but if you give them time to reflect with you and realize that whatever situation you are discussing is the best scenario for the students.

### **Findings.**

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Summer's Gender Bias Effect was -1.5. The resulting negative score indicated that she is more likely to associate women with supportive qualities, and men with leadership qualities. The significance of her negative score reflects the biased associations favoring males and leadership that are held by the female participants.

2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

“I try to remember that I live in a fishbowl and I have to watch my emotions at all times. But I try to be honest at the same time. So if my outer appearance is showing something different, I can explain why it is showing that by my body language”(S. Davis, personal interview, June 11, 2014).

3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

In regards to career advancement barriers, Summer has been fortunate in the respect that she has never experienced any of these barriers. She did offer that she received a promotion every two years, and each move has been an advancement to a different level. Summer indicated that this has been somewhat of a barrier in itself, but a more positive one for her.

### **Ashley’s Story**

#### **Educational Background.**

Ashley has been in the educational arena for a total of 16 years, with nine of those years fulfilling a leadership role. When Ashley was asked about why she sought a leadership role, she indicated that she has a natural talent for teaching and always enjoyed it. She had a fellow teacher friend that encouraged her to become a principal. Ashley not only heard encouragement from her friend, but others as well. Encouragement coupled with support assisted Ashley with acquiring her master’s degree and embarking on the leadership path in education.

#### **Communication Style.**

Ashley described her communication style as being direct, but deduced that you can be direct about a point or subject while still having tact. Ashley noted that an individual does not have to necessarily be mean, but to actually strive to treat people like you would want to be treated. Ashley indicated that she actually preferred that people communicate in a direct manner to her, but not in a mean or condescending manner that is hurtful or embarrassing. If Ashley's subordinates were asked to describe her communication style, Ashley felt that they would label her as an approachable individual that one could come to and inquire with about anything.

#### **Experience With Gender Bias.**

Ashley has has one experience that she shared in regards to gender bias. While passing a teacher in the hallway, the female teacher felt as if the look Ashley gave her did not suit her needs or standards, therefore she went to a higher authority to make her feeling known. Ashley brought about a good point when she stated the obvious that often times than not, women do not pursue these types of issues when they have a male superior. She raised to question whether or not this type of behavior was gender bias.

#### **Communication Approach.**

Ashley's communication approach is one that is based upon building trust and relationships with individuals by stiving to do what is right. Being a direct communicator could very well result in a loss in the school popularity contest, however Ashley strives to be liked by everyone. She does not want to be seen as a negative person. She conveyed that she tries to be friendly and hoped that people picked up on that aspect about her. She explained

“This is a people job. You are dealing with real people and real emotions. I am not out for myself. I am honest and forthright. I am funny and I have a sense of humor. I don’t have any patience for people who do not want to do the right thing. I don’t have a problem calling them out. Most people do appreciate it” (A. Taylor, personal interview, June 13, 2014).

### **Implications for Aspiring Female Leaders.**

When asked what advice she would give to aspiring female administrators, Ashley advised them to

“Stick by your guns. Just get ready for the fact that you will get pushback from people. It’s not a most liked person contest- you are not going to win it. Put your suit of armor on. Be yourself and in the end you have to answer to you and look at yourself in the mirror. You can’t compromise who you are. Finally, think about things before they come out of your mouth” (A. Taylor, personal interview, June 13, 2014).

### **Findings.**

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Ashley’s Gender Bias Effect was  $-.09$ . The resulting negative score indicated that she is more likely to associate women with supportive qualities, and men with leadership qualities. The significance of her negative score reflects the biased associations favoring males and leadership that are held by the female participants.

2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

While being an assistant principal at a high school, Ashley was told many times that appeared to be and was in fact nicer than her male colleagues. They informed Ashley that she was easier to go to. Ashley further explains that she feels that there is a need for a female administrator, so that female teachers felt more comfortable and at ease because they had someone relatable to converse with and confide in.

3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

Ashley shared an account about a conversation she had in regards to a nearby school district, in which ‘I was told by the school board president’s wife that they do not hire female administrators. You can look back at the school’s history and they have not. It exists. I think it is because most people still believe that men can handle things better than women can’ (A. Taylor, personal interview, June 13, 2014).

## **Cynthia’s Story**

### **Educational Background.**

Cynthia has been in education for 12 total years, and two of those years she has been in a leadership position. As a teacher, Cynthia held various roles such as cheerleading sponsor, dance team sponsor, class sponsor, and various other roles. She has always gravitated towards leadership roles and opportunities, and felt like she needed to take the next step towards becoming a principal.

### **Communication Style.**

Cynthia describes her communication style as being very open and approachable. She feels that if her subordinates were asked to describe her communication style, they

would offer that she is an individual that is very easy to converse with, but will still approach you to communicate if necessary, but will do so in a positive manner. Cynthia also adds that a communication strength that she possesses is that she is bi-lingual, and often times communicates to individuals who can only speak Spanish. She feels that because she can converse in a manner that they can understand helps to foster trust and meaningful relationships with parents and students. They feel as if they have someone that they can connect to or reach out to, which is extremely important in keeping them involved with their child's education.

#### **Experience With Gender Bias.**

Cynthia has been very fortunate in the aspect that she has not encountered career advancement barriers head on, and if she has, she opts to view and take them as something other than advancement barriers. When asked what her interpretation of gender bias was, Cynthia described it as the act of seeing a leadership role only being occupied by a male leader, and 'not seeing that a female has the same traits and qualities as a male when it comes to certain things' (C. Jackson, personal interview, June 13, 2014). Cynthia did offer that she experienced gender bias when she first assumed a leadership position, but has worked hard to prove herself and overcome those biases. She attributes the biases that she experienced with pre-existing conditions that other administrative colleagues had brought about.

#### **Communication Approach.**

Cynthia's interpretation of her approach to communication is that she is a more positive individual rather than negative because she feels as if you get more out of a relationship if you are positive. Cynthia also strives to openly communicate with staff

members to keep them aware of situations or events, and feels that they are appreciative of this because they feel more informed and valued.

### **Implications for Aspiring Female Leaders.**

When asked what advice she would offer to aspiring female administrators, Cynthia responded with ‘always stand your ground and believe in yourself’ (C. Nixon, personal interview, June 13, 2014). She further offered to be confident in your decisions and abilities.

### **Findings.**

1. What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Cynthia’s Gender Bias Effect was  $-.02$ . The resulting negative score indicated that she is more likely to associate women with supportive qualities, and men with leadership qualities. The significance of her negative score reflects the biased associations favoring males and leadership that are held by the female participants.

2. What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

Cynthia feels as if society’s perception and methods contribute to gender bias. She has deduced this opinion after conversing with parents in the process of trying to solve situations at hand or about topics in general.

3. Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

Although Cynthia has not experienced a negative aspect of communication and its impact on career advancement, she feels that her unique bi-lingual attribute, coupled with

her positive and approachable style have ultimately assisted her in advancing into the leadership sector of education.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The conclusions contained within this chapter include a summary of the findings of the investigation into gender communication bias of female secondary leaders within Regions 15 and 17 in Texas. The conclusions garnered from this study will be followed by implications for practice and suggestions for future research. This qualitative study was approved through the Internal Review Board (IRB) for Texas Tech University and focused on approaches and experiences with communication, as well as personal experiences of female administrators at the secondary level or higher.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary female administrators and analyze the effects of gender bias in communication and leadership in promotional practices of female leaders in secondary administrative positions in education. This study also attempted to identify trends of promotional practices of aspiring female administrators in relation to their communication styles by shedding light on the true communication styles of secondary female administrators, rather than society's perception.

The data collected for the study included personal interviews with six female secondary administrators in Regions 15 and 17 in Texas. The results were interpreted utilizing a critical feminist perspective in order to highlight the impact of gender bias in communication and leadership on promotional practices of secondary female leaders.

#### **Summary of Findings**

In synthesizing the information from the initial participant screening questionnaire to recruit female secondary administrators and the participants for this study, the following information was obtained. Thirty-three percent of respondents held an administrative position above principal, 17% held principal positions, and 50% held assistant principal positions.

Of the respondents, 67% have 11-20 years of experience in education, and 33% have 21-30 years of experience in education. Additionally, 33% of the respondents were aged 31-40, whereas 67% were aged 41-50. Furthermore, 67% of respondents had children and 33% of respondents do not have children.

Further analysis of the participant screening questionnaire indicated that 67% would describe their communication demeanor as being direct, whereas 33% of respondents would categorize their communication demeanor as being indirect. Interestingly, 67% of respondents indicated that they have not experienced gender bias, whereas 33% of respondents conveyed they have experienced gender bias. Additionally, 83% of respondents specified their approach to communication as being direct, while a mere 17% of respondents expressed that their approach to communication as being indirect.

The account yielded from interviews with the six female participants provided an understanding into the challenges and bias that female leaders face in reference to their communication style. The narratives of the interviews with the six female participants were analyzed from a critical feminist theory lens. The Coding Analysis Toolkit (CAT) program was utilized to assist with the account of word frequency and the coding of information.

A small sampling of words that were descriptive or appeared more frequently were utilized to deduce if the words that the female participants utilized during their interviews gleaned tendencies of male communication propensities.

The female participants in this study utilized strong words such as direct, forceful, and critical, accounted for .7% of adjectives that would fall into the dominate or strong word categories. Regarding soft word adjectives such as approachable, indirect, and nice, were employed at a rate of .5%. Neutral adjectives such as leader, situation, or gender accounted for 1% of word usage by the female participants. Overall, the descriptive adjectives were utilized at a rate of 2.1% overall.

The utilization of pronouns such as “I” and “me” in this study utilized by female participants occurred at a rate of 36%. The usage of pronouns such as “we” and “our” represented a rate of 2% of overall word usage. The female educational leaders in this study exerted strong word usage at a higher frequency that that of soft word usage. The word analysis of this data supports the suggestion that women within this study communicate and lead by male communication propensities.

One common theme that all six research participants shared was that they all offered that they have had to adapt their communication style, depending on the situation they were involved in. They described this as recalling a time to be more direct in their communication approach, and other scenarios needing a more nurturing and calming means of communication style. All six research participants believed that this communication style adaptability skillset allowed them to thrive in their roles as female secondary administrators, and for some, has propelled them to even higher leadership ranks.

### **Research Question 1**

What insights do female secondary administrators have when completing the Gender IAT?

Results from the administration of the Gender IAT showed that 83% of the females interviewed and tested in this study yielded scores that were associated with Male & Leadership tendencies, and 17% of the females interviewed and tested in this study yielded a score that was reflective of Female and Supportive tendencies. The significance of the use of the Gender IAT in this study was to analyze biased associations favoring males and leadership that are potentially held by the female participants.

The majority of women in this study believed that the perceptions of their subordinates and superiors in regards to their communication style and leadership tendencies were direct and more indicative of male leadership and communication tendencies. Eagley, & Steffen's 1984 research highlighted that stereotypic beliefs about the sexes do in fact exist. These beliefs portray that women are more communal (selfless and concerned with others) and less agentic (self-assertive and motivated to master) than men. Interestingly enough, the majority of females in this research study assigned themselves male communication tendencies, and were well aware of them. These females were not surprised by the results of the Gender-Leader IAT, indicating that they have male leadership tendencies, even though they are actually females.

Darla's account of the perceptions of her subordinates in regards to her communication style was

"I hate to say it, but it is probably a negative. To the point. Direct. I am very relational, but not when I have a task to do. If there is a task that needs to be

completed, I am not very relational. My communication is quick. Give me the answer. I move on. If I am not busy and I am trying to build relationships, I will slow down and talk to them about what was going on. Most of the time there is a task that needs to be done. I think I am not afraid to have a difficult conversation. I always start out and say ‘this is a difficult conversation, but we have to have it.’ But i am not doing my job if i don’t... ifi avoid it” (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

The results from the Gender IAT supported the majority of women’s perceptions of their subordinates regarding their communication style. The female leaders in this study were well aware of their communication tendencies and that they are more associated with male tendencies, prior to the Gender IAT administration. The female participants were not given the results of their Gender IAT assessment until the completion of the interview segment of the study, to ensure that the answers obtained from the participants were not skewed or biased in any way by the Gender IAT. Furthermore, analysis of the word frequency usage from the interview analysis supports the fact that the female participants in the study communicate and lead with male communication propensities. These findings together corroborate the conclusions of previous empirical studies regarding gender communication bias.

## **Research Question 2**

What are the experiences of female secondary administrators regarding gender bias in the workplace?

Although the vast majority (67%) of participants in this study responded that they have not personally experienced gender bias in the workplace, all (100%) participants

indicated that they have observed gender bias occur at some point in time to another female. One research participant called attention to the fact that a large majority of elementary teachers are female, but as one transitions to middle and high schools, female teachers do not outnumber male teachers as much.

“If you want to consider being overlooked because of gender...you can look at the majority of teachers and they are women. The number of female teachers of course changes at elementary, middle, and high schools” (S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

One research participant recalled the fact that she was favored on her high school campus among female teachers, as they felt more comfortable about communicating with her, rather than her male colleagues. Another research participant shared her story of being named the ‘Alpha Dog’ by her male colleagues. After she researched the term and familiarized herself with the various meanings of the stereotypical term, she informed her male colleagues of the inappropriate and sexually oriented demeanor of the term they dubbed her with, and the use of the stereotypical term ceased. A story exhibiting gender bias in the workplace was shared by a participant as she reflected her experience of trying to acquire employment.

“I definitely have been overlooked because of my gender. One of my first jobs, kinda real job, I walk into an auto store for a cashier/retail position. They wouldn’t hire me because I was a girl and wouldn’t know anything about automobiles. I will never forget that. They said ‘Aw, you’re a girl, you don’t know anything about the automotive industry.’ I thought to myself, I’m applying

to be a cashier. I'm not working on a car" (S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

Some of the participants in the study felt that some people feel that leadership roles should only be occupied by men. "Some people see the leadership role only for males. They do not see that a female has the same traits as a male when it comes to certain things" (C. Jackson, personal interview, June 13, 2014). Another participant recalled

"When I was an assistant principal at a high school, I had women teachers that would say "I come to you." I was the only female administrator on campus. I think there needed to be a woman. And so is that gender bias? I don't know"(A. Taylor, personal interview, June 13, 2014).

### **Research Question 3**

Among female secondary administrators, what are the perceptions regarding the impact of communication style on advancement opportunity?

The women in this study felt like there were barriers to communication, more specifically,

"I think when you speak openly, it could cost you. I personally will not agree with something just to make you feel better. I say what's on my heart. I find that if you don't play the game, it could cost you. You can't have an independent thought. These are serious barriers"(S. Graves, personal communication, June 11, 2014).

In other words, the more direct a female's communicative tendencies are, one will be less susceptible to errors and mixed signals. On the flip side of that is that most direct

communicators say what is on their mind and get right to the point. Ashley shared an account about a conversation she had in regards to a nearby school district, in which

‘I was told by the school board president’s wife that they do not hire female administrators. You can look back at the school’s history and they have not. It exists. I think it is because most people still believe that men can handle things better than women can’ (A. Taylor, personal interview, June 13, 2014).

In another account, a participant stated that

“...sometimes you tend not to ask too many questions. You don't want to get the answer and have a chip on your shoulder kind of attitude. I can't say that I have. Which is I don't want to say offensive, because it is a strong word. I would say I have seen gender bias but it really didn't affect me” (D. Smith, personal communication, June 5, 2014).

One participant stated that although she had not yet felt the impact of communication style on any advancement opportunities, she definitely felt that there would be in the future as she tried to advance from an assistant principal position. All participants shared a common approach to communication. Each one offered that communication can somewhat be manipulated to fit a certain situation or scenario. There are times that call for more direct or firm communication, whereas other times call for a more softer approach. Learning to identify and apply the appropriate method of communication has allowed these female participants to thrive in their leadership positions.

### **Implications for Future Female Educational Leaders**

Through the analysis of this study and implications for aspiring female administrators, several themes emerged. First and foremost, the majority of female

participants in this study were aware of their male communication and leadership tendencies. These female participants have acknowledged, accepted, and embraced their communication and leadership techniques by familiarizing themselves with the positives and negatives of such leadership, and have tailored them to attain success in positions predominately dominated by men. In correlation with Research Question 1, the majority of women in this study were aware of the male communication style and leadership tendencies, and predicted that the perceptions of their subordinates and superiors in regards to their communication style and leadership tendencies were direct and more indicative of male leadership and communication tendencies. This finding coincided with Eagley, & Steffen's 1984 research that highlighted that stereotypic beliefs about the sexes do in fact exist. These beliefs portray that women are more communal (selfless and concerned with others) and less agentic (self-assertive and motivated to master) than men. The findings of the Gender-Leader IAT test corroborates the past empirical studies conducted regarding gender communication bias. The majority of females in this research study regarded their communication and leadership tendencies as being more characteristic of a male.

Second, female leaders must recognize that communication will be situational in nature. The majority of empirical studies of gender communication bias in Chapter Two focused upon the direct communication approach utilized by women, and how the direct communication style could be a negative or detrimental component of the view of female leadership tendencies. Merchant (2012) states that three waves of the women's liberation movement led to political equality for men and women, an increase of women's participation in the workplace, as well as more females in leadership and managerial

positions. These effects were crucial for women in gaining their independence and a unique voice to their gender, differentiating them from men. These gender differences have implications in communication styles and influence tactics and across leadership styles. Both academic and popular research in the intersection of gender and communication styles support that men and women differ in the way in which they communicate. There will be times that a direct or firmer approach is needed, and there will be times when a softer or gentler approach is warranted. A female leader must adapt and thrive with this approach, as communication is a vital tool for leaders.

The next implication for future female educational leaders is to surround yourself with other individuals, whether they be male or female, that will grow you as a leader. There was very little empirical research available that encompassed growing yourself as a leader and gender communication bias. Females in leadership positions will be working with various leadership styles, therefore it is imperative to learn to work with and appreciate the multitude of leadership styles, as it will allow the opportunity for a diverse understanding and appreciation of leadership.

Fourth, a female leader must stand her ground and have confidence in her abilities and decision making skills. She must also be consistent with her methods and approach to all sectors of the leadership position, as well as recognize that being in a leadership position will not coincide with a popularity contest. A female leader must recognize that doing the right thing will not always result in being a popular person on campus. Very little empirical studies yielded themselves regarding the emotional and relationship struggles that female administrators face.

In analyzing the literature presented in Chapter One regarding the information available on female secondary leaders and gender communication bias, it clearly supports the findings developed in this study. Huff & Mitchell, 2008, stated that, there are significantly fewer women than men that hold top administrative positions in secondary and superintendent roles, which boast the most responsibility and garner the highest paid salaries. This study found that the percentage of instances where participants in this study currently or have held a secondary principal position yielded 33%. Furthermore, the percentage of the participants in this study holding a principal position at the elementary level was 42%, slightly higher than the percentage that have held or currently hold a secondary principal position. Finally, the percentage that have held or currently hold an assistant principal position at the secondary level accounted for 33%, whereas the percentage for research participant holding an assistant principal position at an elementary campus were 0%. When comparing secondary level position percentages, where the principalship was 33% and the assistant principalship was the same, 33%, one can derive that the probability of a female administrator pursuing an administrative role would have an equivalent opportunity at an assistant principal position and a principal position. However, when analyzing the participants past or present roles at the elementary level, the probability is much higher for an aspiring female administrator to obtain a principal position, because the percentage of principals at the elementary level in this study yielded 42%, whereas the percentage of females holding an assistant principal position at the elementary level was 0%. Although the research participants in this study represent only a fraction of the female administrative population in the state of Texas, their career resumes reflect that the majority of female administrators in this study held

administrative positions at the elementary level at a more frequent rate when compared to secondary level administrative positions held by the female research participants.

The literature employed in this study was derived from various sources regarding female leadership in secondary education, communication styles, gender bias, and female leaders with a critical feminist perspective. Literature regarding female leadership in education and gender bias reveal that women in leadership roles, especially at the secondary and superintendency level, struggle with gender communication bias.

The use of a critical feminist lens was essential in providing depth of understanding and a voice to this research. The critical feminist theory is a pertinent theory and outlook to utilize when analyzing organizational communication, as it spotlights criticism and emancipation efforts of the perceived promotional constraints of females to top administrative positions (Papa, Daniels, & Spiker, 2008). Furthermore, a feminist approach was utilized in this study because it centered upon diverse outcomes and situations, as well as issues that women face and the institutions that envelop them (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenological perspective was employed, as phenomenological research focuses on investigating the actual lived experiences of the people being studied. These lived experiences assist the researcher in identifying the core essence of human experience through descriptive testimonies of the research participants. Phenomenology allows for the researcher to rely and draw upon his or her own personal experiences to comprehend the experiences of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Further support to this study's findings occurred through the literature regarding gender bias, educational leadership and communication. Although there has been an influx on women attaining administrative roles, there is still a disconnect of women

obtaining leadership positions at the secondary level and beyond in education, thus causing missed opportunities of phenomenal female leadership. Among 89,810 public school principals, females accounted for 52 % of the total. More specifically, females accounted for 64% of primary school, 42% of middle school, 30% of high school, and 40% of combined school principals (NCES, 2013). In order to maximize on the leadership potential provided by women, some organizations are furthering career development opportunities for women by involving them in career development programs, allowing them to participate in formal networks, and providing work-life support. Organizations that are trying to reduce the leadership gap are assigning women to high-visibility positions, as well as fostering effective and supporting mentoring opportunities and relationships for them. (Northouse, 2010).

Northouse also contends that gender biases have somewhat of a detrimental impact on the career advancement opportunities for women, as they skew the perception and evaluation systems that are utilized to rank work performance. These gender biases also limit the leadership behavior of women in top roles, and cause potential problems for organizations alike. Overcoming these problems that are ever present in the leadership sector of organizations can only occur if individuals are educated about gender bias and become aware of the issue and prejudices that plague leadership positions in organizations. (Northouse, 2010). Young & Skrla (2003) poetically describe the emergence of female administrators by verbalizing that the best approach for changing the gender stratified situation in the public school superintendency relies on replacing the standard portrayal of the superintendency with a more diverse view of the superintendency.

Studies focusing on communication continue to shed light on the struggles that females endure. According to Merchant (2012), three waves of the women's liberation movement led to political equality for men and women, an increase of women's participation in the workplace, as well as more females in leadership and managerial positions. These effects were crucial for women in gaining their independence and a unique voice to their gender, differentiating them from men. These gender differences have implications in communication styles and influence tactics and across leadership styles. Both academic and popular research in the intersection of gender and communication styles support that men and women differ in the way in which they communicate.

Effective uses and harnesses of power and the perceptions of an individual's power by subordinates, peers, or even supervisors can be critical components to managerial and organizational success (Aguinis & Henle, 2001).

In reviewing the literature regarding gender bias in educational leadership, Heliman (2001) describes gender bias to be expectations about what women are perceived to be like (descriptive) and how they should behave (prescriptive). Heliman goes on to state that these expectations can affect their work performance, curtail credit or merit for success, and lead to a penalization of their performance. Because gender bias influences evaluations in the work setting, competence does not guarantee that a woman will advance in the ranks in the organizational setting that is equivalent to that of men.

### **Suggestions for Future Study**

The data obtained during this study has added valuable research to the areas of gender bias, female leadership in secondary administrative positions, and female studies.

Because of the lack of information available regarding gender communication bias and how it affects female secondary administrative leaders and aspiring female administrators, this study has provided a theoretical framework in which future studies can be based upon. Further study into the impact of the aforementioned areas of gender communication bias and female secondary administrative leaders could have a positive impact of leadership at the secondary level and unveil untapped and underutilized female leadership.

The next recommendation from this researcher would be a qualitative or mixed methods study analyzing gender communication bias in educational administration, with an emphasis at the secondary level that includes the male perspective and a larger focus on participant population.

This study brings to light numerous questions regarding female secondary leadership and promotion rates of females at the secondary level. Are there barriers, other than gender communication bias, that women face in their quest for top leadership positions such as religion or cultural effects?

Additionally, this study poses the question, if female secondary administrators have the communication style adaptability skillset, what does it mean in different settings, and how does it compare among female and male administrators?

The data obtained during this study has added valuable research to the segments of gender bias, communication, and promotional practices of female administrators at the secondary level of education. Because there is a shortage of empirical and research information available that includes all three areas, this study has provided a theoretical framework in which future studies may be based upon. Further study into the impact of

these areas of inquiry could make a significant and positive impact on both female and male leaders.



## **Appendix A**

### **RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

Dear (Name),

Greetings. My name is Raelye Self and I am currently conducting a study as a Doctoral Candidate through Texas Tech University regarding communication gender bias, and I was writing to see if you would be willing to participate in my study. I promise to limit your participation to an hour or less, and ensure complete confidentiality.

This study will help me learn more about how to strengthen professional development for principals and teachers to help them become better leaders and teachers. I would really appreciate it if you could please take the time to fill out this brief, 13 question survey via Survey Monkey at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P6FVPBT>.

If you choose to participate, I will contact you to schedule a one-hour audio-taped interview at a location and time of your choice. During this interview, I will administer a Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test and conduct an interview. Combined, the two will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test will take approximately fifteen minutes, and the interview will take approximately forty-five minutes to conduct. The interview questions will be related to teaching practices, professional learning, leadership, and value-added data.

If you have questions, you may contact me at [raelye.self@ttu.edu](mailto:raelye.self@ttu.edu) or at (325) 450-3453. Thank you so much for your time, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Thanks!

Raelye Self

Educational Leadership  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas Tech University

## **Appendix B**

### **PARTICIPANT SCREENING QUESTIONS**

- 1) Name
- 2) What is your current position?
- 3) At what school/school district?
- 3) How many total years have you been in education?
- 4) What is your age?
- 5) Do you have children? If so, what are their ages?
  - a) 0-10 b) 11-20 c) 21-30 d) 31-40 e) 41-50 f) 50 >
- 6) Would you describe your communication demeanor as quiet or direct?
- 7) Have you ever experienced gender bias? Yes or No
- 8) Do you feel your communication style has hindered your performance?
- 9) Do you insert opinions into conversations or wait until each speaker has spoken?
- 10) Is your communication approach direct or indirect?
- 11) Has anyone ever told you that you have a dominating personality?
- 12) Do you think you have a dominating personality?
- 13) Would you be willing to be contacted about the possibility of a follow-up interview?
  - a) Name b) Email c) Phone

## **Appendix C**

### **SCRIPT FOR INTERVIEW SCHEDULING**

Thank you so much for your interest in participating in this study regarding gender communication bias in secondary female leadership roles. I will be conducting the research as a Doctoral Candidate through Texas Tech University.

I would like to schedule a one-hour interview with you at a time and place that is convenient for you. Please know that you may choose to stop the interview at any time. With your permission, this interview will be audio-taped. The Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test and Interview session combined will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test will take approximately fifteen minutes, and the interview will take approximately forty-five minutes to conduct. Also, I would like to remind you that your name and information will be kept completely confidential.

Do you have any questions that I can answer at this time? If you think of any questions prior to our interview, please do not hesitate to contact me at (325) 450-3453. I look forward to seeing you on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you!

## **Appendix D**

### **INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM**

#### **What is this project studying?**

This study is called “To speak or not to speak:Secondary Female Administrators and Communication Gender Bias. What we learn may help other secondary female administrators, and we hope to publish this study widely to make it as beneficial as possible.

#### **What would I do if I participate?**

In this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-hour, face-to-face individual interview at a location and time of your choice. During this hour, you will be given a Gender Leader Implicit Association Test that will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The Gender IAT is being utilized in this study to analyze possible biased associations favoring males and leadership that are potentially held by the female participants. The interview segment will take approximately forty-five minutes to complete. Some questions will be asked about any changes you made in your teaching, about professional development, and the about how your principal supported your growth as a teacher. A second follow-up interview may be scheduled if needed, and it may be completed over the phone. All interviews will be audio-taped.

#### **How will I benefit from participating?**

There will be no personal benefit for participating in this study, however, you will be adding to the knowledge base of secondary female administrators.

#### **Can I quit if I become uncomfortable?**

Yes, absolutely. Dr. Valle, Raelye Self, and the Protection Board have reviewed the questions and think you can answer them comfortably. However, you can stop answering the questions at any time. You may skip any question(s) you do not feel comfortable answering. You can leave any time you wish. Participating is your choice.

#### **How long will participation take?**

The interview will last one hour. During this hour, the Gender Leader Implicit Association Test will take approximately fifteen minutes, and the interview portion will take approximately forty-five minutes. If a follow-up interview is needed, it will take no more than twenty minutes and can be done via phone call at a convenient time for you.

#### **How are you protecting privacy?**

All of the information you share will remain confidential. Fake names will be used in the report.

**If I have some questions about this study, who can I ask?**

If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to contact me [raelye.self@ttu.edu](mailto:raelye.self@ttu.edu) or at (325) 450-3453, or Dr. Fernando Valle at [f.valle@ttu.edu](mailto:f.valle@ttu.edu). If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), Office of the Vice President for Research, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409, (806) 742-2064.

**What do I do if I want to participate?**

Contact Raelye Self at (325) 450-3453 to schedule an interview or email her at [raelye.self@ttu.edu](mailto:raelye.self@ttu.edu) to communicate your willingness to participate in this study.

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This consent form will no longer be valid after March 31, 2015.

### Appendix E

### Gender IAT Test

Practice Trial

Flower		Insect
<input type="radio"/>	Rose	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Lily	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Dragonfly	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Beetle	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Gnat	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Daffodil	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Mosquito	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Daisy	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Roach	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Tulip	<input type="radio"/>

Trial A

Male or Leader		Female or Supporter
<input type="radio"/>	Emily	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Josh	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Supporter	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Leader	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Brandon	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Ambitious	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Peter	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Determined	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Donna	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Debbie	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Helpful	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Dynamic	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Understanding	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Katherine	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Ian	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Sympathetic	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Compassionate	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Jane	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Andrew	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Assertive	<input type="radio"/>

Time to complete Test Trial A: \_\_\_\_\_











## Appendix F

### PERMISSION FOR USE OF GENDER-LEADER IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST

Hi Raelye -

There are no limitations on use of the IAT for scholarly research purposes, and no need to seek formal permission for scholarly research uses.

You can find some advice about using the IAT on my web site and Brian Nosek's. On my site you can look at:

[http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/iat\\_materials.htm](http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/iat_materials.htm)

Best wishes,

-Tony Greenwald

-----  
Anthony G. Greenwald <http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/>

Dept of Psychology - Box 351525 email: [agg@uw.edu](mailto:agg@uw.edu)

Univ. of Washington VOICE: (206) 543-7227

Seattle WA 98195-1525 FAX: (206) 685-3157

IAT demonstration web site: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/>

IAT software: [http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/iat\\_materials.htm](http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/iat_materials.htm)

Downloadable papers: <http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/bydate.htm>

Project Implicit web site: <http://www.projectimplicit.net/>

Blindspot: Hidden biases <http://www.spottheblindspot.com>  
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----- Original Message -----

From: "Self, Raelye" <raelye.self@ttu.edu>

To: <agg@u.washington.edu>

Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2013 11:08 AM

Subject: Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test

Dr. Greenwald,

Good afternoon. My name is Raelye Self and I am an Educational Leadership doctoral student at Texas Tech University. My dissertation is focused on gender bias in regards to communication, as well as promotion rates of aspiring female administrators. I have narrowed my scope of research to secondary female administrators in Region 17 in Texas, and will be analyzing the research through a critical feminist lens. I am planning on conducting interviews with willing female administrator participants to gain a female perspective to perceived differences in communication styles of females vs males (especially in administrative positions), and also hope to correlate promotion rates of aspiring female administrators based with their communication style.

Upon my investigation of resources for my literature review, I found myself reading Peter Northouse's Leadership: Theory and Practice book. I was particularly interested in the Women and Leadership chapter because of the Gender-Leader Implicit Association Test that it included. I began to ponder the ways in which I could augment the depth and validity of my research, and came up with the notion of having each interviewee take the IAT.

Would it be permissible to utilize the IAT as one of the data collection tools for my research, and if so, could I obtain the IAT from you? If you do not wish me to utilize this in my research, I completely understand.

I sincerely appreciate your time, and hope to hear back from you.

Raelye Self

## **Appendix G**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1) How long have you been in education (total years)?
- 2) How long have you been an administrator?
- 3) What made you choose the leadership sector of education?
- 4) How would you describe your communication style? Are you a direct or indirect communicator?
- 5) How would your subordinates describe your communication style?
- 6) How would your superiors describe your leadership style?
- 7) Do you know what the term “glass ceiling” refers to?
- 8) What does gender bias mean to you?
- 9) Have you ever encountered gender bias during your quest for an administrative position?
- 10) Has your communication style or leadership style ever been compared to that of a male?
- 11) Have you ever been approached regarding your communication style, and if so, what was your response?
- 12) When working with staff members, how would you describe your communication style?
- 13) What are your strengths?
- 14) Have you ever encountered any career advancement barriers? If so, what were they?
- 15) What is the hardest aspect of this job for you?

## Appendix H

### INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

#### Darla's Survey Results

TTU Participant Screening Questionnaire

 **COMPLETE**  
Collector: Web Link (Web Link)  
Started: Thursday, May 29, 2014 8:12:20 AM  
Last Modified: Thursday, May 29, 2014 8:45:18 AM  
Time Spent: 00:32:58  
IP Address: 216.48.204.69

PAGE 1

Q1: Please provide your first and last name. [REDACTED]

Q2: What is your current position? Associate Executive Director

Q3: At what school/school district? Region [REDACTED] ESC

Q4: How many years have you been in education? 27

Q5: What is your age? 49

Q6: If you have children, please indicate by marking their age(s). c) 21-30

Q7: Would you describe your communication demeanor as quiet or direct? Direct

Q8: Have you ever experienced gender bias? Not that I am aware

Q9: Do you feel your communication style has hindered your performance?  
No

Q10: Do you insert opinions into conversations or wait until each speaker has spoken?  
Both, depending on the situation.

Q11: Is your communication approach direct or indirect? Direct

Q12: Has anyone ever told you that you have a dominating personality? No

Q13: Do you think you have a dominating personality?  
No

### Jessica's Survey Results

TTU Participant Screening Questionnaire		SurveyMonkey
#6		<b>COMPLETE</b> Collector: Web Link (Web Link) Started: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 11:47:17 AM Last Modified: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 11:50:09 AM Time Spent: 00:02:51 IP Address: 166.147.70.112
PAGE 1		
Q1: Please provide your first and last name.	[REDACTED]	
Q2: What is your current position?	Assistant Principal	
Q3: At what school/school district?	[REDACTED]	
Q4: How many years have you been in education?	11	
Q5: What is your age?	35	
Q6: If you have children, please indicate by marking their age(s).	a) 0-10	
Q7: Would you describe your communication demeanor as quiet or direct?	Quiet	
Q8: Have you ever experienced gender bias?	No	
Q9: Do you feel your communication style has hindered your performance?	At times yes it has.	
Q10: Do you insert opinions into conversations or wait until each speaker has spoken?	I work very hard to wait until the speaker has spoken.	
Q11: Is your communication approach direct or indirect?	Indirect	
Q12: Has anyone ever told you that you have a dominating personality?	No	
Q13: Do you think you have a dominating personality?	No	
Q14: Would you be willing to be contacted about the possibility of a follow-up interview?	Yes	
1 / 2		

## **Samantha's Survey Results**

### Summer's Survey Results

TTU Participant Screening Questionnaire



**COMPLETE**  
Collector: Web Link (Web Link)  
Started: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 7:31:38 PM  
Last Modified: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 7:37:10 PM  
Time Spent: 00:05:32  
IP Address: 74.197.51.43

PAGE 1

Q1: Please provide your first and last name. [REDACTED]

Q2: What is your current position? Executive Director of Schools

Q3: At what school/school district? [REDACTED]

Q4: How many years have you been in education? 24

Q5: What is your age? 46

Q6: If you have children, please indicate by marking their age(s). *Respondent skipped this question*

Q7: Would you describe your communication demeanor as quiet or direct? quiet

Q8: Have you ever experienced gender bias? no

Q9: Do you feel your communication style has hindered your performance?  
At times I think it has been hindered, especially when it is new information or I don't have a good grasp on the information.

Q10: Do you insert opinions into conversations or wait until each speaker has spoken?  
I insert opinions.

Q11: Is your communication approach direct or indirect? I think it is a mixture of both. I probably am more direct.

Q12: Has anyone ever told you that you have a dominating personality? No, I don't recall ever been told it is dominating.

### Ashley's Survey Results

**TTU Participant Screening Questionnaire**

 **COMPLETE**  
Collector: Web Link (Web Link)  
Started: Friday, June 13, 2014 3:41:28 PM  
Last Modified: Friday, June 13, 2014 3:48:34 PM  
Time Spent: 00:05:06  
IP Address: 68.208.106.14

PAGE 1

Q1: Please provide your first and last name. [REDACTED]

Q2: What is your current position? Principal

Q3: At what school/school district? [REDACTED]

Q4: How many years have you been in education? 16

Q5: What is your age? 46

Q6: If you have children, please indicate by marking their age(s). b) 11-20

Q7: Would you describe your communication demeanor as quiet or direct? more direct

Q8: Have you ever experienced gender bias? not directly

Q9: Do you feel your communication style has hindered your performance?  
Some in the past, maybe 8 or so years ago: "too outspoken."

Q10: Do you insert opinions into conversations or wait until each speaker has spoken?  
Insert.

Q11: Is your communication approach direct or indirect? direct

Q12: Has anyone ever told you that you have a dominating personality? yes

Q13: Do you think you have a dominating personality?  
Yes

## Cynthia's Survey Results

**TTU Participant Screening Questionnaire**



**COMPLETE**

Collector: Web Link (Web Link)  
Started: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 7:31:38 PM  
Last Modified: Tuesday, June 10, 2014 7:37:10 PM  
Time Spent: 00:05:32  
IP Address: 74.197.51.43

PAGE 1

**Q1: Please provide your first and last name.** [REDACTED]

Q2: What is your current position? Executive Director of Schools

Q3: At what school/school district? [REDACTED]

Q4: How many years have you been in education? 24

Q5: What is your age? 46

Q6: If you have children, please indicate by marking their age(s). *Respondent skipped this question*

Q7: Would you describe your communication demeanor as quiet or direct? quiet

Q8: Have you ever experienced gender bias? no

Q9: Do you feel your communication style has hindered your performance?  
At times I think it has been hindered, especially when it is new information or I don't have a good grasp on the information.

Q10: Do you insert opinions into conversations or wait until each speaker has spoken?  
I insert opinions.

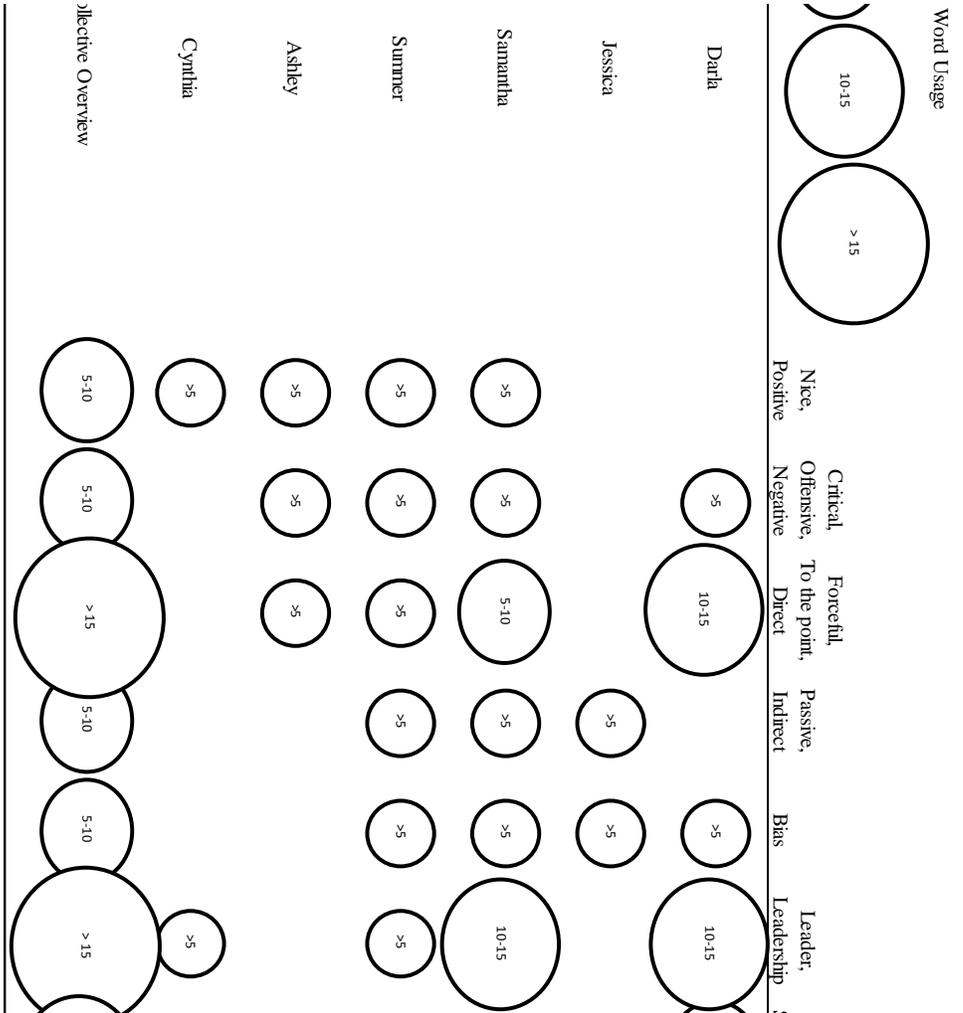
Q11: Is your communication approach direct or indirect? I think it is a mixture of both. I probably am more direct.

Q12: Has anyone ever told you that you have a dominating personality? No, I don't recall ever been told it is dominating.

### Appendix I

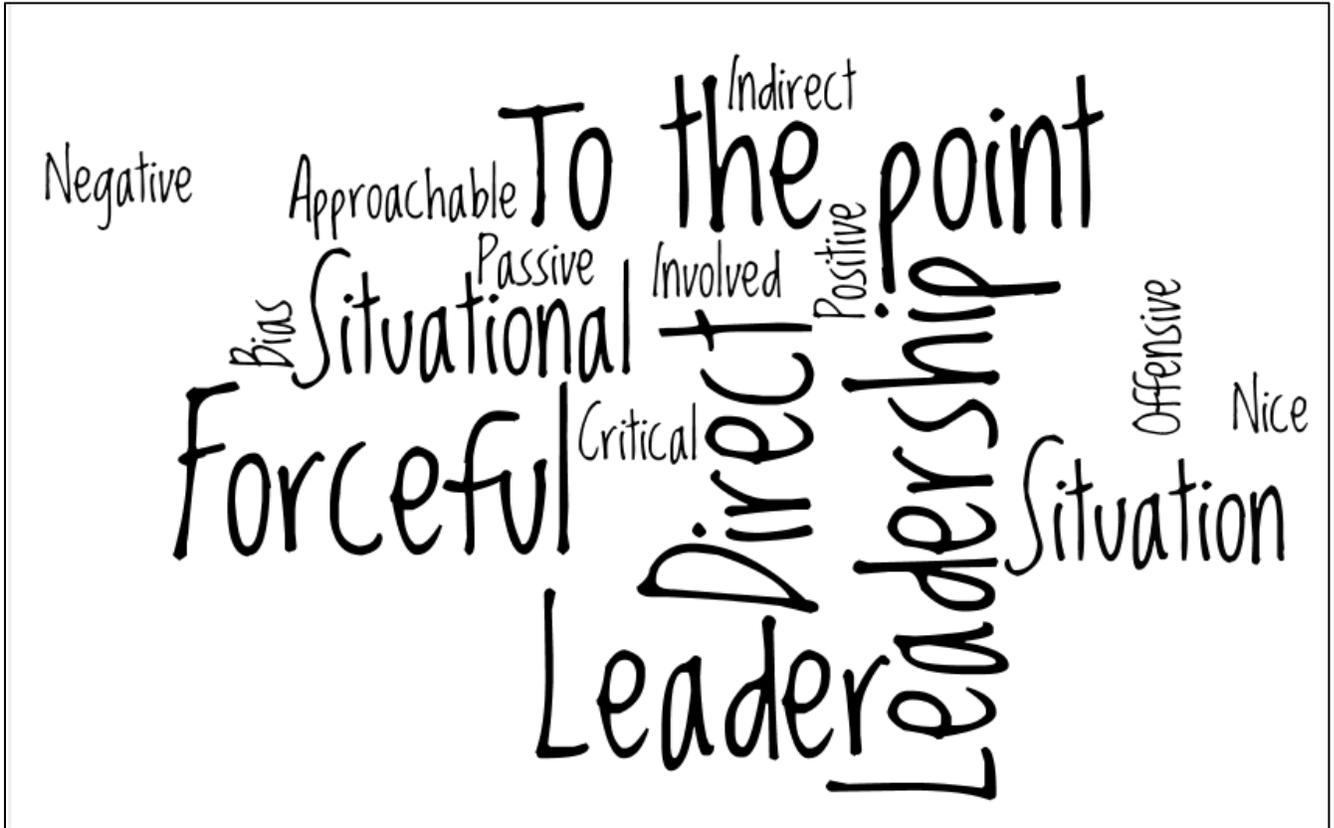
### Word Frequency Table

*arch Participant Interviews*



Appendix J

WORD FREQUENCY WORD CLOUD



**Appendix K**  
**IRB Approval**



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
Vice President for Research

April 28, 2014

Fernando Valle  
Ed Psychology & Leadership  
Mail Stop: 1071

Regarding: 504453 To Speak or Not to Speak: Secondary Female Administrators and Communication Gender Bias

Dr. Fernando Valle:

The Texas Tech University Protection of Human Subjects Committee has approved your proposal referenced above. The approval is effective from April 28, 2014 to March 31, 2015. This expiration date must appear on all of your consent documents.

We will remind you of the pending expiration approximately eight weeks before March 31, 2015 and to update information about the project. If you request an extension, the proposal on file and the information you provide will be routed for continuing review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rosemary Cogan".

Rosemary Cogan, Ph.D., ABPP  
Protection of Human Subjects Committee

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