Women's Leadership: A Study of African American Female Principal Experiences

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WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP: A STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCES

By

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This project is dedicated to my mother. Though you are not here, you are. You will never be forgotten and your granddaughter shall know thy name. Wherever you are, however you are, take a bow. We did it. You will be happy to know that somewhere, I listened and will continue to listen. I could write a novel that would eclipse this project in length and fill it with sweet salutations. However, no word or phrase would eclipse two of the greatest words ever created, thank you. Thank you for loving me before I knew what “me” was. Thank you for loving me after you discovered who I was and after my infallible nature bequeathed to me through birth was revealed. Finally, thank you for being you and teaching me to be myself. I LOVE YOU.
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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, women’s leadership has been overlooked and underappreciated by researchers and policymakers although this leadership has been vital to America’s ultimate success and infrastructure. Simply stated, contributions of female leadership have been overshadowed by a system that primarily values patriarchal forms of leadership and oppresses females. African American female leaders have been a part of this exclusion. This study explored the underrepresentation of African female leaders by focusing on the experiences of seven former African American female principals. To understand their perspectives and experiences, this study uses narrative life history and draws on two complementary lenses which facilitate a greater understanding of the experiences associated with African American female principals: Standpoint Theory and a Womanist perspective. The capturing of the seven former principal experiences were accomplished by tracing events from their childhood, adult life, extracting life lessons, patterns of socialization, and further exploring their everyday leadership realities. The realities included their successes, failures, limitations, reconstructions of identity, and personal resolutions as practiced through their leadership. Some of the findings within this study supported previous research findings on the principalship and some of them shed new light on possible new findings. This conclusion gives credence to the notion that research on African American female principals is vital and necessary to understand a growing population of professionals that have traditionally been omitted from leadership literature on two counts, by race and gender. As researchers further understand their unique standpoints and realities, the field of education becomes more equipped to better serve its people and purpose.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, women’s leadership has been overlooked and underappreciated by researchers and policymakers although this leadership has been vital to America’s ultimate success and infrastructure (Collins, 1989; Grogan, 1999; Dagbovie, 2003; Gasman, 2007). Quite simply, America has benefited from both male and female leadership. However, contributions of female leadership have been overshadowed by a system that primarily values patriarchal forms of leadership and oppresses females (Collins, 1989). Although often overlooked and understudied, this reality has not gone unnoticed by some scholars who are now advocating for more recognition and research of women’s leadership (Adkison, 1981; Bell, 1990; Lawson, 1991; Fitzgerald, 2003; Chin, 2004; Alston, 2005; Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Rusaw, 2005).

The field of education has been more inclusive of female centered research in the last seventy years. However, consistent with general approaches and societal views on leadership, women centered research on leadership has been under represented (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Researching societal conditions and gender, Collins (1989) argues that, “women share a history of patriarchal oppression through the political economy of the material conditions of sexuality and reproduction” and that this oppression transcends divisions among all women regardless of race, class, ethnicity and religion (p. 756).

In similar research on leadership, Stephens (2003) exploring society’s patriarchal view of leadership and practices noted this oppression and stated that women’s leadership has been a cultural oxymoron, “working beneath the level of accessible
language, beneath the traditional words for leadership: president, king, chairman, minister, professor, or rhetorician, all of which, until recently, were gendered male” (p. 59). However, although noted, language has not been the sole factor of a de-emphasis of the contributions of female leaders.

Researchers have identified a number of factors such as language and societal values that account for the condition of women’s leadership roles being systematically overlooked and understudied. African American females have experienced this lack of scholarship activity focused on their leadership roles and attributes to an even greater degree than their White counterparts (Harley, 1996; Waring, 2003; Gasman, 2007). This study will illuminate the scholarship and contributions of African American female leadership, by exploring the realities and experiences of African American female principals.

**Traditional Research on Female Leadership**

To understand the scholarship and experiences of African American female principals, it is important to examine the scholarship in women’s leadership more generally. Interest in the unique experiences of women and their leadership practices began during the 1970’s when in order to document and recognize more forms of leadership, researchers began to examine more diverse forms of leadership and gender relations (Adkison, 1981; Grogan, 2000). Even though scholarship activity on women’s leadership increased, research approaches were still skewed in favor of men, and when about women, almost exclusively focused on the White female experience. For example, early studies of female leadership assumed all women within organizations had similar experiences regardless of racial and ethnic differences (Grogan, 2000).
During this period (1970’s), research focused on women leaders emerged primarily through the disciplines of philosophy, sociology, psychology and history. This early research was centered on women as leaders in corporations and concluded that successful women leaders needed to model their behavior according to the expectations of males in order to be successful (Waring, 2003). Together, these studies explored women’s leadership experiences and treated women as homogenous beings who experienced the same realities (Grogan, 2000).

The next two decades of women leadership studies would offer alternative findings in comparison to studies conducted in the 1970’s. As scholars continued the inquiry on women’s leadership during the 1980’s and 1990’s, the literature on leadership began to openly question the practice of conflating female leadership styles, arguing that females possessed different leadership styles than men (Waring, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Within the latter part of this timeframe (mid-1990’s), researchers began to take a more critical view of leadership that focused on diverse populations such as women managers and school leaders (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). This more critical approach to leadership studies yielded data that suggested African American female leaders and administrators faced different experiences than their White female counterparts (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; King & Ferguson, 2001; Hite, 2004).

As an example, Loder (2005a) researching African American women principals and their interactions in various communities noted their experiences and stated, “An emerging literature on African American women principals suggests that their race and gender statuses distinguish their leadership orientations and experiences from their male and White female colleagues” (p. 299). Scholars began to recognize that the
conditions of sexism and racism affected women of color differently and their careers may be heavily impacted by one or both factors, creating an atmosphere of double marginalization (Hite 2004). This more critical research suggested the African American female leadership experience merited its own area of research focus specifically based on their unique gender and racial experiences (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000).

In the last twenty years, research has increasingly begun to recognize the contributions that have been overlooked. Researchers such as Marybeth Gasman (Walton, 2005) and Steven Lawson (1991) researching African American female leadership, shows how historically, African American female leaders’ contributions were even downplayed within African American communities. African American female leaders such as: Jo Ann Robinson, Ella Baker, Diane Nash, Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clark, and Rosa Parks were ignored or devalued in comparison to their male counterparts (Lawson, 1991; Colburn & Landers, 1995; Williams, 1996; Grant, 1998; Franklin & Moss, 2000; Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003; Summers, 2004; Walton, 2005).

Lawson (1991) underscored the importance of understanding the contributions of African American females by arguing systematic studies of African American females in their various roles as mothers, wives, and professionals should be conducted. Barnett Cash (1995) reasserted Lawson’s contention and added to his thoughts by stating:

In order to understand the historical experience of the multifaceted lives of African-American women, it is necessary to integrate the folk culture into the existing body of knowledge of Black women…African American women, whose voices are largely unknown, have often unconsciously created their own lives and are the voices of authority on their experiences (p. 30).
Within this body of women whose voices have remained unknown exists educators whose leadership has been shaped by different historical periods and experiences. This study seeks to illuminate these voices.

**Statement of the Problem and Research Questions**

**Statement of the Problem**

African American female educational leaders have been instrumental in educating communities for decades and can be traced to the Antebellum period (Davis, 1983; Tillman, 2004; Alston, 2005). However, researchers have all but ignored their presence in these communities until the 1980’s and only began to concentrate certain studies on African American women in the mid-1990’s (Waring, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). This study will continue to build on that foundation by adding discourse based on findings from research that is specifically designed to study African American female leaders in education. Taking a cue from Gasman (2007), this research project is centered on describing African American female leadership in education by drawing on their conceptions of self and leadership in order to add more legitimacy to current findings. By posing and exploring research questions with an understanding of the historical context of African Americans at the intersection of race and gender, this study will make an important contribution to the current studies on the principalship by detailing specific realities of an integral part of the larger body of educational leaders.

A clear example of African American female leadership in educational scholarship being overlooked is the role of African American female administrators prior to, during, and shortly after the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling in 1954 (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Harley, 1996; Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Tillman, 2004).
Female administrators were prevalent in Black communities but were not the focus of educational leadership texts. During these times, in reference to Black leadership in education, males were used as examples and usually the focus of research and studies (Fitzgerald, 2003; Alston, 2005; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Rusaw, 2005; Gasman, 2007). Gasman (2007) in her review of Black leadership in education asserted:

…the use of the Black male experience to stand for the experience of Black women is problematic in research—but it is especially troubling in practice, as the unique situations of Black men and Black women may not be uncovered (p. 783)

Clearly a case for recognition and inclusion for African American female experiences is being made by Gasman (2007). However, the implication of exclusion is more alarming to the field of education when it is currently searching for sound leadership practices for all students.

Although researchers have begun conducting studies on African American females in education, these studies have typically centered on the challenges they face due to gender and race (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Case, 1997; Delany & Rogers, 2004; Tillman, 2004; Loder, 2005a; Loder, 2005b). These factors are central in understanding the experiences of African American female leaders in education. However, the authors of these studies consistently identify an omission in the research documenting the experiences and inner dialogue of female leaders.

Chronicling the inner dialogue and awareness of self and standpoints of African American female leaders, coupled with their leadership practices and the intersection of race and gender, would provide researchers with a more complete understanding of
African American female leadership. Put differently, the current studies on African American female leaders in education do not help us understand the inner discourse and reconciliations through their concepts of what it means to be African American, female, and African American females in a profession traditionally dominated by White males, males in general, and White females. This study will illuminate that inner dialogue and associated concepts with self-identity.

The current literature does not adequately capture the voices and views of African American female leadership through their standpoints and concepts centered on self-identity (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Educational researchers have only recently begun to address the traditional research pattern of gender and racial omission by actively researching more diverse voices in an ever changing and diverse culture (Jones, 2002; Brown, 2005). Based on this dearth of literature and limited body of knowledge in reference to African American female educational leadership, this dissertation will focus on the following questions:

1. How do African American female principals conceptualize principal roles, practices, and concept of power as educational leaders in the various communities they serve?

2. How do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions?

This study will employ the use of a narrative life history methodology to examine the experiences of a set of former African American female principals to further explore these questions.
Research on School Leaders

Principals in general (Tirozzi, 2001; McGough, 2003) and Black principals in particular, have been found to play a critical role in exemplary school operations (Lomotey, 1987; Gooden, 2005). Researchers find that African American principals positively affect the academic achievement of Black students (Lomotey, 1987, 1993; Gooden, 2005), mentor teachers for preparation of advancing to formal leadership positions (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007), and provide positive leadership for the communities they serve (Tillman, 2004; Loder, 2005a). In a comprehensive qualitative study of African American principals in leadership positions prior to and after the 1954 ruling in Brown vs. Board of Education, Tillman (2004) documented how African American principals were instrumental in the academic achievement of Black students and the social uplift of Black communities. Her conclusions affirmed similar findings from a study conducted by Lomotey (1987) who identified the positive affect of African American principals on Black students while examining the impact of (Black) leadership in predominantly Black elementary schools.

Although research activity has increased, only a limited number of studies have examined the experiences and overall effect of African American female principal educational leaders (Tillman, 2004). In their study of mentors and sponsors for African American female administrators, Allen, Jacobson and Lomotey (1995) addressing the lack of research stated, “Because they have been so few in number, there is precious little research about African American women in educational administration…” (p. 409). This point was reiterated by Tillman (2004) nine years later when she lamented that limited documentation (support/evidence) existed in reference to the experiences of
Black female principals. In this same study, Tillman (2004) found overall, African American principals were instrumental in the academic achievement of Black children. However, when addressing African American female administrators, the literature documented and chronicled a lack of studies centered on African American female principal experiences. This suggests that the lack of research aimed towards their principalships leave a gap of information on their realities and influence.

In response to the state of current literature, this study will address the lack of research that exists on African American female leadership by examining and illuminating their experiences at the principal level. Researching the social conditions and realities of African American female principals will inform scholars and policymakers of issues and challenges that are unique to a particular segment of the school population. As mentioned before, due to their unique characteristics of being non-male and non-White, African American female principals must deal with issues that are associated with being a double minority (Hite, 2004). By isolating African American female principals’ strategies, challenges, successes, setbacks, and styles, researchers gain more intimate knowledge of their realities thus offering an alternative narrative for educational leadership.

**Quantitative Studies**

While statistics of African American female principals have not been rigorously captured, much can be estimated through the statistics of females, African American, and minority principals collectively (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). These statistics underscore the importance of advanced inquiry into the experiences of the African American female principal. According to the National Center for Education Statistics,
Commissioner's Statement (2010), the percentage of female public elementary school principals increased from 52% to 59% and 22% to 29% for secondary public schools from the 1999-2000 school year to the 2007-2008 school year. Looking closer at the statistics, the numbers also show a steady increase throughout the mid-1990’s to the year 2000, especially in the public sector. For instance, the U.S. Department of Education recorded that women held 34.5% of overall principalships in the public school systems in 1994 and increased to 44% by 1999 and 2000 (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). See Figures 1.1 and 1.2 for a summary of percentages.

![Figure 1.1: Percentage of Female Public School Principals](image1)

![Figure 1.2: Percentage of Female Public Elementary and Secondary School Principals](image2)
Exploring race, male and female persons of color represented 24% of all principals at both the secondary and elementary levels with 5% representing appointments at secondary schools in 2003-2004 (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). In reference to public schools, African Americans, male and female, held 9.3% of school principalships in the same 2003-2004 school year (Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Even still, in the 2007-2008 school year, 52% of the principals in low-poverty and 65% of principals in high poverty elementary schools were female. These numbers are significant for African American female principals because overall, African American and Hispanic principals were more likely to be employed at high-poverty elementary and secondary schools in comparison to their White counterparts (National Center for Education Statistics, Special Analysis, High-Poverty Public Schools, 2010). See Figures 1.3 and 1.4 for a summary of percentages.

![Overall African American and Persons of Color Principals](chart.png)

**Figure 1.3: Percentage of Overall African American and Persons of Color Principals**

Adding to the significant percentages, in the same 2007-2008 school year, 22% of principals in high-poverty and low-poverty elementary schools were identified as African American (National Center for Education Statistics, Special Analysis, High-Poverty Public Schools, 2010). Also, studies have consistently found that White female
administrators were less likely to have appointments in high poverty schools which may have increased the percentages of minority principal placements (Adkison, 1981; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Gooden, 2005). These trends will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Figure 1.4: Percentage of Female Principals in Low and High Poverty Elementary Schools

**African American Female Principals**

In the literature, qualitative studies underscore the common context of African American female leadership in education. This research suggests that African American female leadership is embedded within two primary social conditions: 1) gender equity and equality; and, 2) racial equity and equality. The research also illuminates that African American female principalships are faced with challenges associated with urban settings (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Loder, 2005a). Kimball and Sirotnik (2000) researching the urban school principalship identify several circumstances common among urban schools such as poverty, child abuse, joblessness, lack of school
achievement and a host of other challenges impeding the growth of an educational community. These challenges are commonly associated with African American female principals and as a result, warrant further inquiry through research designed to explore their circumstances (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Loder, 2005a).

Through more recent literature, several researchers have illustrated and advocated for this need and focus of African American female principal challenges. Researchers have found that African American female principals quite often receive their appointments at inner city schools where their male counterparts have failed (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). These inner city schools ultimately create opportunities for African American females to obtain leadership positions in education (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a). For example, Loder (2005a) studying African American women principals and their interactions in various communities located within the Chicago Public School System, discovered African American women specifically were receiving their leadership opportunities in the “nation’s toughest urban schools” located in districts experiencing economic and social dilemmas on a severe scale (p. 299). According to her study, 41% of principals within the Chicago Public School system were African American females. This was a drastic difference from 1967, where less than 5% of all Chicago principals were African American, male and female combined.

The growing percentage of African American female principals documented in the Loder (2005a) study suggests that African American female principals can play a vital role in education. Bloom and Erlandson (2003) also researching the realities of African American women principals noted their association with urban settings and
stated, “Listening to and recording veteran African American women principals’ experiences may provide useful direction to future administrators who aspire to work within urban school settings” (p. 339). They continued their analysis by contending that Black women see the world in discrete perspectives due to their positions in society and a lack of research activity on said perspectives is still prevalent in research. The findings in this study suggest African American female principals’ perspectives and experiences may offer alternative narratives for the field of education.

As indicated in the statistics provided previously, women in general, and African American females have continued to advance in educational administration. While the current research illuminates certain African American female principal practices and the double marginalization of African American female educators, there is still a need to understand their concept of leadership through Black feminism and inner dialogue that occurs as a result of their leadership experiences. This underscores the need for scholarship focused on the diverse set of issues that include African American female principals’ experiences, knowledge, and contributions. Studies concentrated on these aspects of educational leadership could offer researchers and policymakers valuable information in reference to an integral part of its leadership. The statistics of African Americans and females combined, further suggest that minority principalships are increasing. By not adequately researching African American female principal realities, we fail to use them as a resource and potentially lose valuable knowledge towards alternative viable solutions for sound leadership practices.
Conceptual Framework

Although traditional leadership theories are a guideline for leadership in general, they have largely omitted African American women narratives and experiences (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; King & Ferguson, 2001; Hite, 2004; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Research on leadership and its associated practices must, therefore, include frameworks that reveal and illuminate their distinctive characteristics and leadership practices. To understand their perspectives and experiences, this study draws on two complementary lenses which facilitate a greater understanding of the experiences associated with African American female principals: Standpoint Theory and a Womanist perspective.

Standpoint Theory is predicated on the belief that some members of society are marginalized. As a result, these individuals can see the system from multiple perspectives, creating a unique position. This position referred to as “an outsider within,” gives them a clear vision of the intersections of class, race, and gender (Collins, 1986; Parker, 2001). Standpoint Theory turns our attention to women of diverse backgrounds and illuminates their alternative knowledge instead of using the frame of traditional models of White middle-class women to address issues for all women (Parker, 2001).

The literature suggests that the use of traditional models for African American females perpetuate the practice of “intellectual and cultural exclusion by creating the appearance of acceptance in women’s studies using an ethnic additive model” (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 344). In other words, by adding an ethnic element to traditional models, researchers fail to appreciate the intricacies involved with African American females. This further suggests isolated studies of African American female principals
are necessary for the field of education to ascertain characteristics of their principalships. As Parker (2001) states:

Black women standpoints are a valuable resource for understanding leadership. If organizational leadership is understood as a process of negotiating meanings within contradictory and paradoxical situations to forge viable solutions, then we would do well to listen closely to what the experiences of Black women leaders can reveal (p. 48).

Overall, Standpoint Theory offers insight into African American female creations and conceptions of leadership through adverse challenges based on racial and gender marginalization (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003).

Second, I will use a Womanist Tool designed to understand the self-identity of African American females. Womanist Theory builds on Black women’s capacities for supporting and developing each other. This entails an emphasis on the recognition, appreciation (acceptance) and seeking of Black women’s culture, emotional flexibility and strength. It also emphasizes the documentation of women’s lives and development of an understanding of women’s issues through their own words. The Womanist Model details four stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996). This lens specifically allows me to expand upon the African American female experiences and further detail their understanding and existence in Black feminism. Together, these lenses facilitate a better understanding of the intersections of race, gender, and school leadership as defined by African American female principals through their experiences while exploring distinct and common aspects of their lives (King & Ferguson, 2001)
Methodology, Data Collection, and Analysis

Life Narrative: A Biographical Design

In order to understand how African American female principals make sense of race, gender, and their role as leaders, I will conduct a qualitative narrative life history. Specifically, narrative life histories allow researchers to explore how individuals make sense of the world through their voices and offer insight into their lives by way of rich and detailed stories (Creswell, 1998; Kridel, 1998; McGough, 2003). Using the life narrative approach gives me an opportunity to explore African American female principals’ leadership according to their understandings within the body of qualitative research (Cresswell, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Kridell, 1998; McGough, 2003). This biographical method is appropriate because it will include the study of the former principals’ experiences through their words and voices (Creswell, 1998). In what follows, I will briefly explain the tenets of biography and life narratives.

The biographical method focuses on the turning points in peoples’ lives and is used to explore “lesser lives, great lives, thwarted lives, lives cut short, or lives miraculous in their unapplauded achievement” (Creswell, 1998, p. 48). Using this type of qualitative method will enable me to ascertain a better understanding of the critical experiences that have shaped African American female principals’ conceptions of school leadership at the intersections of gender and race. Researchers that use qualitative methods “seek to grasp the process by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are” (Alfred, 2001, p. 4). Narrative life history will allow me to explore in depth, the critical moments voiced through participants’ perceptions of race, gender and leadership as females and African Americans.
Consistent with McGough (2003) who also studied the experiences of principals, the exploration of their perceptions should allow me a window into each principals’ beliefs, experiences, and understandings in relation to the aforementioned intersections and leadership. Ultimately these revelations create a narrative exclusive to the participants based on inclusion of their realities, extending beyond traditional theories with additive ethnic models.

**Sources and Sample**

The study will consist of seven former African American female principals who practiced in the states of Florida or Georgia. The principals will be chosen to represent diverse locales such as their respective geographic region and nature of municipality (suburban, rural, urban). The statistics in the literature suggest more females are prevalent in elementary principalships and offer a rich resource for capturing the experiences, perceptions, and realities of African American females (Grogan, 1999; Alston, 2000). However, female principals at the secondary level are also important and should be illuminated. My sample will therefore contain leaders at both levels.

The capturing of their experiences will be accomplished by tracing events from their childhood, adult life, extracting life lessons, patterns of socialization, and further exploring their everyday leadership realities. The realities will include their successes, failures, limitations, reconstructions of identity, and personal resolutions as practiced through their leadership. Consistent with McGough (2003) and Case (1997), I will use the interviews to gain access to the principals’ perspectives individually to understand how they perceive their leadership roles, and their self-concepts of gender and race.
Conclusion

Within this introductory chapter I have explored the underrepresentation of African American female leadership in leadership literature. African American females are still underresearched in educational leadership studies (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Tillman, 2004). This suggests that scholarly activities on this specific subset of leaders should increase if the field of education is going to encompass more comprehensive research within its collective research body. In addition, equity issues in reference to sociological, economic and cultural perceptions of race (and gender) are critical and should be explored in the field of education (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007). As the demographics of America’s schools become increasingly more diverse at the leadership and student body levels, researchers should engage in research that is focused on all demographics. As illustrated by the body of literature that exists on leadership and education, research on White male and female leaders exist at a disproportionate rate, calling for more research on African Americans and more specifically, African American females.

Although researchers are slowly addressing this issue, Murtadha and Watts (2005) assert, “Current theorists remain inadequate in their treatment of Black women, nominalizing their work with brief nods to their presence in the workplace” (p. 605). Waring (2003) states, “The importance of understanding the identity of leaders, as well as their skill sets, can contribute much to our understanding of leaders and leadership” (p. 42). African American female principals need to be recognized as such while their realities are being illuminated. By focusing on African American female principals, researchers expand the body of literature on principalships by proactively engaging in
research that has traditionally omitted a very active and ever growing populace of professionals.

Studies, such as this one, will yield valuable information for recruiters, aspiring administrators by acting as a mentoring tool, and ultimately the field of education in general by addressing the specificities and idiosyncrasies involved with principalships. It will also facilitate the demystification and stereotyping that permeates issues surrounding those that happen to be African American, female, and principals in a field that still relies heavily upon theories and facts supported by research that overwhelmingly favors White males, White females, and African American males (in that order).

**Chapters in the Dissertation**

This dissertation has five additional chapters. The second chapter, Literature Review, discusses relevant research, analyzing and contextualizing the discourse on principals with an emphasis on issues associated with African American female principals. This chapter also discusses current research and implications from the literature on educational leadership and includes historical research focus. In chapter three, I go into depth on my methodology, rationale, and elaborate on the theoretical frame and lenses for the study. The rationale for conducting the study is detailed, providing critical support for the study while presenting an audit trail for future research through a description of the methods used to conduct the study.

Chapters four and five contain the study results, beginning with the profile of each participant in chapter four. Chapter four contains a detailed portrait of each participant in the study. Chapter five is divided into two sections with the first being
centered on the first research question, defining the former principals' realities. The second section of chapter five, Race and Gender, addresses the second research question and discusses the principals’ experiences in relation to the intersections of racial and gender challenges, understandings, and realities. Lastly, chapter six discusses the conclusion and this dissertation’s contributions to research, practice, and theory.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Although researchers have begun to discuss leadership in reference to gender and race, very little research exists focusing on African American female principals and the intersections of gender, race and school leadership (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Grogan, 1999; Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Tillman, 2004). However, the field of educational leadership has become more inclusive and over the last seventy years has addressed a number of issues in reference to leadership practice and theory. Towards the latter part of the last millennium, and as the start of the new millennium settled in, a diverse set of issues began to emerge in existing research on the subject (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). For example, in a comprehensive study on the state of research in educational leadership dating back to the 1930’s, Heck and Hallinger (2005) found that research in the field has expanded from anecdotal evidence of administrative behaviors and practice to more scientifically accepted empirical studies including methodology based on feminism and Standpoint Theory.

As part of this new line of research and methodology, the practices and realities of African American principals in educational leadership have become recognized. However, the available literature suggests there is a large gap in the area of school leadership by African Americans, with some researchers arguing that it is due to a lack of concentrated focus, concern, or genuine interest (Dantley, 2002). For example, although more recent studies have documented the leadership practices of African American superintendents, there is a shortage of work concentrated on African
American school administrators (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007). This suggests that although underrepresented areas are being recognized, there is still a lack of concentrated focus on African American female principals.

As discussed in Chapter 1, further review of the literature on educational leadership and principals reveals a pattern of exclusion towards not only African Americans but females in general. Quite simply, there is very little research on African Americans and women in comparison to White males (Grogan, 1999). Even still, the intersection of African Americans and females contain an even smaller emphasis in scholarly activities. According to Grogan (1999) who researched equity and equality in education under the context of gender, race and class, “If our knowledge of White women principals and superintendents is only partial, even more scant is our knowledge of women of color who are administrators” (p. 524). Grogan’s (1999) contention captures the alarming truth for not only women, it also illuminates the urgency for more research of African American females, a subset within female and African Americans respectively. Simply put, if the field of educational leadership wants to understand the different characteristics of its different kind of leaders, not just White male leaders, it is critical that the unique experiences of African American female leaders also be explored.

In order to understand the scholarship on African American female principal leadership, it is important to explore intersections of several areas of leadership. This chapter will highlight historical studies, existing literature, and focus of educational research as a whole with an emphasis on studies of African American female principals. To better understand the experiences of African American female principals, this
literature review will be divided into three sections. I will first provide an overview of
general educational leadership theories and race through a historical perspective and
also discuss the emergence of alternative views of leadership. Then I will turn
specifically to research on leadership theories and gender to further the exploration of
leadership theories and female leaders. This research will illuminate the commonalities,
differences, and tensions among White and Black females under the umbrella of
Feminist epistemology.

Lastly, I will focus on studies of African American female principals in schools. Here, I will explore historical understandings of how African American females are situated within the leadership research. I will also discuss historical understandings of leadership and African American female leadership, illuminating findings about their experiences. Consistent with the circumstances and realities of African American female principals, this section will highlight the unique existence of Black female leaders as leaders with a dual focus, understanding, and reality based on gender and race.

**A Historical Perspective**

In order to understand the origin of leadership theories, the concept of leadership itself must be examined. Northouse (2004) describes leadership as a process in which an individual influences a group of individuals in achieving a common goal. Chance and Chance (2002) offer a definition in which leadership “involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 85). It is commonly understood that historically these ideas of leadership have been predicated on behaviors associated with White males. Researchers on leadership agree that first
constructions and descriptions of leadership were formed according to masculine principles (Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Under this construction, orthodox leaders are male and the traditional concept of leadership marginalizes gender (Chin, 2004; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

This masculine model of leadership underscores a hierarchical approach that emphasizes leaders initiating structure and being autonomous while exhibiting strength, self-efficacy, and control. In this model, men are thought to communicate in ways that are unilateral and directive with the purpose of control. Furthermore, the male model also emphasizes aggressiveness, independence, risk-taking, rationality, and intelligence (Parker, 2001). It is important to remember, these male models of leadership were constructed and principled according to values and conceptions of White males.

A historical perspective clearly underscores the dominance of males in school leadership by men such as Horace Mann, considered the father of the common school (Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). In fact, some researchers explicitly state the concept of education delivered as and through institutions, were originally founded (and lead) by men for men. Also, the schools created for females thereafter, were designed to give women a cursory or eventual male equivalent education (Martin, 1985; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule 1986; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004; Urban and Wagoner, 2004; Gasman, Baez & Turner, 2008). This suggests the system of education didn’t change its foundation or original purpose, just allowed women to participate, still in a subordinate fashion or secondary citizens. As a note, when reviewing the literature on the initial idea of public schooling or schools for the masses in America, no female figure is listed in the same breath as Thomas Jefferson or Horace
Mann (Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Urban & Wagoner, 2004). Who is the mother of education?

Other clear examples of exclusion of females in administrative ranks can be traced back to male exclusive membership of the National Education Association (NEA) until 1866, bias towards men in textbooks and graduate education during the early 1900’s (Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo & Harris, 1994). At first glance this appears to only address the access of leadership positions during early stages of educational administration. However, this set of circumstances suggests a culture of male leadership was being established and therefore, leadership studies would be concentrated on males who consequently were the available subjects for study. In fact, Ella Flagg Young, who became the first female president of the NEA in 1910, stated in her first meeting in 1867, women were only allowed to sit and listen to the men discuss educational matters (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Continuing the discussion on male concepts of education, traditional research on educational leadership suggests the function of school administrators is to influence the operations of their schools. This influence is impacted by their behaviors and patterns (Quinn, 2002). The literature identifies four primary behaviors of principals labeled as administrator-bureaucrat qualities and are comprised of: 1) Development of goals which refers to the facilitation of organizational goals; 2) Energy harnessing which focuses on effectively capturing and directing the energy of teachers and staff; 3) Communication facilitation which stresses effective two-way communication between staff, teachers, and the principal; and, 4) Managing instruction which includes effective influence over curriculum planning, teacher supervision, and achievement evaluation (Lomotey, 1993).
These behaviors define the practice and practical application of principal duties and function. They also help define what should be occurring under the traditional male model of leadership when applied to education. However, how this function is delivered and the perception of leader approaches can be further explained according to traditional leadership understandings and research.

For example, educational leadership texts review the trait, skills, style, transactional and transformational approaches of leadership (Chin, 2004; Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). Chin (2004) and Northouse (2004) argue that these four types of leadership approaches were designed according to masculine concepts and characteristics. The trait approach focuses on the personality characteristics of leaders. Referred to as the Great Man Theory, it focuses on innate or natural born characteristics of leaders including intelligence, dominance, confidence, and masculinity (Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004).

The skills approach centers on competencies involved with leadership. It is centered on seven competencies of good leadership: problem solving; social judgment; knowledge; and, management of attention, meaning, trust, and self. Third, the style approach, focuses on the behaviors of leaders, specifically task orientation versus relational. Task behaviors are centered on accomplishing goals and relationship behaviors account for the feelings and comfort level of the subordinates. Lastly, the transactional approach focuses on completing goals and tasks through directedness while transformational leaders act as agents of change (Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004). The former concentrates on directedness for goal accomplishment while in the latter, the leader acts as an agent for change (Chin 2004).
A closer look at these traditional concepts of leadership finds that scholars have consistently argued that masculine leadership principles are not a coincidence but based on gender stereotypes. Wrushen and Sherman (2008) identify three norms: orthodox leaders are male; leadership style is stereotypically masculine; and, male leadership marginalizes gender. As a result, leadership and the concept of leadership, is viewed as masculine or attributed to masculine qualities. In fact, masculinity in leadership can easily be recognized in other areas of society and management. Adkison (1981) researching the literature of women in school administration, noted that even the nuclear family and school act as agents that encourage stereotypes and the masculine characteristics associated with leadership. Lastly, the leadership literature suggests the concept, application, and function of management itself are considered masculine characteristics (Adkison, 1981).

Northouse (2004) continuing the discussion on leadership and theory during the 20th century stated the trait approach, or Great Man Theories, was one of the first systematic efforts at studying leadership. According to Northouse (2004), the Great Man Theories were aptly named because the associated studies concentrated on identifying innate characteristics “possessed by great social, political, and military leaders” (p. 15). A primary criticism can be gathered from the review of this literature. As indicated in the title, the trait approach was heavily rooted or exclusively male oriented, excluding the contributions and traits of many female leaders. At the time of research activity, this practice was the norm and accepted in scholarship.

Heavy research activity occurred on the trait approach prior to 1948. More than 124 studies researched between 1904 and 1947 were conducted using the trait
approach (Northouse, 2004). The findings indicated leaders differed from group members in the following areas: intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability. Two additional characteristics of leadership were also identified and advocated for in the literature: leadership is a working relationship shared between the leader and followers; and, leaders must possess the traits that are relevant in certain situations. This research activity would start a new process in leadership studies that would focus specifically on leadership behaviors and situations (Northouse, 2004).

In 1959, another review was conducted that examined more than 1,400 findings on personality and leadership. It deemphasized situational factors. In that study, the researcher concluded leaders could be identified through their possession of intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extroversion, and conservatism in their traits (Northouse, 2004). Although studies on leadership were expanding, the theme of male dominance could still be seen as exhibited by another major strand of studies, research on the skills approach.

Interest in the skills approach being a centerpiece of mainstream research activity began in 1955 (Northouse, 2004). The foundational study using a skills approach was based on a study of business executives and described three personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual (Northouse, 2004). Technical skills implied the leader being proficient in work activity. Human skills referred to the leader being able to successfully work with people. The third skill, conceptual, referred to the leader being able to successfully navigate concepts and work with ideas (Northouse, 2004).
The difference in the focus of this leadership approach was the nature of the implications involved with who could be leaders. According to this approach, skills could be learned and acquired. This was a change from the previous trait approach which focused on the leader being born with innate capabilities and traits (Northouse, 2004). However, as with the trait approach, the studies and research were still based on male attributes and subjects. As late as the 1990’s, research using this approach was conducted with military personnel, leading researchers to question the generalizability of the findings (Northouse, 2004). For example, certain free choices and liberties in the civilian population are not exercised in the military, at least for the rank and file. So, major findings for this approach were concentrated on masculine principles according to the armed forces.

Early studies of the style approach can be traced back to studies from the late 1940’s conducted at the Ohio State University and University of Michigan. Findings from both sets of studies suggest that male leaders exhibited two major behaviors including both task and relationship behaviors. Task behaviors were focused on accomplishing goals whereas relationship behaviors were focused on the comfort levels of the workers (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). In the Ohio State Studies, researchers purposely began concentrating on the behavior of leaders because “the results of studying leadership as a personality trait appeared fruitless” (Northouse, 2004, p. 66). Researchers administered tools to hundreds of professionals in the military, educational, and industrial fields. According to the findings, the major leader behaviors were found to be initiating structure (task oriented) and consideration for others (relationship) (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004).
The University of Michigan Studies, which were conducted during the same time period as the Ohio State Studies, found that leaders exhibited similar behaviors only they called it production orientation (task) and employee orientation (relationship) (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). Throughout the 1950’s and 1960’s both universities would continue their research on task and relationship behaviors with the aim of discovering a universal theory of leadership focused on leaders’ effectiveness in all situations (Northouse, 2004). In the 1960’s another major research project was conducted on leadership behaviors in addition to the studies conducted at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan. Based on a Managerial Grid, this strand of research would expand concepts within the style approach to include more categories of leadership behaviors and style.

Blake and Mouton’s Managerial study, conducted after the pioneering Ohio State University and University of Michigan studies, built on the early style approach studies and identified the primary leadership behaviors as concern for production (task) and concern for people (relationship). Blake and Mouton developed a Managerial Grid of two intersecting axes based on the two behaviors (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). This Grid emphasized five major leadership styles: authority-compliance, country club management, impoverished management, middle-of-the-road management, and team management. Consistent with the aforementioned approaches, this approach was heavily centered on findings associated with male leadership associated perceptions.

During the 1970’s a shift in leadership studies occurred. Transactional and transformational leadership concepts became the focus. Although the term
transformational leadership was defined in 1973, its importance was not solidified in the literature until 1978 (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). At this time, transformational leadership was defined and closely associated with transactional leadership (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). According to the research, transactional leadership referred to exchanges between leader and followers. The exchanges or interactions as described in the literature suggested give and take interactions between leader and follower. Transformational leadership, in contrast, referred to exchanges and interactions where the leader and worker experienced an increase in morality and motivation. As transformational research activity continued through the 1980’s, findings suggested that transformational leadership raised the consciousness levels about the value associated with goals and assisted followers with transcending their own interest for the sake of the organization (Hackman & Johnson, 2004; Northouse, 2004). Although leadership studies still relied on male examples of leaders during this phase of research activity, studies based on women began to materialize.

Isolating educational leadership and management, research activity drew on principles from several other disciplines such as scientific management and human relations (Grogan, 2000; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). Similar to the larger leadership research, prior to 1950, researchers relied on stories told by former administrators to identify leadership practices (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). During the 1950’s, this rationale changed and researchers began to lobby for a more scientific way of studying educational administration (Heck and Hallinger, 2005). According to Heck and Hallinger (2005), the result was research conducted with more sound methodology and
Empiricism with a growing comprehensive body of knowledge that could further enhance the development of administrators. However, one criticism of this time period is the subjects used in the literature on educational leadership were overwhelmingly male which illustrates the exclusive nature of the research being centered on male administrators (Alston, 2005; Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo & Harris, 1994).

Research on educational administrators during the 1950’s and 1960’s, particularly superintendents, used principles from the government, business, and military to guide practices and research (Grogan, 2000). Research findings during this period stated the leaders were to: emphasize and maintain democratic qualities to school systems; uphold moral and community values being second only to the local minister; and, wield symbolic power likened to a warrior. The masculine focus could clearly be seen as one researcher stated, “The American school superintendent accepts the fact that his school system is…the lengthened shadow of himself” (Grogan, 2000, p. 120). According to Grogan (2000), by the late 1960’s leadership was strongly influenced by scientific management emphasizing the hierarchical tenets of administration, another approach based on a masculine concept. In short, the literature suggests that even when leadership studies were specifically geared toward school personnel, the focus, findings, and application of said findings, were geared towards males. This clearly conceptualized sound leadership according to concepts aligned with masculinity.

This section has detailed leadership models and concepts according to values associated with White male perspectives. Although this outlook is clearly dominant in leadership studies and research, other circumstances, practices, and theories have began to form. Continuing with the theme of leadership theories and race, I will now
focus on the intersection of African Americans and leadership by detailing findings from
the strand of critical research that originated in the 1990’s (Heck and Hallinger, 2005;
Waring, 2003). This research expanded on findings and perceptions traditionally based
on White male concepts and explored leadership with, by, and among African
Americans.

**Recent Understandings of African American Leadership: Alternative Views of Leadership**

According to Heck and Hallinger (2005) leadership studies focusing on African
Americans did not begin until after the 1980’s. This research has revealed new and
important perspectives on African American principal practices and realities (Lomotey,
1993; Tillman, 2004, 2008; Loder, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). One major contribution of this
research has been to identify that the field has a growing need for African American
leaders. Reviewing the demographics of Black students in comparison with the
population, for example, one can see a change is necessary for the various school
systems in America to become more diverse and inclusive of more than just White male
administrators.

According to the United States Department of Education, *National Snapshot*
(2010), 49,809,606 students were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools
for the 2008-2009 school year of which 44.2% were low income students. The National
Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics* (2011) reports the number
of enrolled students as being 49,265,572 with 54.9% White, 17% Black and 21.5%
Hispanic students. As illustrated by the statistics, African American and low income
students are abound in the education system. In addition, Black principals are being
assigned to schools that carry these two demographics, often times highly correlated, at very high percentages (Gooden, 2005). These numbers support the field of education increasing its diversity among faculty and research efforts. Some researchers have attempted to address this research topic to begin an alternative or supplemental narrative to traditional research.

This research also highlights how principal leadership can be instrumental in greater academic success for African American students (Lomotey, 1993). The role exhibited by African American principals is unique because research suggests differences exist in Black and White leadership. In particular, studies find that historically and currently, Black leaders place a higher significance on community involvement that, in turn, positively affects their students’ academic achievement (Lomotey, 1987, 1993; Tillman, 2004, 2008; Foster & Tillman, 2009). For example, Tillman (2008) finds that Black principals were central figures and communicated, enforced, and encouraged the cultural norms within the Black community. On the importance of Black principal perspectives, Tillman (2008) also finds that the culture was “a group’s individual and collective ways of thinking, believing, and knowing, which includes their shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions and behaviors” (p. 599). This suggests that Black principals acted or were at least in tune with the cultural “beat” and understandings of the communities.

Similarly, studies find that Black leaders are important because they act as role models and have the potential to offer greater cultural understandings within the communities they serve (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a; Lomotey, 1987, 1993; Tillman, 2004). Principals today must deal with the under
achievement of Black children, large number of African American children living in poverty, and the disproportionate number of African American males in special education programs (Tillman, 2008). “African American principals are usually selected to take positions where a large percentage of the students are minorities,” therefore, placing them at the forefront for confronting these challenges (Gooden, 2005, p. 631).

Some researchers trace the challenges faced by African American administrators to the institution of slavery. They argue that Black schools have to deal with unique circumstances when it comes to serving the communities. For instance, slavery in America, the remembrance, realities, and scars have caused African Americans to believe that many opportunities are unavailable to them. For example, researchers and studies find that some African Americans that attempt to excel academically are accused of acting White (McWhorter, 2000; Robinson, 2000; Gamoran, 2001; Buck, 2010).

The cultural memory and distrust in Black communities creates a potential barrier for those African Americans attempting to excel and place many in a quandary. “The history of racism and discrimination encourages distrust of institutions, such as schools, and makes it more difficult for even middle-class parents to manage their children’s academic careers in the way that White parents can” (Gamoran, 2001, pp. 139-140). This is even more ironic because families that have greater income are better equipped to provide resources that aid in educational achievement (Lawson, 1992; Gamoran, 2001). These factors could contribute to the achievement gap described by Bowser (2007) who stated Black children in equivalent middle class families (income) have been found to have lower test scores than their White counterparts. This suggests the Black
principals’ challenges are further compounded because even financially sound Black families may face cultural challenges.

Lomotey (1993) conducted a study of two African American principals’ responses to curriculum innovation. He found two distinct roles Black principals portrayed, bureaucrat/administrators and ethno-humanists (Lomotey, 1993; Shujaa, 1994). According to Lomotey (1993), principals acting in a bureaucrat or administrator role were focused on:

“a) developing goals; b) harnessing energy; c) facilitating communication; and, d) managing instruction…” (p. 396). Principals acting in the ethno-humanist role exhibited a, “commitment to the education of all students; confidence in the ability of all students to do well; and compassion for, and understanding of, all students and the communities in which they live” (p. 396). Finally, Lomotey (1993) found the principals exhibited both roles in an intertwined fashion balancing a focus between schooling and education.

Several researchers using Lomotey’s (1993) categories, found similar findings, and expanded upon his concepts. For instance, Tillman (2004) found that the primary goals of a principal who acted as a bureaucrat/administrator is schooling, assisting and preparing students for grade level progressions. The primary goal of an ethno-humanist principal was education, acquiring and maintaining cultural goals. Gooden (2005), in a study that concentrated on an African American male secondary principal, found both roles being present with the ethnohumanist role being the primary force. Those findings supported the literature which suggests African American principals that practice their leadership in predominantly Black schools, have been found to be centered on the
ethno-humanist role identity while performing their duties associated with the bureaucrat/administrator role (Lomotey, 1993; Tillman, 2004; Gooden, 2005).

Researchers have also identified characteristics of many African American leaders centered on the concept of biculturalism and marginality (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Alfred, 2001). Alfred (2001) explained the bicultural perspective experienced by African Americans by stating, "The bicultural perspective focuses attention on the interplay between the two cultures and its effect on the lives of racial minority workers" (p. 2). Isolating African American women specifically, Alfred (2001) stated:

Biculturalism in African Americans is defined as the ability to function effectively and productively within the context of America's core institutions-the school and workplace-while simultaneously retaining what many would consider an African identity. A bicultural life experience requires that an African American woman create a dynamic, fluid life structure that shapes the patterns of her social interactions, relationships, and mobility, both within and between the two cultural contexts (p. 2).

This existence causes many African Americans to experience marginality. The literature documents that managing the dual identities leads to identity confusion and ambiguity (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993). The literature similarly "suggested that marginality leads to psychological conflict, a divided self, and disjointed person" (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993, p. 395). This is a reality African American principals currently in the field of education must face and learn to operate in.

Although marginality has been discussed and found to negatively affect African Americans in education, it must be noted that some researchers have found marginality only negatively affects individuals if they internalize the conflict between both cultures (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993). The literature documents strategies minorities
use to cope with this reality through five models based on transitioning into mainstream society. According to LaFromboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993), the five models used as coping mechanisms include: assimilation, acculturation, alternation, multiculturalism, and fusion. According to Bell (1990), “Assimilation requires Blacks to conform to the traditions, values, and norms of the dominant White culture” (p. 462). The next few paragraphs further detail the models.

Assimilation involves an individual attempting to become accepted by the members of the targeted culture. In this model, the individual loses more of their native cultural identity as they acquire more characteristics of the new desired culture and identity (usually dominant culture). Ultimately, the individual experiences alienation and isolation until he or she has been accepted into the desired culture. In addition, an attempt at assimilation may cause the individual to be rejected by both members of their native and newly desired cultures (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993).

The next model, acculturation, is very similar to the assimilation model. Under this model the individual still takes on the dominant culture characteristics but through an involuntary process (i.e. economic reasons). In addition, the individual will always be identified as a member of the subordinate culture regardless of whether they accept the dominant one or not (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993).

The alternation model involves an individual moving through a dominant and secondary culture interchangeably. “The alternation model implies that individuals learning to alternate their behavior to fit into the cultures in which they are involved will be less stressed and less anxious than those who are undergoing the process of
acculturation or assimilation” (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993, p. 400). Essentially this model involves an individual acting as a chameleon.

The multicultural model involves individuals maintaining their native cultural status while embracing the culture of others and sharing societal space through tolerance (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993). The last model, fusion, “suggests that cultures sharing an economic, political, or geographic space will fuse together until they are indistinguishable to form a new culture” (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993, p. 401). Fusion can be viewed as the product of the melting pot.

In summary, research on African American principals, albeit limited, has allowed researchers to describe certain practices and realities for some African American principals. Murtadha and Watts (2005) expand this concept and argue, “By studying African American educational leadership, researchers find that mainstream theories are increasingly deficient in understanding leadership from the perspectives of diverse cultural groups who fight for equity in this society” (p. 606). However, more research is necessary for a more complete understanding of their realities, particularly in the area of African American females. Recognizing that African American female principals are a subset of leaders within African American administrators is an accurate description and illustrates their realities associated with intersections of leadership and race. As previously discussed, this intersection is only one of at least two intersections. I will discuss the second intersection, leadership and gender, in the following section by first exploring leadership and feminist studies centered on feminist epistemology.
Overview of Educational Leadership Theories and Gender

Female Leadership: Historical View and Recent Understandings

Switching to a more diverse focus on gender, the literature shows that scholarly activity on women leaders became more prevalent in the 1970’s. As stated by Adkison (1981), “During the 1970’s women’s aspirations rose (or became overt), and they began to prepare for leadership positions in business, industry, and education” (p. 320). For African American females this was not a coincidence. As pointed out by Gasman and Geiger (2012), as early as 1964, enrollment for African American females in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s) was as high as 60%. As females gained access to managerial positions, in the 1970’s and 1980’s, more studies on leadership focused on female leadership in corporations. This research emphasized that women (managers) should adapt to the patriarchal culture already established in business. In addition, it also emphasized that female leadership practices involved emotional tendencies similar to practices exhibited by minorities (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995; Waring, 2003).

However, as these findings generalized from the White female experience of leadership, they excluded the contributions and practices of many African American female leaders and managers. As a result, all women were judged according to patriarchal forms of leadership and assigned characteristics, albeit limited, to those consistent with White females. Consistent with past practices, much of the design for leadership research ignored the experiences of minority women (Conner & Sharp, 1992).
Until the late 1980’s, the research conducted on women in educational administration was specifically focused on three elements: documenting the absence of women; searching for female administrators; and emphasizing the subordinate positions or disadvantaged state of women in educational administration (Grogan, 1999). Not surprisingly, the literature during the 1980’s and 1990’s detailed that women in general had less administrative opportunities than men due to society conditioning both men and women to view females as less capable leaders (Young & McLeod, 2001). Women in educational administration, managers and executives, existed in fields where prescriptions of appropriate behaviors were traditionally based on male models (Fitzgerald, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Rusaw, 2005). The literature during this period consistently supported the traditional positions posited for females in leadership.

Clearly, research activity was occurring on females in leadership studies. From a historical perspective however, traditional researchers generalized findings from studies of White males and believed this could adequately produce knowledge for females and persons of color (Alston, 2005). Although the methodology and focus of the research was changing, the subjects of research activity were still geared towards males and their concepts and practices of leadership. Some critics claim this trend continued to the 1980’s and didn’t change until the mid 1990’s in which more sophisticated conceptual models and diverse studies began to take place (Waring, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). The new models included a more diverse makeup of leaders including minorities and females.

In terms of new research, or non-traditional approaches, during this period (1980’s and 1990’s), a new strand of researchers began to argue that females
possessed different leadership styles. This research abandoned the concept of female conformity in reference to male leadership (Waring, 2003). This literature on women leaders, consistent with current research, illustrated that although women made great strides in the workforce, they continued to be underrepresented at the leadership level in education. Isolating female leadership, researchers identified that the traditional feminine model of leadership underscores an approach based on relationships and interpersonal consideration. In this model, women are thought to employ collaborative, supportive, and participative communication. The female model also emphasized nurturance, compassion, sensitivity to followers’ needs, and caring (Parker, 2001).

Although some documentation exists, research on feminist leadership and female leaders has not been the basis of traditional theories on leadership. In reference to female leader realities, the literature suggests White females still face challenges with attaining managerial positions and exhibit difficulty acknowledging racial privilege as being instrumental to their mobility (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995). In addition, female minorities who do not adhere to exhibiting leader behaviors according to masculine principals are viewed as unprofessional and overlooked in reference to developmental opportunities and ultimately, career mobility (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995). This may explain why Alston (2000), Tillman and Cochran (2000), and Hite (2004), found that African American females needed better mentoring and support for opportunities of advancement.

Continuing the discussion on women’s leadership, Northouse (2004) in his comprehensive study of leadership theory and practice, suggested research on female leadership (based on meta-analyses over a fifteen year period) yielded that women
used a more participative or democratic style of leadership versus male leadership. This form of leadership was focused on a less autocratic and more democratic style in 160 comparison studies. However, female and male leaders did not differ in effective leadership in 82 comparison studies. Lastly, females were negatively evaluated when they used stereotypical masculine leadership styles.

The literature also documented female administrators were usually older (on the average), got paid less, and had approximately ten more years of teaching experience when they received their first opportunity for administration (Young & McLeod, 2001). Women managers were found to not separate their private or personal lives from their professional work (Clark, Caffarella, & Ingram, 1999) and didn’t emphasize status differentiation, showing they were quite often uncomfortable pushing for power. Instead they valued the relationships that may be lost as a result of them pushing for power (Conner & Sharp, 1992). Generally, female leaders in education were found to be uncomfortable with traditional concepts of power, focused on solving problems, had high expectations for followers, self, and task oriented. They were also collaborative, caring, and reflective, while sharing their power (Grogan, 1999; Fennell, 2002).

Examining the history and current understandings of female leadership reveals more recent manifestations of leadership activity and research. However, a deeper understanding of the interaction between gender, leadership and its evolution, reveals a more comprehensive narrative of the realities involved with issues in reference to leadership, females, White females, and ultimately African American females, the subjects of this study. In the next few sections, in order to illuminate this interaction and series of issues, I will focus on: feminism, according to the White female movement;
Black feminism, as described and defined by African American females; and, the connected and disparate concepts between the two activist positions. This exploration will offer us a better understanding of how the intersections of gender and race affect African American female leadership. It will also highlight that even when isolating gender in leadership studies, African American female leadership is never truly devoid of interactions with race.

Feminism: Caucasian Female Understandings

In order to capture the complete meanings associated with African American female leadership in education, researchers have to expand beyond traditional theory to examine the basic understandings of African American females which also includes the following areas: feminism; Black feminism; and, basic leadership principles and practices. Because the literature on African American female leadership is emerging, the volume of available literature is limited. However, this section will review and discuss various components of the female leadership experience through a brief history of available research in the area of feminist issues. African American females being a subset within the female populace fall under this research category. Further exploration of feminist issues, will highlight an integral aspect of their leadership understandings and reality.

As discussed earlier, scholars have argued that Western and American societies’ leadership ideals are based on male concepts, which relegates female figures to a subordinate and subservient position (Fitzgerald, 2003; Katz, Stern & Fader, 2005). Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries many females began to question aloud their rightful place in American society and countered social realities through a feminist
movement (including women suffrage) which acted as a turning point of activity. Pauley (2000) chronicling W.E.B. Du Bois' writings on women suffrage and Davis (1983) conducting a historical study of women, race, and class in America, both contend the suffrage movement was focused and led by Caucasian women. These females placed themselves at the forefront for equality of the sexes (and more explicitly, race during the suffrage period) alienating minority women (Shotwell, 2011). This issue will be explained in further detail as I examine other issues surrounding the feminist movement and feminist thought.

During the 1970’s, literature began to emerge in philosophy, sociology, psychology, and history that explored women in the context of a male dominated society (Grogan, 2000). In order to capture, cover, and recognize female leadership, researchers began to examine the concept and practice of leadership through feminist critical lenses. Gender itself was treated as a legitimate category for research and Feminist Theory analyzed gender relations, how they were constituted, experienced, and their associated perceptions. Researchers endorsed scholarship focused on how women perceived their worlds for a more comprehensive view of human behavior and society (Grogan, 2000). The new research activity based on feminism was described by Grogan (2000) who stated, “Feminist scholarship advocates action that results in a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for those who have been marginalized” (p. 126). Females and feminist researchers were no longer content with literature on leadership that relegated women’s leadership to a subservient position to male leadership.
Feminist thought places women issues at the forefront of all issues. Hauser (1997) states feminist researchers and leaders have an agenda that “involves working to actively reposition women so they are not placed in subordinate relationships to men which we define as disempowering” (p. 124). According to Stephens (2003) an advocate of Feminist Theory, “We must bring a feminist rereading to all of our received texts, particularly those that tell us what it is to be leaders: our myths, metaphors, mentors, and conversations” (p. 48). Overall, the feminist agenda involves examining the power relationships in society with a focus on men and women, and women with other women.

Ultimately, researchers using feminist construction have argued that developing theory requires a shift in thought and processes for feminists. In order to have meaningful and more appropriate theories, researchers must use the voices and interpretations of females versus the traditional practices of using male perspectives as a universal fit (Brookfield, 2003). Feminism allows females to examine: gender relations, how they are constituted, experienced, perceived; power, power differentials; and the existence of power/positionality in all relationships (Bloom, 1997; Hauser, 1997). The literature on feminism (and leadership) that began in the 1970’s suggests feminism attempts to answer why the power differentials exist and if those in power are equally represented by both genders (Downing and Roush, 1985; Hauser, 1997; Grogan, 2000).

According to Feminist Theory historically and currently, practicing professionals (feminists) should challenge the power structures that are built on masculine principles (Grogan, 2000; Chin, 2004). The strand of research in this area shows that men are uncomfortable with female leaders and women perceive they have to conform their
leadership behavior so men will not feel intimidated. In the end, this behavior and set of circumstances limits acceptable behavior for females based on their gender expectations and constricts their leadership practice (Chin, 2004). This point is alarming because according to Trinidad and Normore (2004), the concept of genders refer to qualities of men and women that are cultural conceptions absent of biological differences. In other words, gender expectations and norms are based on social construction.

Further exploring gender, Trinidad and Normore (2004) who researched “the extant literature on the ways women lead,” state directly, “Gender refers to the distinctive culturally created qualities of men and women apart from their biological differences” (p. 576). They continue their contention by arguing gender is associated with the way meaning is aligned with sex in a culture. According to this frame, roles are attached to genders based on the following expectations: masculinity for males which includes aggression, independence, objectivity, logic, analysis, and decision; and, femininity which includes emotions, sensitivity, expressiveness, and intuition (Trinidad & Normore, 2004). Approximately three and a half decades earlier, Toni Cade Bambara (1970) stated more specifically, the entire point associated with the construct of gender (roles and understanding) is to relegate females to a subordinate position.

The findings of Trinidad and Normore (2004) also support assertions made by Adkison (1981) approximately twenty-three years earlier who stated society has specific gender roles for women based on sex-role stereotyping and socialization. According to this concept, women who act appropriately are passive instead of competitive or self assertive. In addition, they are also submissive and conform to the expectation of being
dependent and submissive. Adkison (1981) continues her assertions by stating these gender roles and expectations are ingrained in childhood girls through reinforcement and rewards for “appropriate feminine behavior” (p. 312). Frazier and Sadker (1973) were even more specific and stated this behavior is supported and reinforced through schooling. This suggests if women are supposed to exhibit behaviors that are not based on masculine principles, and those principles are the basic foundation for accepted and expected leader behaviors, society is not preparing or expecting women to participate in leadership capacities.

Chin (2004) referring to expectations of women and leadership states, “Often, women are bound by these perceptions that tie them to their gender roles (which are defined bereft of leadership ability) and function within contexts that are masculinized” (p. 4). She summarizes the feminist objective by stating:

Leadership as empowerment from a feminist perspective means: creating a feminist agenda promoting feminist principles; promoting feminist policies (i.e., family oriented work environments, closing wage gap) within the workplace; changing organizational cultures and goals to be more gender equitable; and empowering women as feminist leaders (Chin, 2004, p. 7).

Ultimately, feminism represents women as empowered, capable, and equal individuals of all social systems. However, it doesn’t address race, class, and the hierarchy of females within the movement.

Addressing frameworks for feminists, researchers contend that any model used to assess feminist issues accurately should address the prejudices and discrimination that significantly affect their lives (Downing & Roush, 1985). In response, Downing and Roush (1985) propose a model for females termed the Model of Feminist Identity that
includes five stages. The stages are: passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active-commitment. In the passive acceptance stage, the woman denies institutional, individual, and cultural discrimination or is unaware that it exists. In the revelation stage, the woman experiences an epiphany through a contradiction or series of events and can no longer deny the discrimination against her and other women. This stage also involves a lot of anger. In the embeddedness-emanation stage, a connection to other women and cautious interaction with males emerges. During the synthesis stage, the woman creates a new identity and becomes more “at-ease” with the world, ultimately judging males on an individual basis. Lastly, active commitment, the fifth stage, involves the female using her feminist identity for meaningful action for the larger society (Downing & Roush, 1985).

As an overall function, the feminist movement was instrumental in addressing female issues and making them public. African American women are females and have dealt with the aforementioned issues. However, throughout the feminist movement, traditionally and in current times, White females have treated the oppression suffered by Black females as marginal issues isolated from women’s issues (Davis, 1990). According to this philosophy, the most efficient and appropriate method of challenging sexism is devoid of issues related to racial and economic oppression (Davis, 1990). As a result, “It is possible for White women—especially those associated with the capitalist or middle classes—to achieve their own particular goals without securing any ostensible progress for their racially oppressed and working-class sisters” (Davis, 1990 p. 18). Specifically during the 1960’s through 1980’s, a critical time in the feminist movement, studies documented that the majority of White females could not comprehend Black
female issues (Davis, 1990). These issues were rooted in labor disputes, discrimination, and the welfare rights movement (Davis, 1990).

Dill (1983) conducting a historical study on race, class, gender, and universal sisterhood among all women, describes this outlook and circumstance as abandonment of Black female issues. According to Dill (1983), “Institutionalized discrimination against Black women by White women has traditionally led to the development of racially separate groups that address themselves to race determined problems as well as the common plight of women in America” (p. 136). Based on these circumstances and realities, Davis (1990) argues that feminists action can be understood in a hierarchical structure according to the following: White women in the bourgeoisie, White middle-class women, White working class women, Black women and women of color that are racially oppressed with the vast majority being from the working class.

The result of this hierarchical structure is that when White women who are at the top of the hierarchy receive their desired results, the needs and concerns of the other females remain according to the status quo. As a result of this and similar circumstances, other females under the umbrella of feminism, specifically African Americans, began to concentrate their efforts on issues more paramount to their experiences. Thus Black feminism was solidified as the consciousness and efforts of choice (Davis, 1990). Next, I will describe feminism according to African American female perspectives.
Black Feminism: A Response to White Feminism

From slavery to Jim Crow, African American women have been traditionally relegated to the lowest status jobs in U.S. society which were physically oppressive and emotionally burdensome, often requiring them to work under precarious and substandard conditions. For example, as late as 1980, more African American women were concentrated in domestic service than in professional jobs (Loder, 2005b, p. 246).

For years African American women have been an integral part of White society and mainstream America. Through domestic services that included child rearing, cooking and cleaning, African American females became honorary members of their White families. “But on another level, these same Black women knew they could never belong to their White families. In spite of their involvement, they remained outsiders” (Collins, 1986, p. 175). As briefly mentioned in the previous section, the experiences of African American females (feminists) in the feminist movement were not ideal or equal. While serving in these capacities, African American females took part in feminist circles while being relegated to secondary citizenship within the movement. Some researchers contend the separation between the African American female domestic workers and their White families were due to the belief of them “being fit for what was categorized as menial labor” (Boehm, 2009, p. 20). This suggests they were prescriptively excluded.

From the early feminist activities to later times, the trend of omission could be clearly seen for African American females. For example, although many researchers believe that Susan B. Anthony, a founding feminist activist and American icon, positively set the tone for treatment of African American females early in the women’s movement, it was more common for them to be discriminated against rather than treated as equals from the 1830’s to 1920 (Dill, 1983). During the early emphasis of the feminist
movements, women focused on the oppressive nature of marriage, educational and professional discrimination, ideas that were almost exclusively centered on White middle class females because African American females were concerned with survival and freedom. In fact, the Seneca Falls Declaration, a monumental artifact in the feminist movement that discussed feminine concerns, ignored the conditions of Black women in the North and South (Dill, 1983).

In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of Black feminism, researchers have examined its tenets from the beginning of activity. Black feminism can be traced to American slavery with heroines such as Sojourner Truth who left an indelible mark on history with her “And A'nt I a woman” proclamation in 1851, in which she challenged society on its mistreatment of African American females. Although many enslaved and free African/African American females post Civil War such as Ida Wells Barnett, Mary Mcleod Bethune, and Fannie Lou Hamer fought for women equality, the 1880’s and 1890’s marked a clear era of feminism with a Black feminist construction. During this time, newly created Black women’s clubs and the focus of Black female members in some White female clubs began to exhibit openly Black feminist views. However, by the 1930’s, the split in ideals for Black and White women would be apparent and solidified as some White females began to state clearly they could not be allies of Black women on certain societal issues. First and foremost, many White feminists could not fathom Black feminists being equal to them, regardless of the common thread of being female (Palmer, 1983; Collins, 1989; Crawford, Rouse & Woods, 1990; Williams, 1996; Cash, 2001; Schechter, 2001; Hanson, 2003; Walton, 2005).
Historically, many Black women were omitted from feminist movements and wrongly accused of not maintaining a feminist consciousness (Collins, 1986). In a study of the sociological significance and tenets of Black feminist thought, Collins (1986) vehemently disagreed with this concept of a lack of feminist consciousness and stated, “In actuality, Black feminists have possessed an ideological commitment to addressing interlocking oppression yet have been excluded from arenas that would have allowed them to do so” (p. 180). As a result, the Black females created a voice and focus of their own referred to as Black feminist thought. In a follow-up study focused on the social construction of Black feminist thought, Collins (1989) described the concept by stating, “Black feminist thought, then, specializes in formulating and rearticulating the distinctive, self-defined standpoint of African American women” (p.750). Referring to the focus and center of the concept, Parker (2001) described it by stating, “A Black feminist perspective directs attention to Black women as self-defined, self-reliant individuals who confront race, gender, and class oppression and stands in opposition to the economic, political, and ideological systems of oppression that suppress Black women’s ideals” (p. 47). According to these concepts, Black feminists place race and gender issues in the forefront of all other issues.

Through a condition of circumstances, Black feminism was developed by African American women because feminism did not address women who were marginalized by both gender and race (Collins, 1986). Race, class, gender, and their influence is a central focus of issues specifically addressing the African American female perspective (Banks-Wallace, 2000). Black feminism was built upon principles used in such forms as Womanist Theory which is an approach that appreciates the views and realities of Black
women as defined by Black women. An integral part of Womanist Theory is the understanding that through this appreciation, African American females have the capacity to support, bond, and help further develop each other (King & Ferguson, 2001). Basically, Womanist Theory focuses on the specific standpoints and realities of Black women (Brown, 1989). As I will draw on Womanist Theory as one of my conceptual frames, I will discuss it in more detail later in this chapter.

Overall, there are three key themes in Black Feminism: a) an affirmation of Black women’s self-definition and self-valuation; b) their interlocking nature of oppression based on race, class, and gender; and, c) the importance of African American women’s culture. These three themes represent the following ideals: a) Black feminism is created by Black women; b) Black women maintain a unique standpoint and share a certain commonality as a group; and, c) class, race, region, age, and sexual orientation shapes different expressions and understandings of this commonality (Collins, 1986). As one researcher summarily stated, “the concept of the simultaneity of oppression is still the crux of a Black feminist understanding of political reality…” (Collins, 1986, p. 180). Black feminism affords African American women the opportunity to express, address, and suppress racism, classicism, and gender discrimination, simultaneously.

According to Collins (1986), Black feminists not only work on behalf of Black women, they have sought to improve society from a humanitarian standpoint, including activism for all oppressed groups (Collins, 1986). By default and circumstance, their political identities are associated with and have been formed by race (Dill, 1983). According to Dill (1983), the political identities of Black women, dating back to the feminist movement in the 19th century, are rooted in feminism and empowerment for
women. However, their issues expand beyond this single focus and include a concentration on “issues which resulted from the racial oppression affecting all Black people. This commitment to the improvement of the race has often led Black women to see feminist issues quite differently from their White sisters” (Dill, 1983, p. 134). Dill (1983) argues that as a result of this focus and unique view of feminism, Black and White females have suffered from racial animosity and mistrust. These challenges have persisted since the women’s suffrage campaigns and have hindered a potential coalition. This suggests that although both African American and White females are campaigning for more equity and equality through feminism, different experiences influence their level of activism and focus.

Historian E. Frances White suggests that African American women have created Black feminism because they have been marginalized due to gender and racial issues while their ideas and realities have been centered between them both (Collins, 1986). Drawing from this premise, Banks-Wallace (2000) argues that race, class, gender, and their influence is a central influence on frameworks designed to explore issues specifically addressing the African American female perspective. The literature further suggests Womanist Theory, Womanism, and Black feminist thought (used interchangeably) comprise the body of research and methods that address the African American female under the umbrella of the Black feminist view. The three terms illuminate the intersections and relationships associated with African American females’ racial and gender oppression while promoting a communal effort to end both forms of oppression through a collective conscious (Brown, 1989; Banks-Wallace, 2000).
Researchers have also coined phrases such as biculturalism, polyculturalism, Afritics, Afrocentric, and Africentric to describe conditions and circumstances affecting the lives of African American females. The literature focused on these terms suggests a common thread that African American females exist in at least two worlds due to their marginalized positions of race, gender and approach each marginalized position with coping mechanisms such as assimilation (Bell, 1990; Banks-Wallace, 2000; Alfred, 2001; Green & King, 2001; King & Ferguson, 2001; Delany & Rogers, 2004).

In summary, the literature suggests African American female leaders contend with issues related to gender and race exclusively and in an intertwined fashion. Black feminism provides an appropriate model for them to frame their experience and address their realities situated within the intersections of leadership, gender, and race. Quite simply, feminism alone is not a sufficient method or ideology for understanding and illuminating the experiences of African American women. In fact, Black feminist thought is better constructed to address the uniqueness of African American females. In order to clearly differentiate between the two concepts of feminism and Black feminism, I will discuss their intersections in addition to their singular focus in the following section.

**Feminism and Black Feminism: Connected and Disparate Concepts**

The division among White and Black females has been well documented (Davis, 1983, 1990; Palmer, 1983; Dill, 1983; Carlton-Laney, 1997; Pauley, 2000). However, during a period of growth for Black and White females active in feminism, there were some women who were willing to overcome the racial issue for the greater cause of humanity and focus on universal sisterhood. For instance, although White women from the North traveled to the South with the Freedman’s Bureau during the reconstruction
period, the historical record has not focused on this aspect of cooperation and unprecedented level of unity among White and Black females to end illiteracy (Davis, 1983).

As stated by Davis (1983), “Sisterhood between Black and White women was indeed possible” as illustrated by the efforts of the females listed above (p. 104). They were able to envision the larger picture and focus on sisterhood as defined by Dill (1983) who stated, “Sisterhood is generally understood as a nurturant, supportive feeling of attachment and loyalty to other women which grows out of a shared experience of oppression” (p. 132). This fact is very important because it suggests that contrary to many examples of exclusion, mistrust, and different focuses, all White and Black feminists were not divided in efforts to empower all females.

However, examining Feminist Theory more closely, illustrates the separating nature of the feminist movement and ideology among women of different cultures in general fashion. In basic application, Feminist Theory approaches issues in an exclusive and separate fashion. Brown (1989) argues that feminists treat race, class, and gender struggles as “either-or” issues that cannot be addressed or experienced simultaneously. In contrast, Black feminism takes an inclusive approach and worldview allowing the separate issues of African American women to be experienced and focused on simultaneously. As stated by Brown (1989),

“Dichotomous thinking does not just inhibit our abilities to see the lives of Black women and other women of color in their wholeness, but, I would argue, it also limits our ability to see the wholeness of the lives and consciousnesses of even White middle-class women” (p. 632).
Feminism then, only addresses part of the struggle for African American females and inherently isolates the views of White females, whether in perception or reality.

Traditional research on Black women recognizes they have gender and race issues specifically and exclusively, but fails to recognize their duality and contributions as Black women (Brown, 1989). Feminism focuses on gender issues, race consciousness centers on race. That is why the term Womanism has been defined by Alice Walker and Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi, two Black feminist activists, as:

> a consciousness that incorporates racial, cultural, sexual, national, economic, and political considerations. As Ogunyemi explains, Black womanism is a philosophy that concerns itself both with sexual equality in the Black community and with the world power structure that subjugates both (Brown, 1989, p. 613).

A clear example of difference can be seen in the reality that Black women have difficulty focusing on sexism perpetrated by Black men, exclusively, because Feminist Theory does not illuminate (enough) that White men are the primary beneficiaries of sexism and racism. In addition, a focus on sexism exclusively allows White feminists to ignore the role and benefits of their own advantage (Dill, 1983; Brown, 1989).

This is a marked difference because African American women cannot afford to ignore the racial and gender oppression they experience simultaneously. On the other hand, it has been argued that White women have taken the standpoint that it would be almost futile and a waste of energy to focus on issues of race when addressing gender oppression, believing the latter could satisfy a focus for all women (Carlton-Laney, 1997). Palmer (1983) argues according to societal standards, Black women had to fight the stereotypes of being rough, sexually immoral and amoral while White women represented an angelic like purity. Although both were faced with undeniable
oppression, White females did not want to relinquish their superior positions whether it was at the conscious or subconscious levels. The literature suggests addressing gender oppression, as done through Feminist Theory, leaves women of color no choice but to engage in a more comprehensive focus such as Black feminist thought (Dill, 1983; Palmer, 1983).

Another example of differences can be illustrated through family and labor circumstances. Based on historical record, Black women have traditionally been providers for their families in greater numbers than White females, both single and married creating another item of difference (Palmer, 1983). Their occupations have spanned domestic labor to practical nurses in an attempt to either solely provide or supplement the low wages received by their African American males (Palmer, 1983). Based on these circumstances, it is not a surprise that contemporary research on women of color shows that a universal sisterhood among women of different races is hindered by the histories of oppression and exploitation experienced by Blacks (Dill, 1983).

The literature addresses this area of tension between White and Black females and illustrates a common theme across socioeconomic statuses. As stated by Dill (1983), “These histories affect the social positions of these groups today, and racial ethnic women in every social class express anger and distress about the forms of discrimination and insensitivity which they encounter in their interactions with White feminists” (p. 145). For example, Parks, Carter, and Gushue (1996) conducted a study on racial and Womanist identity development with 214 women (67 Black, 147 White) and found a similar circumstance. According to the research, Black and White women
share many experiences by being female but differ significantly because of their positions within the American social order. The researchers also found a significant relationship and Womanist identity attitudes existed in the Black participants. In contrast, this relationship was not revealed in the White participants.

According to other researchers, societal positioning hinders feminists and Black feminists from a common understanding. White females start life in a position of power and privilege in reference to race and marginality according to gender. In contrast, Black women start life in a position of marginality in both terms of race and gender and focus on the problems simultaneously, not sequentially. Because of the differences, both women experience different aspects of struggling to progress within the American system due to their orientations within said structure (Brown, 1989; Carlton-Laney, 1997).

In summary, the major difference between feminist and Black feminist thought is that feminism places the sex struggle as primary and Black feminism places racial equality as primary concern while battling both racism and sexism (Brown, 1989; Carlton-Laney, 1997). Overall however, feminist issues are prevalent in the experiences of both White and Black females, and affect them differently as illustrated in the literature on educational leadership and administration. In the following section, I will explore the realities and practices of African American female leaders by combining their circumstances that are situated both between race and gender, highlighting African American female principals.
African American Women Administrators: Nexus of Race and Gender

Statistics

Statistics for African American female principals have not been rigorously kept or recorded (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). The presence of African Americans was not appreciated and recognized in the field of education until the late 19th century (Alston, 2000). However, the literature does indicate their presence as women or females in various school systems. Alston (2000) conducting research on the presence of Black women in leadership literature found a strong period of growth in the number of women teachers from 1830 to 1900 for both White and Black females. She further stated by 1880, 57.2% of teachers were women and by 1900, 70.1% of the teaching force was female. Women also founded schools, acting as head administrators from 1820 to 1900 while a few held administrative positions in systems that were already established (Alston, 2000). Still, overall, higher positions of power in education such as administrative positions were controlled by White males (Alston, 2000). This suggests that although women were being introduced into the educational system, the prior model of male leadership remained (see Figure 2.1).

![Percentage of Female Teachers in American Schools](image)

**Figure 2.1: Percentage of Black and White Female Teachers in American Schools, 1880 and 1900**
From 1900 to 1930 most of the principalships by females were occupied at the elementary school level (Alston, 2000). During this time, a record number of females gained administrative positions particularly in elementary appointments. “By 1928 women held 55% of elementary principalships, 25% of county superintendencies, 8% of secondary principalships, and 1.6% of district superintendencies” (Alston, 2000, p. 528). Looking at more recent numbers, in the 1999 and 2000 school year, females held 44% of overall principalships in the public school system (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). When isolating public elementary school principalships, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, *Commissioner’s Statement* (2010), females held 52% of principalships in the 1999-2000 school year and it increased to 59% by the 2007-2008 school year. For secondary public school principalships, female percentages were 22% for 1999-2000 and 29% for 2007-2008 respectively (see Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 2.2).

Reviewing the literature reveals that females were slowly being assigned to a large section of schooling, elementary administrative positions. The literature also shows females still have a much higher concentration at the elementary school level. This fact in the literature implies that women were being targeted for leadership in the
basic introductory years of learning and overlooked in the secondary and more sophisticated years in the K-12 system.

Overall, although the numbers are currently rising for female administrators in leadership positions, female appointments are below their male counterparts in secondary schools and disproportionate to the numbers of female teachers in the field of education. For example, exploring their statistics further, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 1994, 53.1% of secondary school teachers were female and they only represented 13.8% of the secondary school principals (Eckman, 2004). The number of female principals at the secondary level increased to approximately 26% percent according to Young and McLeod (2001) and raised to 29% by the 2007-2008 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, Commissioner's Statement, 2010). Please see Figure 2.3 for a summary of percentages.

![Overall Percentages of Secondary Female Teachers vs. Female Administrators](image)

Figure 2.3: Progression of Percentages for Secondary Female Teachers vs. Administrators

In 2007-2008, females comprised approximately 50% of overall public school principalships and 76% of teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2011). The Florida Department of Education, Gender
Representation Among Professionals in Florida’s Public Schools (2011) noted a small discrepancy and stated in the 2007-2008 school year, 51% percent of females were principals versus 74.7% as teachers. As illustrated, clearly progress has been made in increasing the number of female administrators. However, the number of female teachers versus principalships shows a very large discrepancy between teaching, existing in the field, versus administrative positions, leading in the field. Please see Figure 2.4 for a summary of percentages according to the National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2011.

Even still, the U.S. Department of Education reports that women held 34.5% of overall principalships in the public school systems in 1994 and it increased to 44% by 1999 and 2000 (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). The Florida Department of Education, Gender Representation Among Professionals in Florida’s Public Schools (2011) statistics list a small discrepancy and state the numbers were 39.1% in the 1993-1994 school year, 46.3% in 1999-2000, and 49.7% in 2003-2004 for female administrators in
public schools. In the year 1999-2000, women also represented 75% of all teachers in public schools (Loder, 2005c). This shows, the overall discrepancy of females at the administrative level is narrowing due to their appointments in elementary school principalships where women held 52% of the administrative positions in 1999-2000 and 59% in 2007-2008 (National Center for Education Statistics, Commissioner’s Statement, 2010). In addition, for the same year, women administrators also held 51% of all public school principalships (Florida Department of Education, Gender Representation Among Professionals in Florida’s Public Schools, 2011). Please see Figures 1.1 and 1.2 for baseline percentages.

Although women have had many challenges in reference to employment opportunities and access to managerial positions, as shown above, they have made tremendous progress since 1960 as a result of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, and the Women’s Educational equity Act of 1972 (Hornig, 2003; Katz, Stern, & Fader, 2005). The field of education specifically, became a professional field where women could reach managerial levels at a higher rate, especially the latter years in the twentieth century (Fridell, Newcom-Belcher & Messner, 2009). For example, the overall number of female principals was 5.6% in 1972 and 23.2% in 1986. In 1990, 5% of 11,346 school districts had female superintendents (Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, & Harris, 1994). In comparison, more current times show female appointments in higher percentages. Please see Figure 2.5 for a summary of percentages.
In examining statistics of female leaders in education, I have briefly discussed the percentages of female administrators under the context of gender, showing their growing percentages in the field of education. However, African American female principals are also considered minorities and in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of their realities, African American leadership has to be explored and understood in conjunction with their female realities. In the following paragraphs, I will explore African American leadership, detailing how African American female principals are situated within said leadership. This will provide a foundation for further contextualizing findings on African American female principals and their circumstances as a double minority.

**Black Administration: Historical Overview**

Although studies on African American leadership in education have been sparsely conducted when compared to studies on White males, research has been conducted on the Black administrator. This strand of studies is a result of the critical research that began to be conducted in the 1990’s (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). To better
understand the realities of African American female principals, the history of Black principals have to be explored and understood. Current research on the Black principal details that from the 1860’s to the 1950’s, Black educational leaders were establishing, building, and maintaining educational structure for Black children. Between 1860 and 1935 in the South, where most of the enslaved and newly freed African American population existed, the common school and Sabbath schools were created and maintained by the newly freed Blacks (Anderson, 1988; Tillman, 2004).

Tillman (2004) who researched African American principals prior to Brown vs. Board of Education stated African American principals, both male and female, were positive influences in Black communities prior to the ruling which legally ended segregation for Black students. During this time, African American men, most notably ministers, played an integral role in the establishment of schools for Blacks. However, African American women were also instrumental in building schools for Blacks in the North and South during this same period. For example, African American women acted as teachers, principals, and founders during this pivotal time through the 1960’s (Anderson, 1988; Alston, 2000; Hanson, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Tillman, 2004).

The literature on African American principals detailed that Black female administrators existed prior to and after Brown. Many of the Black female administrators for Black schools were called Jeanes Supervisors and their most influential period was from 1907 to 1967. Jeanes Supervisors were African American females that acted as principals, teachers, and assistants to county supervisors simultaneously in Black schools. Although 1907 to 1967 defines their critical involvement, African American female principalship can be officially traced to the 1860’s (Chirhart, 2003; Tillman,
African American female principals were present, active, and very instrumental in their communities and schools. For instance, Sarah Smith became the first African American female principal of New York when she became the head administrator of the African School in Brooklyn in 1863. Fannie Jackson Coppin, another Black female, became principal of Philadelphia’s Institute for Colored Youth from 1869 to 1904 (Tillman, 2004).

Another example of early African American female leadership can be found with Gertrude Elise Ayer in the first part of the 20th century. She became the first African American female principal for public schools in New York, New York and appointed to P.S. 24 in 1935. The student population was 95% African American and the teachers were predominantly White. Within a few weeks of her appointment, she established a more comfortable school atmosphere, better communication with the parents, and an assistance program for unemployed parents within the neighborhood (Johnson, 2004). Reviewing surviving statistics on African American females in the state of Florida, historian Maxine Jones identified Black female leadership and stated, “There were at least eight female principals in Miami in 1942 and some five in Pensacola in 1950” (Colburn & Landers, 1995, pp. 253-254).

The realities involved with African American female principalships, including those deemed Jeanes Supervisors may never be fully uncovered (Tillman, 2004). For instance, although Ms. Ayer’s appointment in 1935 was an excellent example of African American female success, many of her realities as an African American female principal in an urban environment are still unknown. Documentation also shows the true nature of her principalship through some of her challenges. As she was being appointed, fifteen
teachers immediately asked for a transfer which was denied by the school board (Johnson, 2004). Did other Jeanes Supervisors experience similar realities? Unfortunately, due to a lack of research, the field of education and researchers will never be able to ascertain many realities for those African American female principals and Jeanes Supervisors. For this reason in addition to the previous aforementioned reasons, the literature suggests African American female principals should be isolated as the center of research activity in educational leadership studies.

Switching to a focus on experiences and practices, African American leadership has traditionally been described as collaborative, focusing on the student as being a holistic individual benefitting from various aspects of the community (Foster, 2005). Some researchers have termed this type of leadership as interpersonal caring and institutional caring, and date it back to the newly created communities after the Civil War and the *Emancipation Proclamation* (Foster, 2005). Tillman (2008) states that historically, Black principals treated the schools as transformational institutions focused on improving students’ self-esteem, goal-setting, work ethic, and success in society as a whole. However, this focus did not mean assimilation into White culture. Rather, there was a focus on social development by nurturing their strengths and idiosyncrasies so that they may survive and thrive in a society that marginalized their existence.

Overall, historical literature on the Black principalship can be divided into two distinct periods which were researched and will be discussed, pre and post *Brown versus the Board of Education* (Tillman, 2004). In 1954, through this dramatic and monumental case, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Shujaa, 1996; Franklin & Moss, 2000; Borman,
Stringfield & Slavin; 2001; Higginbotham, 2001; Reese, 2005; Eisenmann, 2006; Gasman, 2007). However, progress would not occur overnight as the school systems began to change the racial make-up of its facilities, especially in the South where the highest population of Blacks resided. According to Kluger (2004) who researched the events and effects of the monumental case, “A decade after Brown, not even one in fifty African American pupils was attending classes with Whites in the eleven states with the largest proportion of Black residents” (p. 755). In addition, the ruling also had an adverse affect on Black administrators. In the South, upon the face of integration, Black administrators in charge of predominantly Black schools quite often lost their positions to White administrators (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2007). The result of integration for Black students was having adverse consequences for Black administrators and their employment status.

Desegregation: Effects of Brown vs. Board of Education

The literature on Black principals also suggests Brown vs. Board of Education or more importantly, the results of Brown, had an adverse effect on the Black student by affecting the status of Black school leaders (Tillman, 2004). The affect on student success as experienced by Black students and leaders prior to Brown could be attributed to homophily, which can be defined as effective communication and interaction based on commonalities. Since African Americans may come from the same type of value system or possess common social characteristics, homogeneity in the form of beliefs and social understandings may have facilitated more effective communication. Therefore the success of the students may have been increased by the commonalities, or more importantly, the perception of a commonality (Lomotey, 1993).
However, the *Brown* ruling had an adverse impact on this “homophily” for many communities (Tillman, 2004). Integration, although explicitly focused on students, meant teaching staffs and diversity had to be addressed, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Integration from a leadership standpoint quite often meant extinction for many Black administrators, if not in title, definitely according to function and location (Clotfelter, 2004; Tillman, 2004). According to Tillman (2004), many of the Black principals were transferred to desk positions that were ambiguous, lacking a definitive set of objectives and goals/function. Black principals under the segregated system were leaders teaching other African Americans how to become future leaders and embrace communal pride, struggles, and triumphs. Their removal was a negative consequence for the communities. However, we will never know the full magnitude of this drastic change because records for displaced Black principals were not the focus of the school systems. As a result, records are more scarce, creating a gap of information on their experiences and realities (Tillman, 2004). Tillman (2004) argues that an element to leadership and guidance in the Black communities were drastically compromised due to the displaced administration.

Although record-keeping for the affected Black principals was poor at best, some records were kept and according to Tillman (2004), 1954 through 1965 were the most challenging years for Black principals post *Brown*. The negative effects could still be seen decades later. A clear example of the devastating effect of desegregation can be seen in a comparison of the Florida School System in two separate academic years, 1964-1965 and 1975-1976. According to Tillman (2004), Black principals were employed in all of the 67 school districts in 1964-1965. By the 1975-1976 school year,
approximately 21 years after *Brown* and 11 years after the most tumultuous time of transition, 165 public schools were added to the districts, 166 Black principals were demoted, and 27 districts did not have any Black principals.

In an overall assessment of the impact of *Brown versus Board of Education*, the most influential ruling for Black administrators, the literature documents four primary effects on Black principals: 1) demotions to teaching or non-teaching positions; 2) alteration of their schools to lower grade levels; 3) stripping of their power while allowing some to maintain the title of principal; and, 4) receiving promotions to positions without power in central offices (Tillman, 2004). In addition, the displacement of Black principals from positions of power within Black communities adversely affected policies and instructional leadership. Tillman (2004) argues this turn of events left many Black communities with no voices to represent them when negotiating with the White power structure, and forever changed the communities due to this lack of representation.

In addition to the four primary effects caused by *Brown*, an analysis of realities and practices of African American principals pre and post *Brown* exposes four consistent themes: 1) resistance to ideologies in opposition of teaching African American children; 2) primary focus on Black students’ academic and social development; 3) importance of the Black principal cultural perspective; and, 4) leadership practices centered on interpersonal caring (Tillman, 2008). Pre *Brown* Black principals resisted the ideologies and officials that did not believe in education of African American children. Post *Brown* Black principal leaders resisted teachers and school systems that had low expectations for Black students and ignored the ruling of *Brown*. The post *Brown* principals also ignored declining involvement from Black parents.
(Tillman, 2008). This behavior was also documented by Lomotey (1993), Gooden (2005), and Loder (2005a) who found African American principals exhibited behaviors centered on commitment to the education and nurturing of African American students in their various school systems.

Research on post Brown African American principals showed progression from the pre Brown principals and identified four specific characteristics in relation to their practices: acceptance of organizational goals; facilitation of cooperation among staff; increased effective communication with staff; and participation in student assessment, teacher supervision, and curriculum planning (Tillman, 2004). Although post Brown African American principals were instrumental in the academic and professional achievement of the Black students, research showed the landscape of Black schools had changed, better in some aspects and worse in others (Tillman, 2004).

Tillman (2004) found, “While some Black principals retained their positions after the historic Brown v. Board of Education decision, desegregation had a devastating impact on the closed structure of Black education and thus the professional lives of thousands of Black principals” (p. 110). Research also shows this had an impact to access and the racial make-up of teachers changed for African American communities when desegregation began to take place. For example, in a study of a Black school and its students in North Carolina pre and post Brown, a drastic change of community involvement and expectation occurred as desegregation settled (Tillman, 2004). Tillman (2004) stated, “The racial and cultural mismatch between the Black parents and students and the White principal and majority White teaching staff led to barriers between the school and community” (p. 122). The parents reported less accessibility to
teachers in discussing concerns about their children during PTA meetings which created a major communication barrier between the community and school.

In addition to the challenges created by communication barriers and new racial make-up of schools, Tillman (2004) found in the more urbanized schools and areas, student achievement and communal outlook on stability decreased tremendously. According to Tillman (2004):

These cities, which once were centers of educational, economic, and social excellence, were now characterized by crime, poverty, and decay. Their public schools, which once boasted high test scores, numerous academic awards, service to the Black community, and the development of the Black professional, were now being defined by low test scores, locations in decaying neighborhoods, lack of parental support, and discipline problems (p. 115).

The changing environment also transferred African American neighborhoods from middle-class areas to low socio-economic areas further exacerbating problems with test scores and low academic achievement (Tillman, 2004). This alarming set of circumstances can be explained by the findings of Anyon (1997).

Anyon (1997) researching urban schools, social class, race and educational reform found central cities held 29% of America’s population and by 1991 housed 43% of America’s poor. In addition, most residents of large central cities were found to be African American or Latino with 80% of African American’s poor population. Anyon (1997) found that from 1970 to 1990, cities classified as being extreme poverty tracts increased from 6% to 13.7%. Even more significant, over 80% of concentrated poverty areas were located in the largest 100 cities in America. Areas that were once thriving centers for moral stability and communal focus were transformed into areas that were morally challenged and economically oppressed (Anyon, 1997; Tillman, 2004).
These statistics are of extreme importance because African American female principals are more likely to operate in these urban areas and detailing their experiences could offer major insight and understandings of their realities. Tillman (2004) referring to this reality stated:

Today these men and women are primarily employed in large, urban school districts and continue to work for the social, emotional, and academic achievement of African American students. Yet many of the historical and contemporary contributions of African Americans have not been documented in the traditional literature on educational leadership and administration (p. 101).

She further intimates research conducted about and by African Americans is not a major strand of educational leadership research and leaves a gap of information. Lastly, Tillman (2004) argues that research focused on African American racial and cultural issues in educational leadership are relevant due to the increasing percentages of African American principals and students in pre-K-12 grades.

This section has highlighted historical data and information on African American leaders and principals in the field of education. Through an examination into the roles, practices, and circumstances of African American educational leaders through a historical lens, the literature allows researchers to contextualize how African American female principals are situated within African American leadership. However, in order to have a more comprehensive view of African American female principal leadership, researchers also have to examine female leadership to highlight another primary intersection for African American female leaders. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss female leadership roles and practices, illuminating how African American female principals are situated within this intersection of leadership.
Findings on African American Female Principals: Roles and Understandings

The literature on female leadership practices has been understood according to research on administrative behavior and performance. Reviewing the literature and studies on this topic, Adkison (1981) found the studies suggest the behavior of females is more appropriate for school leadership than males. For example, female principals demonstrated democratic leadership, more concern for students, and a higher level of community activism. As a result, researchers concluded female administrators were more effective than their male counterparts who were less likely to involve themselves with instructional supervision, democratic leadership, concern for students, and community involvement (Adkison, 1981).

The studies listed above also indicated that a reason for the effectiveness may be attributed to the time (more than males) that females in general spend teaching prior to moving into administration. This experience allows them to use skills and expertise acquired in the classroom towards instructional supervision (Adkison, 1981). Parker (2001) found the traditional feminine model of leadership was patterned after similar findings in reference to leadership practices of women. According to the literature, this model included an emphasis on relationships and interpersonal caring which included communication centered on collaboration and support.

Contrary to research gathered on White female leaders, a model of mixed leadership styles emerged for African American females based on being direct, confrontational or assertive and straightforward in addition to the collaborative and nurturing models (Case, 1997; Chin, 2004; Loder, 2005a). While studying the realities and styles of African American female principals, Case (1997) and Loder (2005a) found
that African American female principals based their styles on their interpretation of
needs associated with the welfare and well-being of the children. The result of this
perception was a style that centered on the needs of the children as dependents of a
matriarchal figure. This practice is perceived as a necessity in communities that serve
African American students (Dantley, 1990, 2005). However, although African American
female principals exhibited unique characteristics with their leadership styles, the
objectives of school leadership was still centered on specific characteristics and
consistent behaviors of principals according to traditional White male concepts of
leadership.

Focusing on the works of Tondra Loder (2005a, 2005b, 2005c), her research was
centered on African American women principals and their interactions in various
communities, including intergenerational African American women principals. She
discovered their styles were centered on othermothering, a nurturing type of leadership.
She also discovered African American women principals born prior to and after the Civil
Rights Movement (CRC) held different concepts in reference to realities surrounding the
principalship. For instance, pre-CRC principals began teaching because it was a field
that was open to African American females prior to the CRC and they later embraced
the field of education. In contrast, for female principals born after the CRC, their
aspirations and movement into the principalship was more purposive and directed,
specifically geared for the field of education (Loder, 2005b).

When isolating and examining females, Wrushen and Sherman (2008) compared
the leadership styles of female leaders from differing ethnicities by focusing on their
commonalities and differences. The researchers found that in addition to exhibiting the
characteristics listed above, the female principals were operating in a field that used the male concept of leadership. The principals also dealt with hiring discrepancies at the secondary level. In addition, Wrushen and Sherman (2008) discovered the female principals were uncomfortable referring to themselves as yielding power. Instead, the principals chose to concentrate and focus on their service to the communities as an alternative way of describing power.

The literature also indicates the application of female principal duties was delivered with self-definitions of compassion and power through service to the community. The women leaders spoke of a desire to create relationships and believed in a form of nurturing to address the issues of running schools. Although they were found to lead with compassion, minority women were also found to be very serious, did not engage in informal conversations or joking dialogue with faculty, and experienced very similar circumstances when dealing with race and challenges (Adkison, 1981; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

In a comprehensive study of a review of the research on women in school administration from 1974 to 1981, Adkison (1981) found that minority women being subject to both racial and sex discrimination behaved more like nonminority women in comparison to minority men. However, Adkison (1981) stated the minority women that succeeded under those difficult circumstances appeared to be transformed into committed and independent administrators. Allen, Jacobson and Lomotey (1995) researching the importance of mentors and sponsors for African American women in educational administration, found the females viewed race as a major barrier more than gender. However, the researchers also stated studies on gender and leadership
included African American female principals within larger studies, creating a need for more studies isolating the African American female principal to have more concentrated data. This suggests isolated studies of African American female principals are needed for more assurance of reliable and valid findings.

Continuing their discussion, Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) conducting a qualitative study of aspiring African American women school administrators, found White females believe effective administration involves male behaviors and Black females do not. They state this difference may be due to the socialization of African American females who are prepared to be leaders in their families and churches in their youth. While researching the literature on African American women in educational administration, they also found that African American women are encouraged to take leadership positions that place them with other connections to the larger community. Through this form of socialization, the African American females acquire, learn to use leadership abilities and interpret how to use them in a larger context as women (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Walton, 2005). This is similar to their roles of leadership within the family and communal structures which may encourage them to be leaders while maintaining female status, focus and uniqueness (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995). Although this explanation may explain African American females’ different concept of effective administration, it does not explain their legacy and current practices associated with leadership in full detail. These issues will be further illuminated and explained in the following paragraphs.
African American Female Practices

During the pivotal times for detailing concepts in educational leadership, research on the practices, experiences, and influences of African American female leadership was not occurring. African American females were just entering the professional ranks in large numbers in the 1970’s and their social supports were not researched until the 1980’s (King & Ferguson, 2001). Although there was a little research conducted, King and Ferguson (2001) state, “There was still a dearth of research on contemporary Black women of professional status” (p. 127). This research reality caused problems within the field of education because it affected past, present, and future potential leaders of America.

As noted by Delany and Rogers (2004) during their research of educational leadership, “Sadly, the analysis also highlights the dearth of learning experiences within formal adult and professional education that support the preparation of Black women for leadership roles” (p. 103). So in essence, the research activity also highlighted a system that was deficient in preparing future generations of African American females for leadership. In order to more accurately capture their circumstances, African American and African American female experiences and realities have to be further isolated and will be discussed below.

The literature that exists on African American principals records them as being different from their White counterparts in how they performed the duties of goal development, energy harnessing, communication facilitation, and instructional management (Gooden, 2005). The literature also suggests they exhibited three other attributes referred to as ethnohumanist roles: 1) commitment to the education of African
American children; 2) compassion for the communities they served; and, 3) confidence in academic achievement from African American children (Lomotey, 1993; Gooden 2005). These attributes were part of a communal approach to educating and serving the communities to enhance their life standards as well as maintaining communal structure.

When isolating African American female principals, Case (1997) and Loder (2005a) using qualitative methodology found they interpret their roles through values associated with motherhood including: nurturing, caretaking, and assisting children. Some of the principals identified themselves as othermothers which amounted to maternal figures in the various African American communities that cared for the welfare and well-being of the children. Othermothering is a practice that was originally traced to slavery and involves the relationships females had among the local communities (relative to their vicinities). It basically involved African American females playing an integral role of fulfilling the psycho-educational needs of African American children in their vicinity and more recently, urban schools (Case, 1997).

Dantley (1990, 2005) studying the effective school movement, and the restructuring of educational leadership in African American urban schools respectively, found that this level of dedication, commitment and social outlook towards the students of the community was consistent with the idea that urban poor schools (in which many of the African American female principals practice) needed this type of outreach and service for silenced and marginalized students. These studies suggest a unique form of leadership is practiced by African American female leaders differing from the male dominated forms of leadership traditionally explored in leadership centered research (Parker, 2001).
Although the literature suggests othermothering is a common practice among African American female principals, researchers held favoring and opposing views of this type of leadership. Loder (2005a) found opposing views that questioned the appropriateness of maternal approaches practiced among the administrators. According to Loder (2005a), researchers in the late 1990’s documented two reasons to oppose this style of leadership: 1) the maternal and paternal approaches used by African American principals were not conducive to collaborative leadership because it placed too much power into the principal’s hands; and, 2) in urban schools that are not well managed, the staff and students quite often witnessed the power associated with an autocracy in a negative form. However, this negative form of a single power was often not witnessed by urban schools that were managed very well.

The researchers who supported this maternal style of leadership during the 1990’s and presently, contended African American females did not accept the term leader because they didn’t want to be associated with domination and control. So the nurturing aspect of leadership is an alternative to the male styles of leadership that specifically focused on levels of control. Lastly, the researchers also stated the maternal practices by the African American female principals were directly related to the African American female and her historic relationship with the African American community (Loder, 2005a).

The literature that exists on African American female principals illustrates the administrators’ behaviors and circumstances are more similar to White females than African American males when isolating styles and gender (Adkison, 1981). However, they also have a common ground with African American males when isolating race and
held the same outlook toward improving communal interaction and the academic achievement of African American children (Tillman, 2004). Tillman (2004) documenting the effect and focus of African American principals both male and female prior to and post Brown, illustrated both sets of African American leaders were concerned with the social and academic welfare of the communities in which they served.

**Challenges for African American Female Administrators: Research Activity**

Although it exists, the literature on African American women in educational administration is small. Even more current research usually refers to a sample of Black females situated in a larger study of other women (commonly Hispanics) and do not adequately focus on the differences between them (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Benham, 1997). In 1995, Allen, Jacobson, and Lomotey (1995) reviewing the literature on African American female leadership and the lack of research focus stated, “About the only thing researchers know with any certainty about African American women in positions of authority in America’s public schools is that there are not many of them” (p. 409). Although, since 1995 several studies have been conducted on African American females and their principal numbers have increased, this area of research activity is still deficient.

This point was made and reiterated by Hite (2004) and Alston (2005) who stated White males and females have been used to understand minorities and females; and, Wrushen and Sherman (2008) who stated a dearth of information on women leadership roles still existed although strides were made in research activity. In addition, Delany and Rogers (2004) stated the academy of higher learning only recently perceived that Black women’s leadership warranted scholarship focus. This is a very crucial point and
aspect of leadership because African American females’ leadership roles and experiences have traditionally been unique and continues to exist under unique conditions due to their race and gender status (King & Ferguson, 2001).

When dealing with the intersections of racial and gender equity and equality, and school leadership, African American female principals exist in a unique area that merits further research. Brooks and Jean-Marie (2007), researching Black and White leadership and race relations in an urban high school, discussed the need for more scholarship in the area of Black school leadership at the building-level in spite of an emerging body of literature focusing on Black superintendents. Although their conclusion was addressing African American principals in general, African American female principals are a subset of individuals within that group who experience a unique set of circumstances. For instance, Staples and Johnson (1993) state that Black women experience challenges with sexist values and practices within and outside Black communities.

Ultimately, several factors have contributed to the circumstance of limited research on leadership and African American females that include: number of African American females in prek-12 grade administrative positions; limited research interests in issues affecting school leadership from African American leaders; theories on women in the literature referring to women as teacher leaders; a systematic design that subjugates women issues to men issues; and, a melting pot focus that includes Black women issues as a supplemental part of women issues within White feminist literature that fails to address cultural exclusion and White privilege (Tillman, 2004). Research on Black female principals also includes studies that have African American women in the
research labeled as women and minorities which frequently omits the intricacies and challenges specific to African American females (Tillman, 2004).

In addition to using African American females as primary subjects in educational leadership studies, several researchers also state scholars should be equally concerned with the methods used for research as well as the lenses that are used to construct meanings. As Heck and Hallinger (2005) contend, “Social research is influenced not only by the dominant research questions and rules regarding the construction of knowledge, but also by the historical and cultural contexts in which inquiry is situated” (p. 234). Wrushen and Sherman (2008) discussing similar issues state, “When research begins with personal ideas, particularly from those who have traditionally been silenced, new perspectives emerge that challenge traditional assumptions” (p. 459). A focus on the diverse leaders in education, especially the overlooked, could provide the field with perspectives of positive change. Brooks and Jean-Marie (2007) being consistent with Gasman (2007) cautions that scholars pursuing research related to African Americans should be aware of the historical context of information that has been gathered and omitted. These concepts challenge the current body of research on leadership and educational administration by exposing potential gaps in the existing literature due to subject focus and appropriate frameworks.

**Challenges for African American Female Administrators: In the Field**

Continuing the discussion and exploration of female challenges, Loder (2005c) focusing on administrator percentages, sums the conditions explicitly by stating, “Pervasive discrimination in hiring and promotion, lack of sponsoring and mentoring, and the entrenchment of the good old boy network are barriers to women
administrators, particularly aspiring and practicing principals, which have been well documented in the literature” (pp. 741-742). Loder (2005c) clearly suggests women have been omitted from administrative circles and positions of leadership while dominating other positions in the educational hierarchy.

The progress of women leaders have been acknowledged and recognized in the current literature. However, although women administrators have made many strides in the field of education, based on their numbers as teachers, they still represent a lower percentage (Loder, 2005c). When combining elementary and secondary principals, women held approximately 50% of public school principalships during the 2007-2008 school year while also comprising 76% of the teaching force during the same time period (National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2011). This shows progress from research findings from Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, and Harris (1994) who approximately sixteen years earlier stated, “It is common knowledge that women have been excluded from the administrative ranks and other positions of authority in education. What we have witnessed is an absence of women from power.” (p. 398). Women now hold positions of power. However, in comparison to their numbers as teachers, their percentages as principals are significantly lower and males still dominate certain areas in education, like secondary schools.

The pattern of male domination in administration is recognizable at the secondary level and reproduced in school districts nationally. This creates a matching challenge between school leadership and the communities they serve which includes an increasing minority population (Tirozzi, 2001; Jean-Marie, 2008). Tirozzi (2001) addressing the challenges with the changing demographics at secondary schools stated
prescriptively, that increasing minorities in management positions has been challenging and will be a primary issue in the following decade (Tirozzi, 2001). Although this change is slowly beginning to occur, more research on African American principals in general and African American female principals specifically, are needed to equip the field of education with a diverse set of knowledge on diverse leadership. This may aid in increasing the numbers of African American females as secondary school administrators by illuminating their importance.

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) found that women principals at the secondary level are underrepresented suggesting a clear discrepancy in hiring practices for female principals. Young and McLeod (2001) examining the percentages of female administrators found a similar reality and state, “Although women occupy more leadership positions than they did a decade ago, women leading schools at the secondary level or running school districts in the United States are still unusual” (p. 463). The two researchers found women do not have the same opportunities as men for administrative leadership positions and societal conditions support the notion that women are less capable leaders. Statistics released by the National Center for Education Statistics, Commissioner’s Statement, (2010) states the percentage of female administrators for public secondary schools was raised 3% equaling 29% by the 2007-2008 school year. Yet, their numbers were still relatively low. How did this circumstance occur? Maybe the answer is further embedded within their circumstances while in the field as well as preparation for a career in education.

To better understand the literature on African American females and their challenges, I turn to the literature on females in general. Within this body of research,
women administrators are found to experience challenges such as work and family conflicts, discrimination, and difficulty with sponsorship and mentoring (Loder, 2005c). The research shows that hiring discrimination, lack of sponsorship and mentoring are barriers that affect aspiring and current women administrators and appear to be the greatest challenges faced by all women in general (Loder, 2005c). Although it must be noted, in comparison, a few researchers have concluded that a primary barrier to the advancement of women administrators has to do with their family conflicts, more so than a lack of mentoring and sponsorship (Loder, 2005c). Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, and Harris (1994) point to a more direct challenge and argue most researchers conclude that “Sex discrimination occurs throughout the administrative hiring process from application, to screening, interview, and selection” (p. 403). This further supports the contention that female administrators (aspirants) are discriminated against by virtue of birth.

Centering African American female challenges, researchers identified two primary obstacles in comparison to one major obstacle experienced by their White female counterparts. Because African American females are twice removed from being White males, being non-White and female, they have to overcome two non-traditionally recognized characteristics when dealing with employment issues in society (Crawford & Smith, 2005). In their study on the importance of mentoring for African American women in higher education, Crawford and Smith (2005) contend that African Americans have low status in society and state, “Because African American women appear to be at the bottom of the social order, they are greatly disadvantaged in the job market” (p. 54). However, as their conclusion suggests, some African American females can overcome
this challenge and achieve success in the field of education without having ideal conditions for success.

The success in Crawford and Smith’s (2005) study illustrates that being disadvantaged is not definitively incapable. However, the researchers also noted that although the African American females achieved success in their study, collectively, they were educated instead of nurtured, and all believed their job satisfaction would be higher if they were mentored. As a result of their lack of nurturing, the African American females felt isolated and frustrated because no mentors identified and mentored them.

Loder (2005a) researching African American women reflections and practices found that a growing number of African American women were receiving the opportunity to lead in schools. However, their opportunities were being granted in some of the nation’s toughest schools and predominantly in elementary schools. Overwhelmingly, the research indicated that being female and African American adversely affected their employment status at the secondary level and increased the probability of those that obtained employment to being assigned to troubled schools (Adkison, 1981; Collier-Thomas, 1982; Crawford & Smith, 2005). Adkison (1981) chronicling the research on women in education three decades earlier, found that Black women were more likely to be elementary school principals and hold other administrative designations such as consultant. This was similar to Loder (2005a) findings two decades later which illustrated African American female principals were more than likely to be assigned to tough predominantly Black schools. Black males on the other hand were almost exclusively assigned to secondary principalships.
This trend of hiring Blacks to tough schools seems evident in the hiring practices of African American females in reference to principalships (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a). In their naturalistic inquiry exploring the realities of three African American female principals, Bloom and Erlandson (2003) noted that school boards tended to offer African American females principalships in challenging inner city schools where male principals failed. Gooden (2005) researching the role of an African American principal in an urban setting, stated African Americans were usually given principalships in schools where African American students comprised a large percentage of the student population.

Adkison (1981) also stated conclusively that Black women in educational administration faced a double-bind and double-jeopardy because discrimination could occur because of their race or gender status. Collier-Thomas (1982) studying the impact of Black women in education during the same time period, found the progress of Black women administrators was also highly concentrated in the kindergarten and elementary school levels. In her study, the majority of high schools and other administrative placements at the secondary level, school boards, superintendencies and, state departments of education were occupied by males. Although these studies addressed certain realities for African American female principals, they were only for a few administrators, still leaving a gap of information on administrative leadership.

Tillman (2004) argues the field of educational leadership has focused on school administration from a White male perspective omitting other critical areas of leadership like development, further compounding the challenges for women leaders. This omission includes an integral part of leadership and development for aspiring female
administrators. King and Ferguson (2001) have defined a sound practice of leadership for women as:

the activities, processes and methods that aid in clarifying a woman’s understanding of herself in relation to the groups, communities, and societies of which she is a part, and 2) the activities, processes, and methods that aid in clarifying a woman’s sense of personal efficacy and collective purpose (p. 126).

The focus of leadership for those that aspire to be leaders is on male characteristics and ultimately, males. Leadership development for women leaders is incomplete. If it were complete, women, their unique circumstances and styles would be central. This lack of focus suggests discriminatory practices in educational leadership from the very beginning by omitting the unique realities and circumstances of women.

Some attempts have been made to assist women in leadership with mixed results of success. However, in reality, when leadership development is focused on women, it quite often falls short of its goal of equity, still failing to encompass the realities associated with women leaders (Grogan, 1999; Hite, 2004). As stated by Green and King (2001) referring to African American females:

Leadership development for women is often intended to help women break through the so-called ‘glass ceiling’ of invisible but formidable workplace barriers. For women of African descent in the United States, however, the metaphorical ceiling blocking their career advancement may be more than mere glass—indeed, some have likened it more to concrete (p. 157).

Although African American women have seemingly hit a concrete ceiling (Green and King, 2001), it must be noted, some females have been able to advance in the profession.
In the field of education, female aspirants making the transition to administration experience several challenges that have been documented historically and in more recent times. Adkison (1981) over three decades ago stated a major challenge for women was male administrators assumed women were not committed to administration as a career. As a result, the behaviors of women and the organizational processes acted as a barrier to their administrative aspirations. Women who expressed their interest in becoming an administrator may have a challenge finding a sponsor because they didn’t fit the aforementioned stereotypes of females in education.

Sponsors have been found to be very instrumental in assisting the aspirants in obtaining administrative positions. They also assist with learning experiences, guidance and navigation through social networks that include other administrators. These areas all facilitate an easier transition into administration (Adkison, 1981). Grogan (1999) researching challenges for women administrators detailed similar findings for female administrators almost two decades later in reference to sponsors. According to Grogan (1999), women have difficulty advancing because the networks and sponsors in the field are patterned after the traditional model of the White male. The literature suggests, women and minorities don’t fit this mold and are chosen disproportionately when opportunities become available.

Continuing the discussion, Tillman and Cochran (2000) also noted sponsors and mentors could play a vital role for the success of aspiring administrators. According to the researchers, sponsors assist with learning organizational nuances and how to navigate through the bureaucratic nature of schools. Tillman and Cochran (2000) specifically identified five stages involved in the mentoring process: 1) mutual
agreement for a mentoring relationship; 2) trust; 3) mentee growing under the guidance of the mentor; 4) mentor support of the mentee professionally, inducing risk for the mentor; and, 5) mentee’s professional interdependence on the mentor during their transitional stage towards independence (Tillman & Cochran, 2000). This process is challenging for women and even more difficult for minority women as Hite (2004) discussed and stated, “Not surprisingly, women of color face greater barriers in accessing and fully utilizing mentoring relationships. Separated from the majority culture on two counts, they must negotiate sexism and racism when seeking mentors” (p. 133). Based on Hite’s (2004) contentions, African American females must overcome an extra set of challenges in comparison to their White female counterparts being twice removed from the pipeline in administration.

Sex-role stereotypes, another barrier to women transitioning into administration, can also have an adverse effect on female administrators. In the mid-1990’s, researchers found that female acceptance of stereotypical roles created role conflict and women were less likely to have aspirations beyond attaining a principalship. This exposed the system as a machine that perpetuates traditional standard White masculinity through practical and subliminal application (Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, & Harris, 1994). This set of conditions has not gone unnoticed as researchers and educators have addressed this forced circumstance as early as the 1980’s. For instance, Adkison (1981) stated:

The explanation of women’s condition in society as a product of socialization to a stereotyped sex role has dominated social science research on women and has shaped the orientation of national groups that influence social policy. From this perspective women’s underrepresentation in educational administration is explained as a
combination of low aspirations, skill deficiencies, and discrimination (p. 319).

This challenge was manifested externally by and to females, incubated and nurtured internally by some females, externally by males, but ultimately produced by males through social conditioning. This challenge may act as a contributor to underrepresentation of female administrators in hiring discrepancies which causes them to have lower percentages than female teachers.

**Conclusion**

The literature on African American female principal leadership is situated between the intersections of race and gender. Reviewing leadership understandings according to race, the literature illustrates the construct of leadership has been based, researched, and patterned after concepts attributed to White male conceptions (Chin, 2004; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Exploring literature on the intersections of leadership and gender shows that African American females have been underresearched in comparison to their White female counterparts and face challenges that include sex-role and gender stereotyping, and the intersection within and beyond feminist understandings and circles (Adkison, 1981; Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo & Harris, 1994; Alston, 2005; Murtadha & Watts, 2005). This also shows the mainstream literature on gender and leadership is centered on two competing models, masculine instrumentality and feminine collaboration. Both models were created with the exclusion of African American females (including other minorities) and based on White males and females with middle class experiences and perception of values as the norm (Parker, 2001).
Overall, the literature on leadership suggests researchers have not taken advantage of actively studying school leadership of African American females until more recent times which ultimately creates a gap of information on their realities and practices. However, current literature is attempting to bridge this gap of information and illustrates African American women principals have distinguished leadership experiences in comparison to their White female and male counterparts (Loder, 2005a). In reference to school administrators, the research shows Black women are more likely to be hired as elementary school principals, administrative assistants, supervisors, and consultants. The research also shows that women usually assume their leadership positions in their mid 40’s to early 50’s, later than their male counterparts, Black and White. The literature further shows that women who receive those elementary school principalships are usually located in urban school districts with predominantly Black students (Tillman, 2004).

Centering research on roles and practices, the literature on African American women principals indicate their interpretation of the principal role is heavily rooted in motherhood with an emphasis on nurturing and caretaking (Loder, 2005a). This practice of othermothering has been used to describe the African American female principal as exhibiting, “othermothering—consistently nurturing, protecting, and encouraging students and holding herself responsible for their success” (Tillman, 2004, p. 127). Tillman (2004) also found that African American female principals exhibited caring, nurturing and ethno-humanist characteristics focused on empowering the students through their leadership interactions and function.
This chapter has detailed that African American female leaders need to be studied on their own terms and present a challenge to theories created about leadership because they are situated between intersections of race and gender. Through studies focused on their input and experiences, researchers will be able to add significant findings to an area of leadership that has been overlooked. The ultimate goal for researchers should be focused on closing the gap of information that exists in educational leadership. This study will assist in that mission.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in the previous two chapters, the current literature on leadership has been inadequate in capturing the leadership experiences of African American female leaders (Murtadha & Watts, 2005). In order to address this issue, this study explored African American female leadership by researching the leadership experiences of seven former African American female principals. More specifically, the project focused on the realities of seven former African American female principals who practiced in the states of Florida or Georgia by exploring the following: 1) How do African American female principals conceptualize principal roles, practices, and concept of power as educational leaders in the various communities they serve? and, 2) How do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions? As illustrated in the literature review, African American females are an active and growing population of school leaders that need to be further explored in order to ascertain a better understanding of their leadership experiences and practices (Grogan, 1999; Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007). This study illuminated those experiences.

Although limited studies have been found in the literature that detail certain practices and challenges for African American female principals, even fewer studies have been centered on their standpoints and Black feminist understandings. To understand African American female principals’ experiences, I employed a narrative life history approach. Emerging from the larger methodology of biography, narrative life history allowed me to explore the realities of the African American female principals.
according to the intersections of their perceptions and social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Through narrative life history, I created portraits of the seven former African American female principals. I chronicled their individual stories which, in turn, offered insight into how the intersections of gender and race affected their leadership experiences. This study contributed to existing leadership literature by isolating the experiences of African American female leadership, providing alternative narratives for a field that is already rich in literature on White male, White female and more recently, Black male leadership experiences.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the research design of this study and the rationale for choosing qualitative methodology. Next, I will describe the theoretical framework, rationale, logic, and basic concepts for the study. Third, I will discuss the data involved in the study through three sections: collection; analysis; validity and reliability. Lastly, I will summarize the concepts and issues discussed within the chapter.

**Research Design**

In order to chronicle the leadership experiences of African American female principals, I used qualitative methodology which facilitates the interpretation of the meanings associated with their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research is the most appropriate design for this kind of study because it allows for a “holistic overview of the context under study: its logic, its arrangements, its explicit and implicit rules” (p. 6). A key philosophical assumption of qualitative research is that individuals create reality through interaction with their social worlds (Merriam, 1998). In addition, qualitative studies involve:
understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives, not the researcher’s; using the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis; conducting fieldwork; using an inductive research strategy; and, focusing on process, meaning, and understanding through the production of richly descriptive portraits (Merriam, 1998, pp. 6-8).

This type of focus found in qualitative research is the most suitable design to examine, explore and understand leadership experiences in their natural setting versus a quantitative design that emphasizes understanding variables through scientific controls (Gay, 1996).

According to Merriam (1998), “Qualitative research implies a direct concern with experience as it is lived or felt or undergone” (p. 6). This study illuminated, directly and explicitly, the experiences of African American female leaders as told by their narratives. Due to negative stereotypes, inflated poverty and crime, high levels of unemployment, mortality rates, and racism all embedded within African American communities, illustrations of exemplary individuals among the “rank and file” are of extreme importance (West, 1993). This exemplary group of individuals within the African American community may include females that historically and currently lead without the same recognition, acknowledgement and research focus as their counterparts which include Black and White males, and White females. Through research on African American female leadership, this qualitative approach illuminated the contributions, sacrifices, failures, successes, understandings, and ultimate realities of African American female leaders. Qualitative research methodology assisted me in illuminating the stories of the African American female leaders as they were, negating stereotypical assumptions.
In this study, I used narrative life history methodology which emerges from the larger methodological approach of biography to explore the experiences of African American female leaders. Sound biographies address how people face living which includes their challenges, crises, and daily lives (Kridel, 1998). Reviewing the tenets of biographies, Creswell (1998) states:

A biographical study is the study of an individual and her or his experiences as told to the researcher or found in documents and archival material. Denzin defines the biographical method as the studied use and collection of life documents that describe turning moments in an individual's life. These accounts explore lesser lives, great lives, thwarted lives, lives cut short, or lives miraculous in their unapplauded achievement (pp. 47-48).

Each principal had her story and a unique set of circumstances that were best expressed through biographical methods. This method allowed me to examine their stories through personal, social, and historical contexts while identifying paramount themes in reference to their leadership experiences (Creswell, 2007). As such, biographies involve complex issues, challenges, and traditions that the researcher must deal with in order to adequately capture the subject(s) used for the study (Kridel, 1998).

As a form of biography, narrative life histories provide a way to explore complex issues and intricate knowledge of the lives of study participants. “Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories of life experiences of a single life or the lives of a smaller number of individuals” (Creswell, 2007, p. 55). In the context of this study, the participants were asked to share their experiences with leadership, as principals, and pivotal moments of their personal and professional experiences, as well as critical interactions of race and gender in their larger social world. This is consistent with Creswell’s (2007) assessment of narrative research who states, “narrative researchers
situate individual stories within participants; personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place)” (p. 56). Each principal story is a narrative centered on their story which is focused on their various contexts.

Even still, according to Kridel (1998) who examined the tenets involved with writing educational biographies and narrative research, narrative life histories are fundamental, popular, sound approaches used in biographies and educational studies specifically. Kridel (1998) states, “Indeed, biography and life-history, in a variety of forms, are basic to qualitative research” (p. 3). Even more specific to its use in this study, Kridel (1998) finds that academics use biographies to study university and school personnel. Based on the tenets of narrative life history, I was able to explore the experiences of the African American female principals through rich detailed stories placed within their interactions with the larger social world (Creswell, 1998, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Kridel, 1998; McGough, 2003).

Narrative life history is an accepted methodology that is currently used for exploring leadership among school administrators and principals. For example, in his study of 23 principals using a narrative life history approach, McGough (2003) argues that life histories allow subjects to be understood by using their own words to gain insight into their subjective perspectives. Being consistent with other researchers’ findings on the use of narrative life histories, McGough (2003) also reiterates that through the use of rich detailed stories, researchers are afforded a view into how the subjects make sense of their world within various social contexts. He continues the
discourse on this type of research by intimating its nature and results exist in a “learning story” which includes two premises which I explain now.

According to McGough (2003), the first premise in the learning story is centered on the participant’s inner dialogue which contains the organized and processed constructs of meaning as established over the lifetime of an individual. According to this concept, individuals make sense and resolve encountered (unique) problems in personal and professional areas through a unique and private story. This private story contains the individual’s concept of how the world works, his or her role within it, and how it is manifested in public (McGough, 2003).

The second premise of the learning story, “is that the learning story serves as a co-constructive mediator to one’s everyday agency in the world” (McGough, 2003, p. 450). According to this idea, an individual has the mental capacity for meaning making and creative thought which experiences a natural evolution according to the adaptation to changing environments by the individual. This ability is developed specifically through conversation. The conversation can be described as subjective linguistic representations that incorporate beliefs and desires about the world, its meaning, and one’s place in it. It acts as an essential element of human nature (McGough, 2003). McGough (2003) summarizes the importance of subjective linguistic representations by stating:

They are, in essence, meaning-rich private stories that influence what we learn from our environment and how we learn to affect our environment. In this way, they can be said to be the primary mediators in the co-construction process that produces both our selves and our reality (p. 450).
The combination of both premises of the learning stories establish realities based on concepts that exist in dialogue and are exhibited and manifested as meanings and perspectives.

In sum, “By listening to the multiple voices in biography and life-history research, one can reconstruct the remains of the lost, silenced lives of others” (Kridel, 1998, p. 72). Benham (1997) endorsing the use of narrative methodology introduces another benefit by stating, “It is through stories that we come to know our own values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, relationships, rituals, and traditions” (p. 282). Through this narrative life history approach, I chronicled the leadership experiences of the former African American female principals by exploring and documenting their individual narratives. I accomplished this by using their language through a research design, approach, and method that facilitates the understanding of the leadership experiences of African American female leaders as lived experiences. Next, I will explain Standpoint and Womanist Theory which comprise the theoretical framework I used to explore the principals’ leadership experiences.

**Theoretical Framework**

Although leadership theories and application of best practices may be a guideline for leadership in general, research on African American female leadership and its associated practices must include a conceptual framework that identifies and recognizes their distinct characteristics and leadership practices (Parker, 2001). The theoretical framework for this study was not only designed to explore African American female leadership, it reflects a design tailored to efficiently explore the research study questions. The first research question for this study asks how do African American
female principals conceptualize principal roles, practices, and concept of power as educational leaders in the various communities they serve. The second question asks how do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions. In order to answer these questions, I employed the use of Standpoint Theory to further explore their perceptions and a Womanist Tool to further explore the intersections of gender and race.

The two lenses used for this study, Standpoint Theory and a Womanist Tool, which I also described in the first chapter, allow me to explore African American female principal leadership experiences through their interpretations while simultaneously assessing their concepts of self-identity as African American females (King & Ferguson, 2001; Parker, 2001). Standpoint Theory underscores the African American females’ realities through their explanations of leadership and pivotal events, ultimately giving credence to their perceptions of reality (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). The Womanist Tool offers a deep insight into this reality by foregrounding their acceptance, understanding, and stage of feminist development within Black feminism (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996). Together, both lenses facilitated a deeper understanding of African American female leadership through the illumination of their points of view.

Standpoint Theory, the first lens, was used to center the research by highlighting and emphasizing the importance of the concepts and understandings of the African American female principals as a major component of reality (Parker, 2001). It aided in the general design, guided the questions of inquiry, and offered insight into African American female creations and concepts of leadership through their experiences which may include challenges based on racial and gender marginalization (Bloom &
The primary concept of Standpoint Theory is that the subjects’ reality should include their perceptions and viewpoints as valid indications of reality. A key component of Standpoint Theory is the belief that parts of society are marginalized and those that are marginalized can see the system as a whole (clearer picture of the whole society) because of their minority and marginalized positions. This position refers to an outsider within, giving the marginalized, in this case African American females, a clear vision of the intersections of class, race, and gender (Collins, 1986; Parker, 2001).

Standpoint Theory turns our attention to women of diverse backgrounds by illuminating the development of alternative forms of knowledge for research on women, instead of only using the traditional field of White middle-class women to address issues for all women (Parker, 2001). As Parker (2001) states:

Black women standpoints are a valuable resource for understanding leadership. If organizational leadership is understood as a process of negotiating meanings within contradictory and paradoxical situations to forge viable solutions, then we would do well to listen closely to what the experiences of Black women leaders can reveal (p. 48).

Standpoint theory does not replace the traditional research on women in education. It adds to the traditional literature by including African American female experiences through their voices. Equipping researchers with traditional and diverse studies such as this current study, provides the field of education with a more comprehensive view of female leadership.

Drawing from the work of King and Ferguson (2001), I employed a Womanist frame for the second lens. This theoretical lens is an extension of a feminist point of view but tailored for African American females. According to researchers, using a Womanist lens, “means that first, we recognize and honor the strengths that Black
professional women bring to the process of self discovery and personal development” (p. 129). King and Ferguson (2001) continue by describing a process of: building on the capability of Black women’s capacities for supporting and developing each other; recognizing that Black women appreciate and prefer women’s culture, emotional flexibility, strength; and, emphasizing documentation of women’s lives and developing an understanding of women’s issues through their own words.

The Womanist Model details four stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. The first stage in the Womanist Model, the pre-encounter stage, involves acceptance of traditional sex roles; and denial of societal bias. The second stage, encounter, involves questioning and confusion about gender roles, and tentative exploration of solutions to role conflicts. The third stage, immersion-emersion, is focused on: an externally based feminist stance; hostility toward men; idealization of women; and, an intense relationship with other women. Lastly, the fourth stage, internalization, involves an internally defined and integrated female identity without undue reliance on either traditional roles or feminist points of view (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996, p. 625).

The Womanist Model was used to interpret the self identity of each formal principal by examining their stories and assessing their understandings according to each stage. The use of this lens will helped me identify where the African American principals were in their Black feminist development and offered insight into a critical aspect of their concept of leadership, including its evolution. This explanation or understanding enabled me to understand how they functioned as leaders and its ultimate influence on their leadership concepts and practices.
In summation, through this study, Standpoint Theory contributed to the exploration of African American female principals by providing a framework that allowed me to look beyond gender stereotypes and base findings on the actual experiences of African American females (Parker, 2001; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). As Standpoint Theory is predicated on the idea that one’s gender is associated with meaning making, it offered an excellent framework through which to understand the intricacies, nuances, and realities involved with being an African American female leader. As discussed in the literature review, the research illustrated the existence of African American females were quite often defined, accepted, and understood according to social stereotypes attributed to females within a larger social world (Adkison, 1981; Palmer, 1983; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Standpoint theory equipped me with a lens that had the ability to create alternative narratives to accurately capture the essence of African American female leadership experiences and realities through their words, actions, and thoughts by illuminating those interpretations and intersections (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003).

Using the Womanist Tool further equipped me with the ability to define the Black feminist positions of the African American female leaders based on their narratives explained through Standpoint Theory (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996). This tool was instrumental and coupled with Standpoint theory, assisted me with detailing specific viewpoints of African American women within their unique standpoints. As researchers conduct studies on African American females, it is not only important to understand that they have unique standpoints, it is paramount that we also ascertain the specifics of said standpoints. According to Parks, Carter, and Gushue (1996), the Womanist Model
focuses on an internally defined identity that shows levels of progression from acceptance of traditional sex roles to an internally defined identity based on an intersection of traditional sex roles and feminism. The examination of their stories through the four stages of the Womanist Tool complimented Standpoint Theory by further expounding on African American females’ viewpoints and perceptions by situating it within the theory of Black feminism.

Data Collection

Sample. The overall purpose of the study was to explore and document the experiences of African American female principals through their interpretations of what it means to be African American, female, and principals in the various communities in which they lead. I drew from the research design of Loder (2005b) who studied the challenges and advancements of African American female principals and employed the use of a sample consisting of principals from different generations.

Based on Loder’s (2005b) use of different generations to add diversity to her study sample, and Murtadha and Watts’ (2005) contention that historical narratives link the past to the present, I expanded this study to include former principals who practiced at different stages and decades. As a result, the study was comprised of seven former African American female principals who practiced administration in the states of Florida or Georgia. According to Murtadha and Watts (2005), the linking of the past to the present suggests common threads of meaning for theoretical construction on how African American leaders worked in the Black communities. Choosing administrators who practiced during different decades equipped my study with a diverse set of subjects that were in varied historical contexts, intersections of leadership, gender, race, and
reflection upon said leadership. However, to ensure the sample was more diverse among African American female principals, I also chose principals at different grade levels and locales as explained in the following paragraph.

As discussed, the seven principals were former practicing administrators in the states of Florida or Georgia, and chosen to represent diverse locales such as their respective geographic region and the nature of the municipality (suburban, rural, urban). The statistics in the literature suggest more females are prevalent in elementary principalships and offer a rich resource for capturing the experiences, perceptions, and realities of African American females (Grogan, 1999; Alston, 2000). However, female principals at the secondary level also exist and their stories should be illuminated. My sample therefore contained leaders at both levels which was identified through purposive sampling (Gay, 1996). Using former practicing principals from different time periods also allowed me to study participants who are situated in a more diverse historical and social context. Since narrative life histories involve the interpretations and perceptions of participants in their larger social worlds (Creswell, 1998; Kridel, 1998), exploring former principals from different timeframes enabled me to encompass a wider range of experiences and interpretations in different historical and social contexts.

I used snowball and chain sampling, forms of purposive sampling, to select the seven former principals for the study. Purposive sampling is a method of selecting specific cases or subjects to provide rich data for qualitative studies (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Snowball and chain sampling involves “asking well-situated people to recommend cases to study” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 179). I identified the seven former practicing principals based on prior knowledge and using my connections within
the College of Education at Florida State University. Drawing on recommendations from current practicing administrators and school officials, the seven former principals were identified and added to the sample population. Initial contact for participants were made via email and mail, soliciting their involvement with a synopsis of the study, recruitment letter and consent form. Each principal identified for the study were given a pseudonym for their name and associated school.

**Interviews.** Drawing from other research using qualitative methodology to explore leadership experiences and practices among principals, I employed the use of interviews (Case, 1997; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; McGough, 2003; Loder, 2005a; Loder, 2005b; Loder, 2005c). According to Merriam (1998), interviews are necessary “when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (p. 72). Narrative life histories focus on turning points and pivotal moments in individual lives (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; McGough, 2003). Semi-structured interviews allow access to these points and moments because they allow each former African American female principal to describe their experiences through their own words while enabling me to direct them to specifically discuss issues pertinent to leadership experiences. Through this type of interview design, I lead the discussion topic within a given range focusing on leadership experiences while avoiding controlling or limiting their answers. Based on the variety of issues that materialized during the first set of interviews, I conducted a second set of interviews to clarify meanings, themes, and understandings, by further exploring the histories of each principal.

Since life narratives involve a deep examination into a specific subject, I conducted two semi-structured interviews. The first semi-structured interview was
focused on background information and detailing the life history of each principal. Drawing from Kridel (1998), the primary focus of this first interview was to construct the lives and social realities of the African American female principals according to their own terms and voices. This re-definition of educational and leadership experiences within the African American female principals began with them providing baseline data, which included: ethnicity, age, title, area of certification, years in administration, years in the profession, teaching experience, and the highest degree earned. Next, consistent with McGough (2003), I asked the principals to generally describe their life experiences, pivotal moments, and identify events from their childhood and adult life that have been particularly formative.

During the second interview, also drawing from McGough (2003), I employed “perspective interviewing.” This approach is centered on asking the participants deep and probing questions (in a set of interviews), referencing how they handled unfamiliar situations to ascertain a better understanding of how their thoughts and actions interacted to form a professional perspective. As the subjects answered, a “story” was created that offered insight into their cognitive processes during pivotal moments of the events. Consistent with McGough (2003), the results yielded “a listing of immediate influences” on their “thoughts and actions, and a sort of archeological unlayering of key veins of thought toward a critical revelation of the origins and evolution of a professional perspective” (p. 454). As the “story” was being developed, it expanded into networked stories that offered personal insight into each interview (McGough, 2003). For this study, I expanded the use of perspective interviewing to include and encompass leadership experiences of African American females beyond unfamiliar situations,
focusing on pivotal moments of situations that facilitated their self-concept and application of leadership.

Expanding the use of perspective interviewing during the second interview enabled me to explore the actions and thought processes of the principals in the study. Like McGough (2003), I drew on their answers to analyze and make a network of stories and their intersections to create a larger story. Ultimately, this revealed their leadership perspectives and experiences through the transformational events. Although each principal's story was based on their individual narrative, based on the examination of the literature that exists on African American female leadership, several categories emerged from the interviews. According to research, African American female leadership is ultimately situated between the intersections of: leadership practices, understandings, concepts, influences; gender, including concepts and understandings; and, race, including concepts and understandings (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Case, 1997; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Delany & Rogers, 2004; Tillman, 2004; Loder, 2005a; Loder, 2005b).

Data Analysis

For data analysis, I followed the analytical methods of Miles and Huberman (1994) to assist with creating the narratives of the African American female principals. More explicitly, employing Creswell’s (1998) model and techniques for collecting data and data analysis under the biographical approach, I identified an objective set of experiences; examined the experiences; developed a chronology of the participants’ events; and, identified factors that shaped their concepts and realities of leadership. Those steps were performed by grouping and interpreting the collected data from the
interviews. This was a critical part of the study referred to as coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “Coding is analysis” (p. 56). Based on this interpretation, coding for my study related to organizing the data into themes. As I collected the data from the principals, I began the coding process (organization of themes) as explained in the following paragraphs.

After the first set of interviews, I transcribed each interview and conducted an extensive analysis of my findings on the life histories of each principal. During this step, I explored the narrative history storyline created for each participant with a focus on the intersections of gender, race, and leadership. This allowed me to identify patterns, circumstances, and influences involved with shaping their realities in reference to leadership while navigating through their larger social worlds. I began my analyses by grouping the information from the interviews into three classes of themes: descriptive, interpretive, and patterns. Descriptive themes are straightforward and require little interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Drawing from McGough (2003), in addition to Parks, Carter, and Gushue (1996), those themes consisted of categories that were initially discovered in reference to leadership roles, practices, influences, perception of power and intersections of race, and gender.

The second class of themes, interpretative, consisted of researcher understandings as I became more knowledgeable about information gathered from study participants. This class of themes included an initial group of nine categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994):

1. Setting/Context, referring to general information in reference to the principals’ surroundings;
2. Definition of the situation, referring to how the principals understood and perceived leadership, race, and gender;

3. Perspectives, referring to the way the principals performed leadership roles as principals;

4. Ways of thinking about people and objects, referring to how principals perceived their roles and others as principals;

5. Processed, referring to turning points and evolution of principal practices and understandings;

6. Activities, referring to routine activities;

7. Events, referring to epiphanies and specific activities;

8. Strategies, referring to the principals’ tactics and methods for goals, failures; and,

9. Relationships and social structure, referring to the interactions and understandings of the principals in a social context (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Those codes were detailed and used to form the third class of codes which identified common themes of individual principal reality and similar or dissimilar realities for all study participants.

Patterns, the third class of codes, allowed me to identify and establish a more explanatory and inferential group of codes that assisted with forming the principals’ stories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By using this class of codes, I was able to document each principal story individually and compare that story with other study participants to document a larger story of all participating principals, collectively. Addressing the first research question, I detailed and explored how the stories of each principal created their perceptions and circumstances in reference to their concept of leadership, leadership practices, roles, and power. Focusing on the second research question, I
detailed and explored how each principal story was situated within the intersections of race and gender as interpreted through the use of the Womanist Model. By documenting life lessons and patterns of socialization, their concepts of leadership, self, and the larger social world was revealed creating a coherent narrative of who each principal was as a leader and African American female.

Based on my analysis of the first set of interviews, I conducted a second interview with the African American female principals to explore their stories, perspectives, and experiences in further detail. More specifically, the second interview for each principal was focused on themes and patterns that emerged during the first set of interviews. At this interview, I first presented each principal with a summary of their narrative life history and prompted them to expound upon how their leadership took form within their larger social worlds through a new list of questions. By exploring their experiences with leadership, race, and gender individually, I was able to establish norms and basis of understandings relative to their individual lives.

By further exploring the intersections of leadership, race, and gender, I was able to further navigate their lives and create an overall story centered on their leadership experiences. The second set of interviews acted as a method to further explore life lessons and patterns of socialization to construct a more complete narrative of their leadership experiences. During that time, I engaged in what Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to as revising codes which consisted of examining and amending original codes as new information or revelations were discovered (Felicia and Grace did not participate in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} interview).
Drawing from McGough (2003) who also used life narratives, my overall analyses of the data were treated to a cross-case analysis that helped me identify common themes among the subjects in reference to their leadership experiences and perspectives. As I analyzed the themes identified from the first and second set of interviews, I explored the themes discovered during the interviews, such as the intersections of: leadership practices, understandings, concepts, influences; gender, including concepts and understandings; and, race, including concepts and understandings. This allowed me to create a more complete narrative of the principals’ realities individually and also enabled me to note commonalities or differences among each principal. By recording their stories in the first interview, clarifying and further exploring their stories in the second interview, I was able to create a more comprehensive story of their lives according to them, not myself as researcher.

All data analyses listed above were performed through what Miles and Huberman (1994) described as three concurrent flows of activity for qualitative data: data reduction; data display; and, conclusion drawing. Although conclusion drawing is listed as the third flow of activity, I will discuss it first because in application, it is present through all phases of data collection and analysis. Conclusion drawing and verification, the third flow of activity, consists of the explanations and patterns associated with the collected and compressed data of research studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), although this process is considered the third step, it must be emphasized that from the first strand of collected data, a qualitative researcher “is beginning to decide what things mean--is noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions” (p. 11). During
this flow of activity, the researcher forms conclusions based on the themes, patterns, and verifies the information through a review of the notes and input from fellow colleagues upon the conclusion of all collected data.

Relative to this study, as I began to collect data during the first set of interviews and as the principals’ life stories were forming through their discussion on leadership, influences, race, gender, and associated intersections, I made note of occurring themes and placed them into categories. Being consistent with the activities of conclusion drawing, I formed conclusions based on the themes from the data, verified them through triangulation and a review from a colleague (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also explored the intersections of leadership, race, and gender of each principal with the other principals in the study to identify similarities and differences among all principals. Lastly, I asked an identified researcher in the field of educational leadership at Florida State University to verify and assess my analyses and overall conclusions by looking at my findings and assessing the appropriateness of my conclusions. As the researcher, I focused on the activities associated with this step to ensure that it was being performed during every phase of data analysis.

In data reduction, the first listed flow of activity, the main focus involves simplifying and abstracting data from information in the field. This process entails transforming the data gathered from the interviews and field notes into an evolving story through codes and patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As explained, I collected the data during the interviews and continued to explore themes and organize it into a story by further exploring and detailing the information paramount to the leadership experiences of the African American female principals. As described, this particular
activity occurred twice, first in the initial set of interviews, then in the second set of interviews. The coding was accomplished through researcher reflection, interpretation, and the use of NVIVO, a software application designed to organize themes in qualitative research. NVIVO provided me with the tools to more efficiently identify and categorize their concepts associated with leadership, race, gender, and their larger social worlds (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As predicted, the categories also included concepts associated with marginality due both to gender and race, and principal practices based on female and male leadership norms.

Lastly, data display which is listed as the second flow of activity refers to the compressed form of information and basically represents the product of the data reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “Generically, a display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (p. 11). Upon the conclusion of organizing the information gathered from the interviews into codes and categories, I devised a scheme that allowed a comprehensive view of the information in a coherent format. The format included matrices, graphs, and a detailed layout of the codes and themes that were formed during data reduction. Once again, the activity occurred after the initial set of interviews and then upon the conclusion of the second set of interviews.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative studies must be designed so that they have reasonable expectations of reliability and validity. The basic issues for biographies in reference to reliability and validity lie in “where validity is satisfied if conclusions are well grounded (including demonstrating why alternative conclusions are not compelling) and reliability is satisfied
when data are dependable” (Kridel, 1998, p. 29). According to Kridel (1998), the standards associated with reliability and validity inform researchers that interpretations must be guided by that data and careful measures should be taken and followed before conclusion drawing. The reliability of a qualitative study refers to “whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers’ methods” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). The validity of a qualitative study refers to whether or not the information from the study is plausible, sturdy, and confirmable (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1998).

I used triangulation, member checks, and peer examination to address the validity of the study. In reference to triangulation, I employed the use of a researcher administering the interview tool (myself), note-taking, and audio recording each interview with each participant. I also engaged in member checking by asking the subjects to verify the collected data and interpretations by presenting them with reflective notes and a excerpts of information upon completion of each interview. Before I reached my final conclusion for the study, I introduced each principal with my observations and interpretations. Presenting that information was focused on having the principals verify or disconfirm my interpretation of the gathered data. Lastly, I asked a colleague to review the results and derived conclusions for peer examination. Upon receiving feedback from my colleague in reference to the consistency of the noted themes, patterns and conclusions gathered during the data collection, I re-examined my notes, recordings, and ensured the discovered or revealed reality(ies) matched the data and the objectives of the study were addressed (Merriam, 1998).
The reliability of the study was addressed through the explanation of the theoretical frameworks, disclosure of potential researcher bias, use of triangulation, and clear audit trail of the study (Merriam, 1998). Drawing from the research on bias, when conducting biographies, researchers have to be cognizant of several types of biases. For this study, I discovered three potential biases. Miles and Huberman (1994) state a qualitative researcher should be cognizant of potential biases while conducting and analyzing research. According to the researchers, challenges could arise due to my implicit concepts. I first disclosed that I am an African American male reared by African American females who witnessed various elements of leadership. Leadership, by my account, that affords me the opportunity to appreciate education. So, I have experienced strong leadership from African American females. Through this disclosure and review of notes taken during the interviews, I separated my experience and ensured that the analyses of the African American female principals in this study were as objective as possible.

Secondly, biographies in nature also face additional challenges of researcher bias. Biographies traditionally focus on and reveal success stories from a male perspective (Kridel, 1998). According to the literature on biographical research, researchers have a challenge “writing about female subjects” because the “traditional pattern of biography as we know it” is based on the “narrative of a male life” (Kridel, 1998, p. 91). Biographers traditionally focus on and reveal success stories that are centered on accomplishments from a male perspective, which centers on things that can be experienced through accolades and public testaments. This practice creates a “half-truth” and incomplete “story.” However, “This kind of high selectivity—a polite
falsification of the life, if you will—is justified because traditional biography attempts to inscribe moral norms” (Kridel, 1998, p. 92). When applied to my study, this created a challenge for research on women because the context of what is important and paramount to their successes has not been traditionally researched. I remembered this frame as I conducted the study and appropriately deciphered and navigated issues of importance as relayed by the former African American female principals.

Thirdly and closely related to the second potential bias, my position as a male presented a challenge to this study. Based on my gender socialization, I have been conditioned to pattern myself after the male gender role stereotypes which include a masculine view of leadership. Researchers have stated the masculine model of leadership is centered on leaders emphasizing initiating structure and being autonomous while exhibiting strength, self-efficacy, and control. In addition, the male model also emphasizes aggressiveness, independence, risk-taking, rationality, and intelligence as being signs or characteristics of leadership (Parker, 2001). Trinidad and Normore (2004) adds to this discourse and state that masculine gender roles are centered on objectivity, logic, analysis, and decisions.

As I conducted this study, I was cognizant of this potential area of tension between researcher bias and actual findings. It was important that I recognized and realized that my learned position on leadership was male oriented as I interpreted the data. Conversely, I also needed to be aware that males have been conditioned to believe that female gender roles in leadership are based on emotions, sensitivity, expressiveness, and intuition (Trinidad & Normore, 2004). Awareness of those factors were paramount in reference to my objectivity. It was imperative that I interpret the
leadership experiences of the African American female principals as value free observations which could also be enhanced through triangulation. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or, at least, do not contradict it” (p. 266). Using the strategies as previously listed and addressing reliability specifically, I explained my assumptions, theory behind the study; used triangulation; and left a clear audit trail outlined in the methods chapter of this study. The use of these three strategies for reliability establishes whether the design of the study was sound and increased researcher objectivity (Merriam, 1998).

The reliability and validity of the study was addressed through the aforementioned qualitative standards. The potential biases that I am aware of were disclosed and caused me to concentrate my efforts on maintaining a high level of scrutiny in the area of objectivity for this study. I was cognizant of the need to separate former leadership experiences of the researcher as a student, son, nephew, and friend, from leadership experiences and realities of the subjects of the study. Ultimately, the research questions and methodology helped ensure that I remembered that biographies on women have been highly concentrated on successful events that were considered private versus the traditional male successes and public attestations. Lastly, I was aware of the need to disclose any other potential biases or issues in writing if they were would have materialized.

Limitations

In the previous section, I discussed researcher bias, a potential major weakness for qualitative studies and provided a strategy for reducing the risk. In addition to
researcher bias, weaknesses associated with the qualitative design can also be found in: labor intensive circumstance of data collection; time demands for processing and organizing data; and, the utility of conclusions in reference to policy and actions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 2). Specifically addressing this project, I noted two additional weaknesses that included the inherent limitations of isolating gender, race, and region.

Societal issues contain more than just race and gender. For example, class and age differences between the former African American female principals were examined in a limited context. Future research may want to explore the impact of race, class, and age differences in a more expanded context in relation to African American women’s leadership. Also, the participants in the study were restricted to former African American female principals in the South Eastern part of the United States. Realities, practices, and challenges may be limited to that region. In other words, school leadership practices may be influenced by regional practices and assumptions that may not extend to other parts of the country.

Conclusion

The research on African American female leadership has focused on school superintendents, faculty members in higher education, principals, teachers, and females in the corporate sector (Bell, 1990; Case, 1997; Alfred, 2001; Green & King, 2001; King & Ferguson, 2001; Waring, 2003; Tillman, 2004). Despite this research, there is still a need to explore in further detail the topic of African American females and leadership in the field of education (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000). Simply stated, leadership of African American females has been narrowly defined. As a result, few studies have been conducted and until recently did not concentrate on the unique dynamics involved with
being African American and female simultaneously. Research on African American women in educational administration is very small and a large portion of the literature that exists places them in a larger context of women in administration (Adkison, 1981; Bell, 1990; Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Perkins, 1996; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Alston, 2005; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

A more comprehensive set of realities for African American female leaders in education can be used to form better policy initiatives. With more African American female principals being chosen to lead schools that are considered tumultuous situations and challenging entities, the educational system potentially loses valuable solutions that could be applied to schools on a system wide basis if their practices and leadership are not detailed and explored (Adkison, 1981; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Although researchers are slowly addressing this issue, Murtadha and Watts (2005) state, “Current theorists remain inadequate in their treatment of Black women, nominalizing their work with brief nods to their presence in the workplace” (p. 605). African American female leaders and more specifically their practices and understandings, could offer a diverse set of solutions to a diverse set of challenges.

It is paramount that the field of education expands its knowledge of its leaders. Although valuable, pertinent, and in many cases efficient, the current set of educational leadership theories are not comprehensive. Leadership literature cannot remain stagnant when leaders are becoming increasingly dynamic. Waring (2003) states, “The importance of understanding the identity of leaders, as well as their skill sets, can contribute much to our understanding of leaders and leadership” (p. 42). Waring (2003)
continues by stating the research on leadership and management commonly treats all women as the same. Through a sound research design and proven approach, this study illuminated African American female leaders, using their voice to establish their reality(ies), and existence, offering the field of education a more comprehensive understanding of its leaders. This study has equipped the field of education with more knowledge and learning of African American female principals, and facilitated a progression in leadership literature.
CHAPTER 4
PRINCIPAL PORTRAITS

In this chapter, I will present a profile and portrait of each retired principal, allowing me to present and explore each participant’s life experience as an educator. I will use this chapter to create a baseline portrait of each former principal to further contextualize their stories (McGough, 2003; Creswell, 2007). As discussed in previous chapters, narrative life histories provide a framework for exploring how individuals make sense of their world through rich detailed stories (Creswell, 1998; Kridel, 1998; McGough, 2003).

For the portraits, I will first describe my initial perception of each former principal and how they approached the interviews. Second, I will present the basic foundation of each former principal by denoting their demographic information according to: age; described ethnicity; family composition, socio-economic status, parental education levels and educational influence; highest degree achieved; number of teaching years, administrative years; and, grade level assignments. Third, while chronicling their experiences, I will highlight pivotal moments that helped shape their individual learning stories. All seven participants were asked to describe pivotal moments of their time as principal. These moments helped shape their leadership understandings, practices, and careers. As suggested in the literature, pivotal moments involve unfamiliar situations and the associated thoughts and actions to address them (McGough, 2003). According to this idea in narrative life histories, a pivotal moment can be explained through the actions that occur during an event. During this process, an event occurs for the participants. As a result, inner dialogue occurs within the participants who perform an
action based on the dialogue. Lastly, the entire event including the taken action becomes part of the participant’s learning story.

Each participant described pivotal moments that assisted with shaping their understandings and practices of the principalship. In the following paragraphs, I will describe a pivotal moment from each participant’s learning story that assisted them with their understandings and associated practices as principals. The exploration of their learning stories allowed me to further examine how they organized and processed their interpretation of how they fit into the schools as the educational leaders. In other words, I was able to see how they interpreted and reacted to the events as African American female principals.

The last section of this chapter will summarize the former principals’ experiences by highlighting similarities and differences with their collective backgrounds and stories from early life through their tenure as educational leaders.

**Principal Profiles**

For the purpose of the portraits, the seven former principals will be grouped and divided according to their age range. I do this because findings in prior research on educational leaders has detailed that African American female principals born in the same generation have similar experiences. In addition, the research also illustrates that African American female principals born in different generations had some similar and different experiences (Loder, 2005b). In addition, grouping and listing the former principals according to their ages, allows me a greater understanding of each former principal by further conceptualizing important aspects of their historical and cultural contexts in which they are situated. Reviewing the interview dialogue collected in this
study revealed three major age ranges for all seven participants, ages between: 70-80 (two participants); 60-70 (two participants); 50-60 (three participants). The portraits will be discussed and listed according to those three groups.

**Participant Profiles: Ages between 70-80**

**Geraldine**

Mrs. Geraldine is an African American female approximately 5’8 or 5’9 with a medium brown complexion and short hair. She is between the ages of seventy and eighty years old, born in the 1930’s. She walks confidently and with a “command” of respect. More specifically, her movements appear to be sure, directed towards her destination. As we conducted the interviews, her comments were reflective and forthcoming. She displayed a sense of humor and issued very practical statements along with educational concepts. It appeared she was very focused and approached the interviews in a professional manner. If I could describe her in one word, based on her approach to the interviews, it would be, (all) business.

Geraldine is a retired African American female principal from a rural county in South Georgia. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as a “Black American.” Mrs. Geraldine comes from a middle-class family of thirteen with seven sisters, three brothers, and both parents in the household. According to Geraldine, her parents were farmers, property owners and the family was able to sustain themselves. In reference to her parents’ education levels, both parents experienced some type of formal education. Her mother graduated from high school and father completed the ninth grade. Overall, Geraldine’s household was structured with both parents setting a strong foundation built on work and education.
As Geraldine recalled, her mother and father jointly emphasized the importance of education. “They required us to go to school and do what needed to be done and would not take any excuses. We had to go. We had to learn, had to behave.” Geraldine described her parents as being very strict hard workers on their family farm. However, the parents’ focus for their children was on education. Although the children worked on the farm, the parents never let them stay out of school to work. She and her siblings did not have the option of “dropping out” of school. This was progressive thinking because according to Geraldine, other families would allow their kids to miss school or “drop-out” to work in the fields. Her parents also introduced her to a teaching role as a young girl by assigning her to babysit younger siblings and neighborhood children when her older siblings and other adults would go to work in the fields. The influence of her parents and responsibilities as a young girl, created a basic understanding of hard work and an emphasis on the importance of education.

Using the work ethic and emphasis on education learned as a youth, Geraldine chose a career in education and eventually attained two Master Degrees. She received her first teaching job in 1955, one year after the monumental verdict of Brown vs. Board of Education. As she progressed in her career, she was eventually assigned three head principalships that took her through the end of her career. In 1974 she became a principal of an elementary school with approximately 160 students. In 1982, she became the principal of a primary school with approximately 300 students. Her third and last appointment came in 1991 where she assumed leadership of a middle school with 300 students. All of Geraldine’s principalships were in Title I schools. In addition, two of the three schools had a majority of African American faculty. Mrs. Geraldine retired in
1992 ending her career of 37 years in the field of education. She spent 24 of those years as an administrator.

During her career in education, as a teacher, Geraldine was very focused on improving the lives of her students. This focus and intensity would cause her to openly disagree with her head administrator who she would eventually replace. Geraldine’s philosophy as an educator was to exhibit compassion but communicate accurately. When discussing how she communicated at work, Geraldine stated, “I’m not good at pretending. I’m just not.” This mindset coupled with her parents focus on education would drive her motivations and decisions throughout her career. As she continued to talk, the tone of her teaching and administrative focus became very clear. Geraldine meant what she said and said what she meant.

An example of her directness and focus was revealed when we discussed her educational background. She informed me she had been a basketball player at the collegiate level on scholarship. As I continued to listen, she made sure I was well informed on how she excelled in the sport. Her point was to show me how her high level of intensity began with her babysitting younger siblings, neighborhood children and continued throughout her life. According to Geraldine, comparing her focus as a leader to her days as a basketball player, “I wanted to be successful, but I wanted people to act in a certain way…I wanted to win and wanted everybody to play as hard as I did. You see what I’m saying?” She continued by suggesting that all things have to be completed in a correct manner with your best effort.

When we isolated her experiences as a principal, Geraldine spent a considerable time explaining what she believed to be a vital aspect of leadership, attitude. According
to Geraldine, “Your attitude is a great asset to leadership.” She explained an atmosphere where she challenged her teachers to learn new strategies and skills to increase their effectiveness with the students. At the same time, as the head administrator, she made sure they had the funding and time to attend training. As she explained these points, she would quite often smile remembering her time as a student. According to her, being her teacher must have been challenging because even as a student she was very ambitious. Overall, Geraldine stated she enjoyed her career and would choose to be an administrator again if life offered her the chance. When I asked her what was her perceived role as principal, I was not surprised when she stated, “I was the principal that helped parents get where they needed to be.”

Geraldine’s pivotal moment occurred during an exchange with a parent shortly after receiving her first principalship. According to Geraldine, a White female parent was displeased with a decision she made about a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting. This parent was very influential in the community in reference to financial status. The parent visited the school one day and confronted Geraldine about her decision in a very disrespectful manner. Recalling this event, Geraldine stated, “She came in one day and she (was) just cussing me good. She said what she had to say and turned around.” This exchange occurred in the school in front of her faculty. Geraldine did not appreciate this interaction and decided to respond to the disrespectful act by the influential community member.

Geraldine’s response to the parent was very abrupt and just as abrasive. According to her, she stated to the parent, “Well, I just, wait, just a minute. You don’t leave yet. You don’t come here and cuss me out…I deserve the right to do the same for
you, if that’s what I want to do.” The parent calmed down and Geraldine diffused the situation without using obscene language. This was a pivotal moment because in that interaction, she was able to “prove” herself to the parent and actually gain an important ally in the community. Geraldine concluded by stating, “And so I told her…I deserve more respect. You don’t abuse me like that…I had to straighten her out, and of course, we got to be good friends after that…” Geraldine’s decision to challenge the affluent and influential parent was even more critical than she initially realized. Upon the conclusion of this exchange, her secretary confided in her that the parent used to talk to the former principal in that manner, “come and cuss him out,” apparently as a usual occurrence.

**Josephine**

Mrs. Josephine is an African American female approximately 5’5 or 5’6 with a medium brown complexion and short hair. She is between the ages of seventy and eighty years old, born during the 1930’s. She walks confidently and moves in a way that suggests she is in full control. More specifically, her movements do not convey her being overwhelming or in a “bullying” position. Instead, her presence indicates she is in control of her interactions and will conduct herself according to her own set level of participation. As we conducted the interviews, her comments were reflective and quite often redirected with a quick statement of advice on pedagogical strategies and professional behavior. She displayed a sense of humor that usually reinforced her technical comments with practical language. Her comments were also steered towards African Americans in the community in general, beyond just the educational arena, placing an emphasis on her role, place, and activities in the community. It appeared she was focused on instructed which included given me advice on how to approach the
Black community in an uplifting manner. If I could describe her in one word, based on her approach to the interviews, it would be, activist.

Josephine is a retired African American female principal from a rural county in South Georgia. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as “Negro.” Mrs. Josephine comes from a middle-class family of three that also included her mother and father until the age of eleven when her mother and father separated and her mother became the primary “single” parent. According to Josephine, her mother received a Bachelor’s Degree and was a teacher. She did not discuss the education level of her father. However, Josephine stated her mother was a big influence and showed her the importance of teaching, “To her, that was the most important profession in the world.”

As Josephine recalled, her mother was an elementary school teacher who eventually sent her to college as a single parent. She continued to state how her mother set an example focused on her receiving an education because of the respectability of the position. According to Josephine:

My mother was very encouraging. She always wanted me to teach because she was a teacher. That’s about all we could do at that time when I came up. You know, it was really all, you know, if you were a teacher, that was it.

The influence of Josephine’s mother, including modeling being a teacher, created an image and importance placed on a career in education.

Using her mother as a model of a woman in a respectable profession, Josephine chose a career in education and eventually attained a Master’s Degree. She received her first teaching job in 1957, three years after Brown vs. Board of Education. During her career, she was assigned one principalship to an elementary school in 1978 with
approximately 800 students. The assignment was to a Title I school that contained a majority of African American faculty and students. Mrs. Josephine retired in 1987 after nine years at this school, ending her career of 30 years in the field of education.

As an educator, Josephine spent most of her years as a teacher. As she recalled the experiences of her career as an administrator, she stated the experiences as a teacher and being the child of a teacher, guided her decisions as an administrator. As discussed above, teaching was in her family background because of her mother. She explained, “Soon after I finished high school, teaching was, basically, the only professional job that Black people could really get.” However, to Josephine, teaching was not about coping, it was about empowerment. This understanding would become more clear as she continued to discuss her focus and experiences as an educator.

When discussing her educational career, Josephine identified two events that acted as her pivotal moments and helped shape her understandings about leadership prior to her becoming an administrator. Although these events occurred prior to her principalship, these moments would have the greatest impact on her educational career. The first event occurred during her formative educational years at the collegiate level. Josephine wanted to attend the local college to continue her education upon graduating from high school. However, due to strictly enforced segregation laws, she had to attend a historically Black college that was about a three hour drive from her home. On this subject she stated, “I’m not militant about it. I’m not angry about it, but that was really important to me to come back and make a difference in my community.” She used her denial of access as motivation to be the best educator and focused on empowering her community to be the best and highly educated.
The second event that shaped her career occurred during the first stages of integration within her county. According to Josephine, at this time she was a veteran teacher and reassigned from her all Black school (students, teachers, administrators) to a school with a White male administrator and White teachers. During this time, a young White female college student was given the opportunity to become a teaching assistant, preparing her for the field of education. After reviewing the faculty, she chose Josephine. Shortly after her assistantship started, the college student confided in Josephine, and told her the principal discouraged her from working with the new “Black teacher.”

As Josephine continued to inquire about the encounter, she learned the principal told the student, “Well, we’ve got a second grade teacher in there that’s Black and I just don’t know what she can do.” Josephine promised to never disclose what the college student told her and they worked very hard for the students that year. This year ended with Josephine winning teacher of the year in the school, county and eventually being declared state runner-up. Josephine stated she never discussed this with her principal and he died never knowing his perception of her. This was the tone of her leadership, to make a difference regardless of the circumstances. When discussing her focus on this issue, she illustrated her initial focus on education and stated, “It was my determination to make a difference in my community and in my race, and of course, this was in my mind as I pursued educational training.”
Participant Profiles: Ages between 60-70

Felicia

Mrs. Felicia is an African American female approximately 5’8 with a lighter brown complexion and medium length hair. She is between the ages of sixty and seventy years old. She has a medium-brisk walk and body language that appears to be focused on getting her to any destination in an expeditious manner. As I observed her, I noticed her movements and gestures appeared to be used in an efficient and sufficient manner. More specifically, her movements and gestures seemed to be absent of excess. For example, if she could answer a question in three words, it appeared she would not exceed that limit. As we conducted the interview, she gave reflective answers and quite often closed her eyes and paused before sharing her complete thought. I imagined she was thinking of the most efficient way to answer the questions. She did not smile that often and would give straight, quick answers. However, I never felt uninvited or not welcomed. She seemed to be on her own wavelength and took the interview very seriously. It appeared her language was very technical and answers were straight to the point, delivered in an authoritative manner. If I could describe her in one word, based on her approach to the interview, it would be, disciplinarian (“by the book”).

Felicia is a retired principal from a rural/suburban county in North Florida. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as “Black.” Mrs. Felicia comes from a middle-class family of 3 which included her mother and father. According to Felicia, both of her parents were elementary school educators. In reference to their education levels, both received a formal education and attained Master Degrees.
Overall, Felicia’s household was structured with both parents having graduate degrees and working in the field of education.

Felicia is proud of her parents being educators. Although both of them were teachers, her father had the most influence on her in reference to modeling values associated with education. According to Felicia, her father was very active in their community and took an active role in his school. He was never an administrator but acted as a lead teacher. Felicia also stated because he was one of the rare males in their elementary school system, he had a big influence with the students. She continued by stating he also framed her philosophical view of leadership in education. The influence of her parents being educators, and father being an informal school leader set the foundation for a strong value of education and frame for leadership.

Based on her value of education and frame of leadership, Felicia chose a career in education and eventually attained two graduate degrees. She received her first teaching job in 1972, eighteen years after Brown vs. Board of Education. During her career she was assigned two principalships. In 1982 she was appointed to an elementary school with approximately 500 students. For her second and last appointment she was appointed to another elementary school with approximately 800 students (didn’t recall actual start year but retired in 2010). Both appointments were in Title I schools with a majority of African American faculty. Felicia retired in 2010 ending a career of 38 years in the field of education. She spent 28 of those years as an administrator.

“I always believed in doing something to help others in the community. I felt that once I got to be a principal, that would kind of help me to work with more individuals…”
Felicia spoke those words as we discussed her experiences as an administrator. As a leader in the field of education, she stated her focus was placed on preparing her teachers by keeping them informed. Taking a cue from her father’s example of leadership in education, she stated her greatest strength was planning and visibility. According to her philosophy, leading involves “moving around, leading by visibility…” She also believed in open communication with faculty and being straightforward so they wouldn’t be confused about her expectations. This philosophy was effective and she believes her leadership helped improve the community. However, her reality also included challenges in reference to Black female faculty challenging her authority as a female leader.

When Felicia discussed her relationship with faculty, she mentioned that one of her primary challenges involved her interactions with the Black female teachers because they were used to Black male leadership. When referencing her challenges, she stated, “The majority of it came from females…the majority of the females…they were Black females.” The challenges that she experienced were concerning the teachers completing her initiatives and required activities. Felicia stated her greatest challenge was getting the teachers to do what was required of them without having to “monitor so closely.” This was one of her major reasons for always being “visible.” As she progressed in her career, on the advice of her mentors, Felicia eventually found a better way of communicating with her faculty that led to greater understandings, participation, and relationships. Quite simply, her mentors convinced her to allow them more input and a greater voice with school decisions. As explained below, this understanding developed over a period of time and through leadership experiences.
Felicia’s pivotal moment and dealings with the faculty were unique because at one time they were colleagues. She described a scenario that involved her being assigned to a school with a majority of African American female faculty, where she was a former teacher. According to Felicia, this pivotal moment centered on her changing relationship with teachers who still viewed her as a co-worker and their adjustment to her leadership strategies. She indicated this changing relationship caused tension and everything she did as a leader was “critiqued through the union.” As a result of her experiences, she adjusted her leadership strategy at the urging of one of her administrative mentors. This mentor advised her to keep her vision but include the teachers in the decision making process. In reference to initiatives, Felicia stated her mentor told her to “throw it out to the faculty and let them have input into what it is that you’re doing and you’re gonna find somebody who’s got the same idea that you have.” According to Felicia, this was a critical step in her development and in reference to decisions, she learned, “If you make it by yourself, then it’s your decision.” That practice increased scrutiny and blame if initiatives or decisions did not accomplish their goals. She also inferred the teachers “buy-in” was more difficult if they didn’t have any input.

In the beginning of her administrative career, Felicia led her faculty by making most of the major decisions with little or no input from the teachers. As she continued her career, she suggested her understanding of the consequences of making solo decisions, good and bad, tremendously increased. Examining her challenging relationship with faculty, she approached a veteran Black male administrator in the county and explained her problems. Upon hearing her challenges, he encouraged her to allow the faculty more input to get better results. She eventually tried his method and
suggested it increased the faculty’s eagerness and execution. According to Felicia addressing the completion of school initiatives, “Once it comes from them, then they’re going to buy into it more.” Ultimately, Felicia learned overtime to navigate through and improve her planning and organization by engaging in true shared leadership.

**Florida**

Mrs. Florida is an African American female approximately 5’6 or 5’7 with a medium brown complexion and short hair. She is between the ages of sixty and seventy years old, born during the 1940’s. She has a normal paced walk and a disposition that seems very inviting. Her body language appears to be very relaxed and almost prompted me to do likewise. She looks straight into the person’s eyes when she talks and while recalling looks down as if “reliving” the moments. Florida showed a very high level in reference to a sense of humor. As we conducted the interviews, she answered the questions in a manner that established informality. I perceived this to be an attempt to have more of a conversation. Although she maintained professionalism after each exchange, I felt like I was talking casually to someone over lunch. It appeared she was focused on and approached the interviews by encouraging my exchanges and full understanding of her points. If I could describe her in one word, based on her approach to the interviews, it would be, motivator.

Florida is a retired principal from a rural/suburban county in North Florida. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as “Black.” Florida comes from a poor family of five with one sister, one brother, and both parents. According to Florida, her parents were farmers who owned land, livestock, and able to “live off the land.” Her mother was also a licensed cosmetologist. In reference to her parents’ education levels,
both received formal education. Her mother graduated from high school and took a few college courses and obtained a license in cosmetology. Her father received an education until his high school years. He did not attain a high school diploma. Overall, Florida’s household was structured with two working parents who received some form of secondary and post-secondary education and set a strong foundation centered on the family.

As Florida recalled, both her mother and father emphasized the importance of education. She stated her parents held high expectations that all of their children would be educated. According to Florida, “It was just something that was stressed often in the house. It was just something that was expected.” She proudly spoke of her mother’s family who included six children of which three were in college at the same time, illustrating a legacy of college educated “Blacks.” As Florida stated, “This was in the 40’s and it was difficult.” These lessons were passed to her mother’s children and instilled a high value of education to the future second generation of college attendees. The message was so strong that when Florida attempted to enter the Air Force, her mother would not give consent and told her, “You are 17 years old. You’re not going. If you were (going to do something), we’re going to work and you can go to school.” She concluded by stating her parents shared the joint attitude of “You were to do better than they did.” The influence of her parents and legacy of college educated family members steered her towards education.

Understanding her parents’ wishes and vision of college-educated children, Florida chose a career in education and eventually attained two graduate degrees. She received her first teaching job in 1973, nineteen years after Brown vs. Board of
Education. As she progressed in her career, she was assigned three principalships. In 1996, she was appointed to a high school with approximately 300 to 500 students. In 1998, her second appointment was to a high school with approximately 500 students. In 2000, she returned to her first high school appointment which then housed 500 students. All three appointments were in Title I schools with one having a majority of African American faculty. Her original and last appointment which occurred at the same high school had a majority of White faculty. Lastly, Mrs. Florida retired in 2010 ending her career of 37 years in the field of education. She spent 25 of those years as an administrator.

Florida began her administrative career with a determination of making the community a better place to live for African Americans. Her role in that process was to assist the neighborhoods (wherever she was assigned) with increasing their level of education. Recalling her motivation and tools for success, she stated her greatest strength was “being able to develop relationships with the community at large and the school community itself” while not allowing herself to be “easily swayed by outside pressures.” Although optimistic, she realized it would take time to transform the community into a place that experienced schooling and education in a positive way. However, based on teachings from her father and mother, she was prepared to meet the challenge. When referencing her overall outlook, she recalled her parents words as a child, “You were to work hard. Nothing was gonna be given to you.” Using those words, Florida prepared herself to positively affect the community by addressing the make-up of the faculty of her schools and improving their relationship with the administrators.
Florida’s first primary role as principal involved ensuring that her faculty consisted of high quality teachers. This was a constant and consistent source of frustration throughout her career. When discussing her challenges as an administrator, Florida vehemently stated, “My greatest challenge…I had was to get and maintain competent or really effective teachers in a low-performing school.” She suggested that because of the pay scale of her county, beginning teachers would get hired strictly for the experience of teaching and then move to other counties. As a result, she would lose excellent teachers and have cope with less effective and sometimes less motivated teachers. For example, she remembered one male teacher that was an overall good teacher but had an issue with reporting to work on time. Although she prompted him to meet his responsibilities, she admitted she became more of a “mother” figure to the young male teacher because of the need for good teachers. To show she was fully aware of her actions, she candidly stated, “A male administrator would’ve gotten rid of him, okay?”

The example of Florida’s dealings with the young male teacher is also another example of her second major task, improving the relationship between administrators and faculty. Florida’s explanation for this task appeared to address a larger picture focused on uplifting the community through cohesiveness and understanding. Part of her motivation was trying to get the faculty to understand or remember their challenges as Blacks in similar communities during their youth. So as a result of this focus she instituted new initiatives. However, the older teachers resisted implementing these initiatives.

Although Florida would ensure the rules were followed, it disturbed her when the faculty did not seem to understand or relate to her communal goals or community
challenges. To this she stated, “It bothered me because you would think that I’m Black, you’re Black and that I can empathize with what you have gone through because at some point in my life, I was looked at the same way.” So in response to this, she made a point to actively engage with all faculty and staff in a stern but motherly way. For those teachers that could not adjust, she stated, “Everybody did not agree with what I wanted them to do…If they wanted to go somewhere else, no problem with me.” Illustrating she would not attempt to stop teachers from leaving if they did not want to follow her overall vision.

Florida’s pivotal moment occurred in the form of student activity. According to her, during the first few months of her second principalship, her high school students vandalized her car one day before the Christmas break. Her new school was the lowest performing school in the district and she began to make aggressive changes to better the school atmosphere. The students did not like her changes and reacted by vandalizing her car. Immediately upon discovering her damaged car, she called the superintendent very irate. She stated:

I called his secretary. I called him and they said he was in this little meeting. I said, well, I don’t care where he is! You tell him these people over here have torn up my car and he’d better get me out of ‘Second Principalship High’ immediately!

The superintendent did not call her. He immediately left his meeting and met her at the school to discuss the situation. A local minister was also at the school and they encouraged her to stay, stating the vandalism was a result of her effective changes. Finally, they convinced her to stay after the superintendent agreed to make changes, increase her resources, and make structural upgrades to the school. To this end,
Florida stated the situation actually helped her to get some things that were needed for the school. The influence of this situation was her not allowing the students to “run” her away.

**Participant Profiles: Ages between 50-60**

**Grace**

Mrs. Grace is an African American female approximately 5’9 with a very light complexion and long hair. She is between the ages of fifty and sixty years old, born during the 1950's. She walks and moves in a purposive fashion, moving from point A to point B. Her pace is slow but steps are sure, as if she is following a path already planned to travel. As we conducted the interview, Grace’s comments were very thoughtful and delivered in an instructional dialogue. She displayed humor but used it to reinforce her points. It appeared she communicated in a very detailed and directed manner. She came across as a person with a clear set of objectives, mechanisms for achieving them, and following them without deviation. If I could describe her in one word, based on her approach to the interview, it would be, consistency.

Grace is a retired African American female principal from a mid-sized county in South Georgia. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as an “African American.” Grace comes from a family of fifteen. She was reared by her maternal grandparents who had twelve children and lived on a farm. According to Grace, her grandparents would not have been considered a middle-class family. Instead, her family would have been listed as being “on the high-low end.” She mentioned her mother also had three other children and avoided the topic of her father. From her body language, facial expressions and verbal clues, I clearly understood that
the reason why she was with her grandparents and absence of the father would not be discussed. In reference to the grandparent’s education levels, both received a formal education in the elementary grades. Her mother received a Bachelor’s Degree and eventually became a teacher. Overall, Grace’s household was structured with both grandparents establishing a strong foundation based on work and improvement of life through education.

As Grace recounted her story, she described her grandparents as being the driving force behind her value and view of education. According to Grace, her grandparents would say, “You can’t do this forever. You’re not going to want to do this. How many of you want to farm?” She described her grandparents as pushing all of them (aunts and uncles) to make a better life through education. In fact, many of her aunts and uncles became professionals, including several teachers and principals. Grace also stated her mother pushed for education. However, the parental role and most influential push were established by her grandparents. The influences of her grandparents and hard work on the farm created a work ethic that was applied to obtaining a formal education for a higher standard of living (means).

With a high emphasis on education in her family home and several aunts and uncles in the field, Grace chose a career in education and eventually earned two graduate degrees. She received her first teaching job in 1979, 25 years after Brown vs. Board of Education. During her career, she was assigned to one principalship in 1987 which was a primary school (k-3). However, during her tenure at the school, it was transformed into an elementary school (k-5). Initially, at the height of enrollment, the school had 820 students but dropped to approximately 560 students her last few years
as head principal. She was assigned to a Title I school that consisted of a majority African American faculty. Lastly, Mrs. Grace retired in 2012 ending a 33 year career in the field of education. She spent 28 of those years as an administrator.

Grace’s career in education was rewarding although as she recalls, was full of challenges and frustrations. When she started her administrative career, she was young (late twenties), a new mother, and faced a faculty that was older than her. To further complicate matters, Grace taught at the school before becoming an administrator and she believed this also contributed to the high level of contention between her and the faculty. Because of her age, she faced many challenges from the teachers who did not want to follow established school guidelines. As a result, Grace stated, “It was very hard. I became stricto. So during those first years, I was writing people up right and left. I was pretty much kicking butt. It was very hard, very hard.” She also recalled several times where she had to explicitly confront several teachers and acknowledge their age but remind them she was the administrator. After she established her leadership culture through discipline, reprimands, and statements of clarity, she suggests the school faculty became more amenable to the completion of her goals and following guidelines.

Another source of frustration for Grace’s principalship came from dealing with the parents of the community. She recalled how in addition to setting the tone for the faculty through discipline and strict enforcement, she also had to establish a professional tone with the parents of the community. To her amazement, the Black parents of the community would frequently use expletives toward her when they were upset with one of her decisions about their children. Upon experiencing this, Grace stated:
I was cursed out like everything, until I had to, and I never had been cursed before, nor had I ever cursed before. But after the years of my school with them, I ended up saying, Okay, Now I can cuss just like you, okay!

In addition to that behavior, she mentioned that other challenges included: parents contacting the NAACP for a decision they thought she was going to make about the school mascot; babies and toddlers wandering around the school searching for older siblings; and, children that exhibited unruly and disruptive behavior (suggesting lack of parental intervention). Overall, she stated these issues were persistent for years but through her persistence, the behavior and outlook of parents (including children) became better and more conducive for learning.

Listening to Grace explain her career, one would think that she was bitter about the entire experience. However, as I listened further, her tone and facial expressions changed when discussing parents and students. For example, as we discussed her relationship with students, I witnessed a dramatic shift in her tone and the direction of her reality. She used a softer and lighter voice, smiled more and at times, would look down as if her thoughts were being relived. She mentioned extra-curricular activities that weren’t taught at her leadership program. For instance, she recalled asking her husband to obtain little bars of soap so that the children without “running water” could have a way to refresh themselves privately at the school. She also recalled other social work activities that were performed quietly without fanfare, recognition, and often through her own finances.

As she discussed this part of her reality, she almost became visibly emotional when speaking about “the boy.” Grace recalled a very large fifth grader who was sent to
the office because he was misbehaving. When he sat in her office, he told her the children were talking about him. He didn’t disclose what they said, but informed her didn’t have any underwear. She told him that she would purchase some for him and he could inform his mother. Living in that moment during her dialogue she stated:

I left school. I got in the car, just about to keel over, crying like a maniac...At the end of the day, I pulled him into that little nook (place where students passed) and stuck it in the book bag (discretely). See you tomorrow! Keep going you know. We move on.

Grace’s pivotal moment occurred in a scenario of corporal punishment administered to a student and a subsequent allegation of abuse. To further complicate matters, the student and his family were White which induced a racial overtone and undertone to the situation. According to Grace, she administered “three licks” with a paddle for a violation of a school rule. A couple of days later, the student’s mom called and informed her that he had to go to the hospital for “bruises all over his back” and Grace was accused of the abuse. Grace stated, the parents visited the school for a meeting to discuss the paddling and “see who would beat their child” in this manner.

When the parents arrived, they saw the Black female principal and recognized her. Upon discovery, the mom explicitly asked, “Mrs. Grace did you paddle (my child)?” Grace responded with yes and the mother immediately stated, “Oh no, I know she didn’t do that,” referring to the abuse. The significance of the moment was in the lesson of community relationships. Grace believed this response was due to her friendliness to all the parents, inferring all were the same, regardless of status or color. To summarize the event, she and the student’s mother were able to get the child to confess the father was the culprit.
Georgia

Mrs. Georgia is an African American female approximately 5’3 or 5’4 with a
darker brown complexion and short hair. She is between the ages of fifty and sixty years
old, born during the 1950’s. She has a slow walk that is accomplished effortlessly with a
peaceful presence. As I observed her, I noticed her movements appeared to be
presented in a non-threatening and passive manner. They didn’t appear to be a sign of
weakness, more of a “safe” sign for anyone who approached. As we conducted the
interviews, her comments were highly reflective. She explained her points by recalling
the names of students and intimate details of certain scenarios. It appeared she
approached the interviews with a calmness and almost as if she took ownership of her
students beyond a strict professional relationship. If I could describe her in one word,
based on her approach to the interviews, it would be, nurturer.

Georgia is a retired African American principal from a rural county in South
Georgia. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as being “Black.”
Georgia comes from a poor family of ten with four sisters, three brothers, and both
parents in the household. According to Georgia, her parents were farmers and the
household was full of love. In reference to her parents’ education levels, both parents
experienced formal education in their elementary school years. She was sure her
mother finished the fourth grade and father completed the second or third grade.
Overall, Georgia’s household was structured with both parents setting a strong
foundation built on love.
As Georgia recalled, her mother and father jointly emphasized two things, love and education. She described an environment where her parents would emphasize education through love and positive reinforcement:

My parents always made me feel important. They just had that way. They didn’t speak it all the time, but I knew I was loved, just overwhelmed with love and also there was a culture in our family that you must get an education.

Georgia also stated her parents shielded their poverty from the children. She stated the parents created an atmosphere or “spirit” in the household that the children would go far (in life). According to Georgia, “We were poor but rich-minded.” Her parents were wise and illustrated their point of education and success by supporting four of her siblings in college, on a very limited budget, during the early 1960’s. The influence of her parents and success of the siblings making it to college created a basic understanding of family, faith, and the importance of education.

Based on her faith in success and emphasis of education by her parents, Georgia chose a career in education and eventually attained two graduate degrees. She received her first teaching job in 1972, eighteen years after Brown vs. Board of Education. During her career she was assigned two principalships. Her first principalship was in 1999 to a middle school that had approximately 800 students. Her second principalship was in 2001 to a high school that fluctuated between 1,000 to 1,300 students annually. Both appointments were to Title I schools. Her middle school consisted of 50% White and Black faculty while her high school contained a majority of African Americans. Lastly, Mrs. Georgia retired in 2009 ending a career of 37 years in the field of education. She spent 15 of those years as an administrator.
Georgia’s administrative career was based on compassion and a deep sense of communal outreach. When discussing her career, Georgia in a very soft-spoken way would mention the many challenges she faced as a Black administrator in a county that did not appear to treat the Black community as equals (comparing the schools with a majority of White students). As she talked, she sighed consistently and would make a point to show me her disgust, amazement, objectivity and resolve in reference to her experiences. A strong example of her experiences occurred in her appointment in the county’s “Black high school.” Discussing her early realities, she stated how her effectiveness was affected by the county deciding to rezone the district in her second year. She believes this move was done purposely to take away the portion of the students that were high performing. According to Georgia, although they were considered the “Black school,” a portion of the African American students from a more affluent section in the city, traditionally performed well. At the time, she didn’t fight the change but later regretted not protesting because she believed, “The county stripped us of that group.” The group to which she preferred was the high performing African American students.

As she continued to explain her experiences, her explanation detailed a pattern of actions by the county that adversely affected her effectiveness as an administrator and communal leader that began with the rezoning. According to her, the move ultimately sent the higher performing Black students to a majority White public high school and helped maintain the attendance of the more affluent White families in the public school system. Georgia further suggested this was important because at that point, many White families had already removed their children from the public school
system altogether. This was paramount because by ensuring the more affluent Black students would attend the other high school, it reassured the more affluent White families that the other Black students would remain at her school. Basically through this move, integration was satisfied but with chosen African American students, depleting one school of honor students and strengthening the other school with those same students.

Georgia continued her discussion on challenges with the county and mentioned their neglect to maintain the school's ventilation system and athletic facilities. To be clear, she made a distinction between decorative additions, function and safety. According to Georgia, the county did not assist with promoting a safe and functioning environment until a student was physically hurt (football field with bricks and construction materials in the grass) and the threat of parents to mobilize and demand equal treatment because of no air conditioning. Her compassion for the Black community and success of those Black students was greatly enhanced by her upbringing and direct experiences within the county as a Black administrator. However, as she sighed and discussed those realities, she would also interject positive thoughts about the White community. It appeared she was conflicted which illustrated the presence of objectivity. She mentioned how she witnessed great leadership from White administrators who worked in Black communities but ultimately were rejected because of the traditional relationship between Blacks and Whites. She did not agree with their treatment and approached the subject with the same level of intensity. Overall, she believed she made a positive difference in the lives of her students and followed the right career path.
Georgia’s pivotal moment occurred at an assembly during her assistant principalship at a high school. They had an assembly during Black History month where a visiting high school choir visited their school to participate in a planned celebration and event. During the ceremony, the visiting choir began to sing a very popular religious song. Upon hearing this song, the African American students began to stand to their feet and sing very loud with the choir. Seeing this display, the White students thought it was disrespectful and many of them walked out of the ceremony. Georgia stated it was a common custom for Black students to join songs that were popular and inferred it was a sign of respect. At that time, her assigned high school had what she referred to as a lot of “double-gate Whites.” This term was frequently used for very wealthy families living in her county. That part of the school population was not use to the custom and when they exited, the Black students misinterpreted their actions as disrespecting Black History Month. Then, it happened.

The students confronted each other and “it was a riot.” Georgia stated, “Those Black boys ran behind them and beat ‘em up.” The police were called, security alerted, and Georgia was attempting to get in close proximity of the school’s main gang leader. According to Georgia, the gang hadn’t participated at this time. The fighting started with non-gang members. She noticed the most powerful gang leader was contemplating getting involved. In fact, she could hear one of the boys say to him, “If you want us to turn this school out, we’ll do it.” Georgia immediately started pleading with him not to get involved. Eventually, after much pleading and a long conversation, his gang did not join in the fighting.
The significant moment was her understanding and acceptance that she was able to diffuse a situation by approaching the gang leader in a calm, respectful and nurturing manner. In reference to diffusing the situation, Georgia stated, “I was motherly…and I knew it was because I was motherly to him, to all the kids.” She believed that if a male, especially Black male would have approached him, the gang would have joined in and “it woulda been a big mess.” This is a lesson she would take with her and use with gangs when she became head principal. This lesson taught her how to relate to gang members which was a big challenge when she received her head principalship. Consequently, after this incident, Georgia stated her high school “lost” all of the “double gate” White students.

**Faye**

Mrs. Faye is the last participant of the study and an African American female approximately 5’6 or 5’7 with a darker brown complexion and medium length hair. She is between the ages of fifty and sixty years old, born during the 1950’s. She moves slowly and almost wears a permanent smile. During our interactions, her movements appeared to be congruent with her attention given to me. As we conducted the interviews, I noticed the way she was sitting, soft nods and smiles, and facial gestures which appeared to be a form of validation. More specifically, her mannerisms and disposition seemed geared towards encouragement and reinforcement. Her comments were reflective and quite often during her recall, she would smile as she relayed specific stories or scenarios. While smiling, her eyes would briefly divert to the ceiling as if she was “reliving” the moments. She displayed a sense of humor with an invitation for me to also enjoy her moment of reflection. For example, as she recalled the funny moments,
she would look directly towards me and nod to ensure I understood her insight. It appeared she was guiding me through the interviews. If I could describe her in one word, based on her approach in the interviews, it would be, mentor.

Faye is a retired principal from a rural/suburban county in North Florida. When asked to describe her ethnicity, she described herself as an “African American.” Faye described coming from a poor family of 10 with six sisters, two brothers, and mother as a single parent. According to Faye, they lived in a high poverty area and her mother was a domestic worker for White families in the county. Her mother received formal education through the eighth grade. Overall, Faye reported that her household had structure due to her mother’s work ethic and older sisters modeling high value towards education.

As Faye recalled, her mother worked in the homes of White families “and took care of their children and things, and she had nine children of her own.” In addition, she also stated as a family, they had “very little” during her childhood. Watching her mother work and experiencing the struggles of family life left an indelible impression on Faye. To this, she stated, “I was determined, as were my other siblings, that we were going to do better.” Through this determination she stated the value of education was born. According to Faye, “In order to get up out of that situation or that predicament that we were in, we had to go to school. We had to get an education.” She further explained that she and her siblings viewed education as the only way to overcome their living situation. As a result of their determination, her siblings made it through high school and several of her sisters were able to attend college. Faye used these older sisters as a model and their influence to pursue a formal education beyond compulsory years.
Using her mother's hard work ethic, family struggles, and older sisters' examples of going to college, Faye chose a career in education and eventually attained a Master's Degree. She received her first teaching job in 1977, 23 years after Brown vs. Board of Education. During her career, she was assigned two principalships. In 2000, she was appointed to an elementary school with approximately 600 students. In 2009, her second appointment was to a middle school with approximately 565 students. Both appointments were in Title I schools with a majority of African American faculties. Faye retired in 2012 ending a 35-year career in the field of education. She spent 12 of those years as an administrator.

Faye’s experiences in education were highly affected by her outlook as a youth. According to Faye, her main focus and understanding as an educational leader was based on the lessons learned from her mother and sisters. This message of hard work to improve your life became the cornerstone of her leadership philosophy. On this subject she stated, “One of the things that I always try to articulate to the students, as well as to the faculty, is that you have to always set those expectations, those high expectations.” She stressed this concept to me more than once and added her responsibility was to set high expectations and provide the tools for meeting them. Although she took on this task with a smile, she iterated many challenges came with trying to accomplish the task.

Faye’s primary challenges occurred with her faculty and peer administrators. She intimated that she had positive and negative experiences with her faculties. Although she stated there were differences among faculty as individuals, listing her experiences in groups, male administrators (Black and White), White teachers and African American
female teachers provided the greatest amount of difficulty and challenges for her throughout her career. Faye suggested the male administrators would not be as cooperative with her initiatives or as supportive of her leadership because, “They didn’t see the female as being quite their equal you know.” She also stated it was very challenging for her to become appointed because in her county, the administrative ranks in the school system were almost, if not, exclusively male (football and basketball coaches). In reference to White teachers (mostly females) that were on her various faculties, they would test her competence and will by displaying passive aggression. According to Faye, a pattern of resistance occurred with her White teachers that involved them meeting (as a group) to decide whether or not they were going to support or collectively fight implementation of her initiatives and programs. However, undeterred, she still implemented her initiatives.

The last challenging group, African American female teachers, were found to test her resolve on enforcing school policy. Faye did not place them in the same category as the White teachers that were secretly meeting to challenge her initiatives. Her main area of contention with the African American female teachers was that they would challenge her authority. As the principal leader of her schools, she would set school-wide policies on expectations of professional behavior. As she progressed through her career, she explained that she noticed the African American female teachers not adhering to the policies when they thought she wasn’t visibly around. In response, she would enforce the rules and maintain control once the infractions were noticed. She believes the teachers tested her specifically because of gender.
Consistent with other participants, she also believes that the African American female teachers would have treated her differently if she was a male. As a note, Faye stated her experiences with faculty were not all bad. African American male teachers, White female administrators, and African American female administrators were found to be very respectful and helpful throughout her career. In fact, she noticed a developing “sisterhood” based on common experiences and reflection was shared among the African American female administrators.

Faye had several experiences that she recalled during her tenure as principal that helped shape and mold her thoughts and practices with leadership. When asked what event she would consider the most important/having the most impact, she described a scenario that involved the entire county and collective African American female administrators within the county. According to Faye, during her tenure a new set of academic standards and an associated achievement test were introduced to the entire state. Also during that time, the students of her county, specifically African American students, were not performing well academically. As the standards were being introduced, another major change was occurring, the “face” of school leadership was changing from White and African American males to African American females in her school’s county.

According to Faye, this was a major change in the make-up of leadership in the county. In reference to the transition, she stated, “We were the ones that came, took the leadership control pretty much away from the old guards, the males, White males, and a lot of the African American males.” She also iterated the importance of this time in her tenure. She believed student achievement and the overall atmosphere of the county
improved specifically because African American females were leading the schools versus the traditional male leadership. To this end she stated, “So we were the ones that came in and, at that time, we began to see our schools kind of turn around and it seemed like they became more successful.” Faye’s description of the improvement was further contributed to the strengths of African American female leadership with instructional supervision in comparison to their male counterparts. To her, this pivotal moment was shared with the other African American female administrators in the county and it made a concrete example of their direct influence.

Summary of Profiles

The interview data gathered from the interviews highlighted each principal’s demographic make-up in addition to the personal and social contexts shaping their entry into education. Table 4.1 summarizes each retired principal’s baseline profile according to their demographic information. During my analysis of the demographic interview data, I found the retired principals’ stories registered seven different individual experiences which were grouped into seven categories according to the following: age; ethnicity; childhood socio-economic status, family makeup, parental education levels; highest degree earned; and, area of certification.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>SES Status</th>
<th>Family Makeup</th>
<th>Parents Education</th>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>ms</td>
<td>Ed.L, BE, VE, Ma, MG</td>
<td>2, e,ms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td>Mi</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>M/M</td>
<td>EE, Ed.L</td>
<td>2, e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>Bi</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>hsd/hs</td>
<td>EE, AS,</td>
<td>*2, hs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine</td>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td>Mi</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>hsd/hs</td>
<td>EE, AS</td>
<td>3, p.e.ms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>e/e</td>
<td>LS</td>
<td>1, e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>2M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>e/e</td>
<td>Ed.L, E</td>
<td>2, ms, hs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mi</td>
<td>S after age 11</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Ed.L, EE</td>
<td>1, e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AA=African American; Bl=Black; AB=American Black; BA=Black American; N=Negro; M=Master’s Degree; 2M=2 Master Degrees; L=Lower/Poor; Mi=Middle-Class; S=Single Parent; B=Both Parents; p=Primary; e=Elementary School; ms=Middle School; hs=high school; hsd=high school diploma; Bachelor=Bachelor’s Degree/Undergraduate; E=English; Ed.L=Educational Leadership; BE=Business Education; VE=Vocational Education; Ma=Math; MG=Middle Grades; EE=Elementary Education; GC=Guidance and Counseling; AS=Administration Supervision; LS=Leadership Supervision. *F4 received a re-appointment to one of her high schools, totaling 3 full principalships.

In reference to age, three groups were identified: three former principals were between the ages of 50 to 60 years old; two were between 60 to 70 years old; and, two were between 70 to 80 years old. All former principals were born prior to 1960, the beginning of critical Civil Rights Movement activity. As a result, all participants’ administrative experiences were strongly affected by the Civil Rights Movement.

Examining the data on ethnicity, all seven retired principals identified with being African American. However, they used different terms to describe their ethnicity under the umbrella of being African American. Two explicitly identified themselves as African American. These two former principals fell into the youngest category, age 50 to 60 years old. Four referred to themselves as Black. According to this group of responses, three stated they were Black (2 in 60 to 70 age, 1 in 50 to 60 age) and one stated she was a Black American (70 to 80 age). Lastly, one described herself as Negro (70 to 80...
Although there were five different terms used, all former principals identified with being African American which will be further discussed in chapter five.

The review of the data on the former principals’ families revealed their childhood socio-economic status was identified as four of the participants being poor and three as middle-class. Reviewing this category even further reveals that four of their families were farmers with three being identified as poor and one middle-class. Overall, the remaining families had educators and a domestic worker. The next family experience, family make-up, identified five families with both parents in the household throughout their entire childhood. The remaining two were reared in single parent family homes with one having both parents until the age of 12.

The last family experience, parental education levels, revealed that two former principals had at least one parent with a college degree. One of the families had a single parent with a degree. The other family contained both parents with Master Degrees. Two had at least one parent with a high school diploma and the other parent attending but not finishing high school. Two had both parents that attended but did not finish elementary school. The last former principal was reared in a family where the single parent attended middle school but did not finish.

The final two experiences, highest degree earned and area of certification, revealed each participant held at least one Master’s Degree with five holding two graduate degrees. In reference to area of certification, seven listed at least two specific areas. Three listed elementary education; three supervision (administration or leadership); four educational leadership; one guidance and counseling; one English;
and lastly, one held several certifications which included business education, vocational education, math, and middle grades.

The family, demographic and educational information gathered on each participant was instrumental in allowing me access to how the principals situated themselves within the larger social world (McGough, 2003; Creswell, 2007). In the following chapter I will continue my exploration by comparatively reviewing the principals’ experiences as administrators and further contextualize their realities according to existing research.
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS/DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, I presented each principal’s story. In this chapter, I build upon the former principal profiles by looking at the interview data from a comparative perspective. In the first section, I examine the first research question: How do African American female principals conceptualize principal roles, practices, and concept of power as educational leaders in the various communities they serve? I then turn to the second research question: How do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions? However, instead of exclusively presenting the findings, I will integrate my findings with the findings listed in previous research. This approach helps to contextualize the findings within the field and allow me to show the reader how my findings fit with those in the extant research.

First, I will answer the initial research question by exploring the principal experiences through my first theoretical lens, Standpoint Theory. The literature on African American female principals identifies three major areas of African American female principal experiences: principal roles and understandings, principal practices, and principal concepts and application of power. Principal roles and understandings detail the overall focus and perceived function of principals as educational leaders. Principal practices refer to the specific activities of the principals as educational leaders. Finally, concepts of power refer to how the principals use their authority and position to accomplish their goals as educational leaders (Adkison, 1981; Palmer, 1983; Lomotey, 1987, 1993; Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Case, 1997; Young & McLeod, 2001; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Tillman, 2004, 2008; Loder, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Crawford
& Smith, 2005; Gooden, 2005; Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Using the data collected from the participants, I will list the findings of this study and compare the former principal experiences with the findings listed in the literature in those three major areas.

Upon the conclusion of answering the first research question, I will explore the second research question by focusing specifically on race and gender. In order to address this question, I will first detail the participants’ experiences with their respective faculties and communities to show how they were situated between the intersections of race and gender. Second, I will further contextualize their experiences by using my second lens, the Womanist Tool, to explore how the participants view themselves as African American females in a profession that has traditionally been dominated by males. This lens further enables me to understand how the former principals interpret their principal experiences at the intersections of being African American and female. According to Parks, Carter & Gushue (1996), the Womanist Model has four stages that African American females progress through, beginning with the acceptance of traditional sex roles and societal bias to a progressive internally defined female identity. The Womanist Tool will illuminate and identify what stage of development each participant’s reality is housed and their identity of self according to their experiences based on race and gender.

**Standpoint Theory: Principal Roles and Understandings, Practices and Power**

Standpoint Theory focuses on the realities of African American females and lived experiences according to their own words and interpretations of the events in their lives.
(Bloom & Erlandon, 2003). The use of Standpoint Theory centers research on findings that emerge from the subjects or participants being explored (Parker, 2001; Bloom & Erlandon, 2003). In this section, using Standpoint Theory, I will examine and discuss the emerging findings of the principal experiences and situate them within the larger body of research on African American female principals. This will be accomplished by comparing my findings with the prior research findings on African American female principals’ experiences.

In this dissertation, I am interested in understanding how African American administrators understand and construct their roles as school leaders, operate in their schools and communities by way of practices, and conceptualize the use of power as educational leaders. Prior research has examined these three areas and findings on African American female principals and list experiences that are unique to African American female principalships based on race and gender. Within these findings, the literature lists the overall experiences of the African American female leaders according to their roles and understandings, practices, and use of power (Palmer, 1983; Lomotey, 1987, 1993; Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Tillman, 2004, 2008; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a). Comparatively, I find the participants in my study describe these same three areas of experiences.

**Principal Roles and Understandings**

**Early Influences**

The participants’ experiences in this study detailed their roles and understandings came from two distinct areas, their early influences and their approach to leadership and the principalship. In this section, I will discuss the emerging and prior
findings in reference to African American female principals’ roles and understandings according to their socialization and early life influences. Early influences consisted of the participants’ socialized views and understandings of general leadership according to their family life.

Reviewing the experiences of the participants, I found that all the former principals described being encouraged to take active roles in leadership as young girls. Similar to prior research, the participants in this study also reported believing they could be effective leaders and administrators without practicing a traditional male form of leadership (Hackett & Byars, 1996; and, Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995). Each participant described the ways that their family life informed their beliefs about leadership and helped shaped their concept and viewpoint as they moved throughout their career. In particular, I found that each participant traced their understandings of leadership back to family with a strong female influence. This influence was a starting point for their internal dialogue on leadership qualities and components.

An example of leadership influences from youth can be illustrated by Geraldine who explained her socialization began early as a babysitter for younger siblings and neighborhood children. She further explained that her main task as a youth was to watch the children while her older siblings worked on the farm. However, according to her, watching the younger children turned her into an educator before she ever took her first course for teaching or administration. With this experience, Geraldine stated:

As a child, I told you I lived, we lived on a farm. Well, I was a babysitter and everybody had to toe the line. I taught school long before I was a teacher, okay?...and I was in charge of getting everybody to do what they had to do.
Geraldine continued by stating becoming a teacher was natural because she had already taught school on the farm. This activity served a necessary function for the farmers and at the same time placed the young Geraldine in a leadership position as a child.

Similarly, Florida attributed her grandmother and the church with being instrumental in her leadership development. As a young girl, her family was active in a church and her grandmother specifically would demand that she and her siblings participate. According to Florida, discussing the influences of leadership:

I think the church played an important part, and my Grandma. Because we had to always be visible in church. When I say visible, we had to be able, my Grandma would call on...Florida, get on up here and do that part. They pushed you, so we developed, I guess, speaking skills early, leadership skills early.

Similar examples of families influencing leadership skills and outlook were described by the other five participants. For instance, Faye described having much older sisters that listened to her mother who wanted them to do “better” (education, neighborhood and overall living standards) in life. To this she stated, “We went on to school, and I kind of just followed behind them.” Several of her sisters became educational leaders, a lesson observed and internalized by the much younger Florida. Together, the example here supported Allen, Jacobson and Lomotey (1995) who explicitly stated African American females are socialized as girls to be leaders in their families and church organizations.

In reference to early influences and socialization of African American female principals’ understandings of leadership, I found the experiences that emerged from this study to be consistent with prior research. The literature on the socialization of African American girls suggests that African American females are taught in their communities
to engage and embrace an active role in leadership as females from their youth (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Hackett & Byars, 1996; Walton, 2005). Prior research suggests that this is in contrast to traditional socialization for females who are traditionally encouraged to embrace conformity and passive behavior as appropriate female roles (Adkison, 1981; Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Hackett & Byars, 1996; Trinidad and Normore, 2004; Chin, 2004).

**Approach to Leadership and Principalship**

Continuing the discussion on roles and understandings, I will now discuss the second area of experiences that helped shape and form the participants' overall view of their roles and leadership understandings. According to the emerging findings in this study, the former principals' understandings of general leadership were founded in their experiences as youths and through schooling. This played an instrumental role in forming their views on what role a leader should take in general (not exclusively attributed to the principalship). The findings from the interview data revealed that in addition to the leadership influences from their families, all seven participants also believed they received good leadership in their schooling from their youth. Specifically, six participants mentioned receiving good leadership from African American principals. However, the remaining participant did not focus solely on her childhood principals as providing good leadership. According to her, she witnessed good leadership through several of her female teachers.

The participants discussed the effects of this leadership and collectively identified four types of answers in reference to the overall role of leadership and what it should entail. The first three answers were in reference to general leadership and the fourth
was centered specifically on principal roles and understandings of leadership. For the first answer, four participants mentioned a theme of working with others. According to this answer, the role of a leader is to: facilitate shared decision-making; help people in need; act as a supporter or facilitator; and, act as an “influencer.” For the second answer, one of the participants centered her concepts on leading as being in charge or “out in front” of the group. This answer illustrated a more traditional view of leadership as having one individual that leads more in an autocratic fashion (Northouse, 2004).

The third answer in reference to the overall role of general leadership came from the remaining two participants who centered their idea of good leadership on education. They did not separate their understanding of general leadership from their principal role. This line of thought was centered on creating an academic community and culture of learning for students, teachers, and parents. These two participants described leadership that was focused on instructional leadership, physical safety, and establishing a collegial atmosphere. This third type of role discussed by the participants also illuminated the participants more specific understandings of leadership in reference to being principal and led me to the fourth answer that specifically dealt with principalships.

The fourth answer from the participants on leadership roles and understandings shifted to responsibilities as principal and specifically centered on community. Consistent with the literature, I found that all seven former principals held the belief they should be involved with the community and use nurturing as a centerpiece of principal leadership (Lomotey, 1993; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a). This belief and understanding included being role models and very active in community events and
gatherings. The former principals held a collective belief that their role of principal involved the whole child which included an extension beyond the classroom. For example, Faye referred to her motivation for becoming a principal and stated:

We were at the bottom in everything. So this, kind of you know, had a lot of us thinking that we knew that these children could be better, and they were not as low performing as often times you read about and hear about. So that was kind of like a driving force…

Similar comments were made by the other participants in reference to reaching the students and community. When exploring how the community would be reached, the participants revealed a consistent collective mindset on leadership through nurturing. This understanding will be explained further in the following paragraphs.

A good example of the participants’ mindset in reference to nurturing could be seen in the interview data of Faye who in describing the neighborhood of her schools stated, “…they looked for us to provide everything. You know, we were the counselors. We were the mothers in most cases…” Georgia explicitly stated her focus for the students was actually, “a type of mothering” for the entire community. She explained this entailed a focus on ensuring the students and parents received services in basic living skills up to securing housing for the homeless. Geraldine also described a nurturing atmosphere extending to the parents and community. According to her, “Many parents really would come to me with personal problems. They relied on me to help them get where they needed to be.” Although some extended further than others, like Geraldine and Georgia, all participants showed a concerned focus on providing services centered on nurturing and cultivation from a whole child and community perspective.
The emerging findings listed above were consistent with previous literature on African American female principals and their understandings of the principalship. As listed in prior research, African American females were found to be highly concerned and focused on the students and community through nurturing (Case, 1997, Loder, 2005a).

The former principals in this study also explained that their examples of educational leadership and the principalship were modeled from the traditional male examples of leadership. All six that identified good leadership from principals mentioned their childhood administrators were Black males and remembered their leadership as good experiences. Examples of these positive experiences included Georgia who described her childhood principal as being “extremely calm,” and Josephine who stated, “That’s where I received my most inspirational ideas about teaching and learning. He was dynamic.” Another clear example came from Florida who stated she graduated high school during segregated times and principals were “strictly Black males.” She also further stated the principals “pushed you to do as best as you could…That was the principal at both the elementary and high school (they) did that for us.”

Faye, the participant that identified her sisters as exhibiting good leadership, stated she was more attuned to the educational leadership exhibited by her older siblings. Although, she still contended her male principals exhibited good leadership. For Faye however, her sisters provided a better gauge to her understandings of principal roles and acted as better models for good instructional leaders. According to Faye, “I watched my older sisters go on to college and become instruction leaders and that type thing. In fact, I had a sister to become deputy superintendent. So you know, in
that sense, yes there were models that I followed.” Also as a collective, Faye was not the only participant that mentioned good examples of female leadership. In reference to other examples of females and leadership, two of the participants specifically identified Black female teachers as providing good leadership in their youth, with one identifying them exclusively.

The emergent findings listed above on the participants’ understanding of leadership and principal roles as discovered through their youth and schooling were consistent with the literature in reference to the affect of African American principals on Black communities. According to previous research, African American principals provided positive leadership in their school communities (Tillman, 2004; Loder, 2005a). This could clearly be seen through the experiences of participants within this study who credited a large part of their understandings of leadership and the principalship to their principals. This would also apply to Faye who used her older sisters’ examples of becoming administrators as a guide for leadership.

Summary

Principal roles and understandings for the participants were found to be in two specific areas of experiences for the participants, early life experiences and their approach to leadership and the principalship. Consistent with prior leadership, the emergent findings on these realities detailed that African American female principals were socialized by their families to embrace active roles in leadership from their youth as young girls (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Hackett & Byars, 1996; Walton, 2005. In addition, based on this socialization, the former principals believed they could be effective leaders as females, not having to practice traditional male forms of leadership.
(Hacket & Byars, 1996; Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995). Lastly, their understandings of leadership were found to be focused on the community and meeting the needs of the community through nurturing. This emergent finding was consistent with prior research that detailed African American female leaders were highly concerned with the community and served their students and communities through nurturing (Case, 1997; Loder, 2005a).

**Principal Practices**

Within the literature, the findings listed on African American female principal practices are closely based on their concepts of power and the application of their authority. As a result, I will continue to explore the first research question by explaining the emergent and prior findings on African American female leader practices and their approach with the principalship and authority. Building on their understandings of leadership and principal roles, findings on African American female principal practices and principal power have been concentrated in one major category, principal function.

**Principal Function**

Principal practices were found to be represented through two major functions, administrator/bureaucrat and ethno-humanist roles. Not to be confused with the participants’ understandings of their overall roles as leaders and principals in the Black communities, these two roles referenced the driving force behind principal activities on a day-to-day to basis at their respective schools. According to the literature, principals were designed to focus on four activities in the administrator/bureaucrat role: development of goals; energy harnessing; communication facilitation; and, managing instruction (Lomotey, 1993). This study supported those prior findings and the emergent
findings showed all seven participants engaged a high focus on fulfilling that role. Through the findings in the interview data, every participant showed a particular concern with each of the four activities. Faye, Francine, and Florida seemed more heavily focused on goal development.

As an example of their focus, Faye referred to focusing on the school and having the faculty to achieve the goals. Francine set high goals for her school and kept a consistent focus on reminders with her staff. Lastly, Florida centered her goal activity on what she referred to as “long ranged” goals. Her vision was to set goals for academic achievement but she realized it would take a significant amount of time to achieve them. According to her plan, the overall goal of improving the students’ academic environment would take approximately five years.

The next two activities, energy harnessing and communication facilitation, were closely related and once again, all seven participants showed the application of this focus. Geraldine in describing an exchange with her faculty provided the best example of this when she stated:

You don’t have to love me to work in this school. But it would help if you did. If we loved each other, we can really do so much more for our students. But you don’t have to love me. All I want from you is, give me a good day’s work helping these children.

Strong examples of energy harnessing through communication for purposes of the achievement of school goals were present in each participants’ experience.

Managing instruction, the last activity in the administrator/bureaucrat role was also an integral aspect of each former principal’s lived practices and experiences. The analyses of the interview data showed Florida’s and Geraldine’s principal focus was
highly concentrated in this area. For example, referring to instructional guidance, Florida stated, “That’s one of the primary functions, to me, as an administrator, is to show a teacher how to plan and to teach that particular class.” Geraldine intimated the same sentiment when referring to her beginning a principalship appointment. She became aware the prior administrator was not strict on making the teachers prepare lesson plans. Upon that understanding, Geraldine stated, “My teachers had to make lesson plans.” She also stated on her first day, she told the teachers, “I need your help…I need you to make lesson plans so I can see your planning style…” Her thought was focused on improving the teaching atmosphere and ensuring the teachers had sound lesson plans with the intent of improving the delivery of instruction for the students.

Shifting the focus to the second role, the ethno-humanist studies have identified three main activities that were commonly found among African American principals. These three activities were involved the principals: committing to the education of all students; exhibiting confidence in the ability of all students; and showing compassion and understanding for all students and their communities (Lomotey, 1993). Through the analyses of the interview data, I found that all seven participants exhibited this type of focus in their principalships as central to their main goal as principal and performance of day-to-day activities.

This example could be seen in the emergent findings and realities of Josephine who took an experience from her teaching days into the principalship. As she relayed earlier in her pivotal moment, Josephine during the initial stages of integration, was transferred to an integrated school from the Black community. Within her class was a White student who was labeled a slow learner and not on the same academic level as
her other students. In order to help him “catch-up,” she spent extra time before and after school giving him additional instruction. At the end of the school year, his mother stated he gained more with her in one year than with all of his other teachers. She took this experience and attitude into her principalship believing that all children could learn if the teachers were willing to commit to hard work (actually teach).

Other examples of the ethno-humanist role being central to the participants’ activities were exhibited through Geraldine’s belief that parents and children should work closely together. This was relayed as the school’s focus on the community and clearly communicated to her staff. According to her, “I always required my teachers, (to) find out where their children live and ride by there. Even if you don’t stop, ride by so you can see where they’re coming from.” Similarly, Faye stated a large part of her motivation for becoming a principal was to improve the community, because being from the same community, she knew the people were better than their academic achievement indicated. Although all participants exhibited both functions listed in the literature, each participant had to navigate through their specific schools and within the communities using what they deemed as the most appropriate methods.

Summary

For the participants of this study, principal practices were found to be represented through two major functions, administrator/bureaucrat and ethno-humanist roles. The emergent findings of this study were consistent with prior research that stated African American principals exhibited both roles while centering their practices on the ethno-humanist role (Lomotey, 1993). The participants of the study showed a focus on
improving the community and the lives of their students believing in the ability of
students and showing compassion.

Next, I will discuss how the participants chose to navigate through their schools
and operate within the communities by exploring their principal styles which were
heavily based on the concepts of power.

Concepts of Power

The emergent findings in my study were consistent with the previous research on
how African American females chose to use their power. Collectively, I found that all
seven participants perceived the best use of power was from a communal or shared
leadership perspective based on their practices as principals. The concept of shared
leadership could be seen in the interview data of Faye who stated “…I would think that
leadership would be your role in which you would embrace and facilitate collaborative or
shared decision-making in order to reach a desired goal.” Felicia intimated the same
concept and stated, “I think a leader is a person who works with other individuals and
trying to get them to do specific tasks for the better, kind of like an influencer.” Geraldine
spoke of the group focus by stating, “You don’t have to do it yourself all the time, but
you got to be able to know how to involve other people to get it done.”

Each of the seven participants showed a more democratic understanding of
leadership, focused on driving activity of the group while being within the group. This
was consistent with prior research that found African American female leaders and
principals chose to use democratic leadership and collaborative behaviors when leading
(Adkison, 1981; Grogan, 2000; Parker, 2001; Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004; Wrushen &
Sherman, 2008). However, through the interview data they acknowledged they were the
leaders and understood their power as educational leaders. This suggests the participants were more concerned with yielding in power than singularly wielding power.

This study finds that all the former principals exhibited similar leadership styles attributed to African American female principals in previous research. Being consistent with their perceived roles and understanding of the principalship, all seven participants in this study gravitated toward the use of shared and collaborative leadership. Each participant described processes that included the faculty as being active in decision-making, and their active role in ensuring the faculty had an active voice in school decisions. A good example of this included Josephine and Faye who would meet with their administrators regularly with the purpose of discussing school matters and decisions that needed to be made in reference to school operations. As explained, the intent of the former principals was to reach a consensus on the best actions for addressing school challenges.

Another example was Grace who stated she submitted a survey to her teachers to understand some of their concerns when she received her principalship. I also found that each former principal made clear communicated efforts to include their staff in the decision making process through dialogue and organizational structuring. For example, Geraldine discussed communicating with her faculty through cross-grade level meetings and encouraging them to be more active as a whole unit. Prior to her principal appointment, the faculty would only meet in groups according to grade levels. Overall, the participants’ willingness to center their styles on inclusion strongly suggested they did not have to push for power or operate in a dictatorial fashion.
In addition, all seven participants' behavior also supported the literature which stated African American female leadership involved confrontational or assertive and straightforward characteristics. Interview data for six of seven participants described this communication style as being a central aspect to their leadership. For example, Geraldine described a situation where one of her students was sent to her office for discipline. According to Geraldine, the student told her he was not going to be disciplined. She continued by stating:

I didn't paddle kids when they came in the first time. Let's talk about this and find out why you were doing this, you know? But he walked in and told me I wasn't gonna paddle him. I sat down a minute and I thought, this little rascal is trying to bully me. I got up. He was taller than I at the time. I grabbed him at the collar. (Her talking to the student) Let me tell you what. I'm just as crazy as you are...you have a decision to make...decide which end you want it on, on your head or your behind?

This example was indicative of the types of behavior that six participants exhibited in reference to direct communication. Grace also gave an example of direct communication centered on her interactions with parents. After unsuccessful attempts at being tactful when discussing the lack of hygiene care from a mother to her child, Grace finally stated to the parent she had to address the cleanliness of the child. According to Grace, she told the parent directly, “Your child stank.”

The remaining one of seven participants stated she was very soft spoken. However, according to her, direct communication was handled through “the pen.” Georgia stated she was not confrontational or assertive in her verbal communication. Clarifying her thoughts, she stated she would enforce the rules but if the faculty and students did not abide by them, she would not verbally confront their lack of conformity. Instead, she would use disciplinary actions through “write-ups,” and associated
consequences for all involved. In her estimation, this method was just as effective, if not more for her style, at relaying her message and accomplishing her goals as principal.

Summary

The emergent findings on the former principals’ concepts of power were consistent with the literature in that each participant focused on democratic and shared forms of leadership (Adkison, 1981; Parker, 2001; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). In addition, they also used confrontational or assertive methods for communicating with their faculty and community. This finding was also consistent with prior research findings that stated African American female leader and principals styles included straightforward communication (Case, 1997; Chin, 2004; Loder, 2005a).

Table 5.1: Summary of Participants’ Roles and Understandings, Practices, Concept of Power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Leadership Understandings</th>
<th>Principal Understandings</th>
<th>Concepts of Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BMP,SL</td>
<td>GP,C,N,FS/C</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BMP,SL</td>
<td>GP,C,N,FAT</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BMP,L</td>
<td>WM,DN,C,N,FS/C</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BMP,SL</td>
<td>WM,DN,C,N,FS/C</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E,SL</td>
<td>WM,DN,C,N,FC</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BMP,SL</td>
<td>GP,WM,C,N,FS/C</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>BMP,BFT,SL</td>
<td>GP,C,N,FS/C</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F=Family Strong Influence; BMP=Black male principal; E=Experience with all faculty in education; GP=Principalship and Education as a good profession for Black females; C=Community; N=Nurturing; SL=Shared leadership; WM=Pushed by White Male; DN=Did not want to be administrator; L=Leading the group/faculty (in-front); FS/C=Females more sensitive or compassionate; FAT=Females more attuned to the students and operations; FC=Females are better communicators.
Through the exploration of the former principal experiences with their roles and understandings, practices, and concepts of power, I found their experiences to be very consistent with prior the prior findings listed in the literature. The former African American female principals were found to be school leaders that focused on uplifting African American communities through shared leadership with their professional peers and faculty, and community nurturing when addressing the students and their families.

Next, I will continue the exploration of the former principal experiences by addressing issues of race and gender through the second research question.

**Race and Gender: Womanist Understandings**

This section will examine the issues of race and gender by addressing the second research question: How do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions? The exploration of the second research question continues the examination of the inner dialogue of the participants and enables me to capture their principal experiences as African American females, a singular and collective entity whose realities inherently intersect at gender and race. Next, I will begin this exploration by further detailing the participants’ relationships with faculty and the community to show how they were situated between the intersections of race and gender. After I list their relationships, I will then use the Womanist Tool, my second lens to explore how the participants view themselves as African American female principals.

As explained previously, Womanist Theory is an approach under the umbrella of Black Feminism that is centered on illuminating the experiences of African American females by focusing on their views and realities as Black women who live and exist in at least two worlds. These two worlds involve their intersections with race and gender.
Using the Womanist Tool within the framework of Womanist Theory allows me to examine the experiences of the African American females by exploring their realities according to its four stages. These stages include: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. Through the four stages, African American females potentially progress through the acceptance of traditional sex roles and societal bias in the initial stage to a progressive internally defined female identity in the fourth stage (Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996).

**Principal Relationships: Biculturalism and Marginality**

Numerous studies on African American school leaders find that women in the field have faced a double-jeopardy because they could experience discrimination due to their race or gender status (Adkison, 1981). This lived circumstance was expressed and identified as biculturalism and marginality (LaFromboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993; Alfred, 2001). Closely related, both concepts detail a process where African Americans experience living in two cultures. For African American female leaders in education, studies find they are expected to be productive and effective in the workplace (mainstream culture) while maintaining semblance of an African identity. In other words, African American female leaders have had to create a fluid and dynamic living situation in both their mainstream and African American identities (Alfred, 2001).

For this study, I found that each participant experienced both racial and gender challenges that lead them to describe being marginalized or living within two cultures. These challenges occurred through relationships in two primary areas: faculty, administrators and teachers on the one hand; and, community which included parents...
and students on the other. In reference to faculty, all participants described challenges due to gender and/or race with fellow administrators. Each participant discussed these challenges and based their interpretations on groups of people versus individuals.

Exploring the primary groups involved, two participants experienced challenges with African American male administrators due to gender. Five participants experienced challenges with White male administrators due to gender and/or race. Three participants experienced challenges with African American female administrators due to gender. Lastly, two participants experienced challenges with White female administrators due to gender and race (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Summary of Participants’ Intersection with Gender, Race, and Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Overall Racial Challenges</th>
<th>Overall Gender Challenges</th>
<th>Black Female Administrators</th>
<th>White Female Administrators</th>
<th>Black Male Administrators</th>
<th>White Male Administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Y,GC,</td>
<td>Y,GC,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Y,GC,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Y,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Y,GC,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M,GC</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Y,GC,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M,GC</td>
<td>Y,GC,RC</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Y,GC,RC</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Y=Yes; N=No; GC=Gender challenges; RC=Racial challenges; PR=Positive Relationship; Ne=Neutral; M=Mixed of positive and negative.

Examples of gender and racial challenges from White male administrators, the highest number of negative experiences with all administrators according to the participants, can be seen in the experiences of Faye, Felicia, and Geraldine. Faye stated she heard from other African American female administrators that their White male assistant principals held animosity towards them because they believed White
males should be in charge of the schools. Some of these assistant principals were alleged to have engaged in undermining the authority of their head principals who were African American females. She attributed this behavior to what she also witnessed from White male administrators. She perceived that some White male administrators believed African Americans should be their subordinate because of race (and gender for African Americans females).

Referring to this situation even more, she suggested it was more of a male perception by stating, “…especially if you have male teachers or male assistant principals, there’s some people that still view women or women leaders, thinking that they should not or don’t want to listen to women.” Through this statement Faye was suggesting that even the Black male administrators within her county believed a male should be in charge. However, she still reiterated the problem of racial and gender challenges were particularly occurring with White male administrators by saying, “So that little stuff continues to go on,” indicating actions of the White male administrators were still motivated by race in addition to gender.

Felicia’s negative experiences with White male administrators occurred at the District level in meetings and conferences. Felicia stated she was ignored at several meetings by the attending White male administrators. According to her:

You could be at a meeting or whatever and you could come up with a point, and your point look like it was not taken. They come back, maybe thirty minutes later with the same thing that you said, and it’s like it’s a great idea.
Felicia resented this behavior by her fellow administrators and felt it was based more on racial challenges. In her view, she was not treated equally based solely on her racial make-up.

Geraldine stated her White male superintendent didn’t want to pay her a fair wage as a principal and was quoted as saying, “She’s a lady,” when asked to give his justification for the reason. In reflection, Geraldine stated she believed he meant it was because she was a “Black lady.” In addition, she stated she experienced a form of gender discrimination exclusively in her district meetings. She was the only female principal in her first appointed county and the male principals use to engage in “dirty joke telling” at the meetings. One day, the superintendent noticing her “stone-face” during one of the jokes, finally stated to the principals they would have to respect the lady and stop telling the inappropriate jokes. Although she experienced this behavior, she did admit on that day, the joke was particularly funny. In reference to this event she stated, “It was so funny I went into the bathroom and laughed, washed my face, and came back in just as straight-faced.” This allowed her to gain and maintain the respect of her fellow administrators.

Although the participants had challenges and negative experiences with various types of administrators, they also had neutral or very positive experiences. Five participants had these experiences with African American male administrators. Two participants had these experiences with White male administrators. Four participants had these experiences with African American female administrators. Five participants had these experiences with White female administrators. Collectively, the participants
stated African American male and White female administrators were the most helpful and respectful (see Table 5.2).

Examining the participants’ gender and racial experiences with teachers, two participants experienced challenges with African American male teachers due to gender. Two participants experienced challenges with White male teachers due to race and gender. Six participants experienced challenges with African American female teachers due to gender. Lastly, two participants experienced challenges with White female teachers due to race and gender. The most challenging demographic for the participants were with African American female teachers. Examples of these challenges can be seen with Faye, Felicia, Florida, Grace, Georgia, and Josephine. All six participants reported the teachers would challenge their authority on school policy and procedures solely due to their gender make-up. Quite simply, all six participants believed certain African American female teachers did not respect an African American female being in charge of their respective schools. Collectively, the participants believed the African American female teachers would not have challenged them in the same manner if they were male, Black or White (see Table 5.3).

Being consistent with their experiences with administrators, the participants also had positive or neutral experiences with teachers according to the following: Five participants had these experiences with African American male teachers. Five participants had these experiences with White male teachers. One participant had this experience with African American female teachers. Lastly, five participants had these experiences with White female teachers.
Table 5.3: Summary of Participants’ Intersection with Gender, Race, Teachers and Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Overall Racial Challenges</th>
<th>Overall Gender Challenges</th>
<th>Black Female Teachers</th>
<th>White Female Teachers</th>
<th>Black Male Teachers</th>
<th>White Male Teachers</th>
<th>Black Community</th>
<th>White Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faye</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>Y,GC, RC</td>
<td>Y,GC, RC</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldine</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Y,GC, RC</td>
<td>Y,RC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>Y,GC, RC</td>
<td>Y,GC, RC</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y,GC</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>Y,GC, RC</td>
<td>Y,RC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Y=Yes; N=No; GC=Gender challenges; RC=Racial challenges; PR=Positive Relationship; Ne=Neutral; M=Mixed of positive and negative experiences; CPer=Personality challenge.

Isolating African American male and White female teachers, two of the three highest groups for positive experiences, the participants believed they were very helpful and respectful of their authority. One participant also stated she believed the status of tenure affected the level of cooperation she received from the teachers. In her observation, she received more cooperation from beginning teachers and more resistance or challenges from teachers who had achieved tenure status (see Table 5.3). According to her suggestion, when this occurred, it was not affected by race or gender.

Looking at the last major section of relationships and the intersections of race and gender, the participants experienced a myriad of challenges in reference to the communities. Three of the participants stated the White parents in their schools’ community challenged their authority, competency, or leadership capability based on race. This included the use of disrespectful and obscene language, questioning their
knowledge on school matters, and resentment because Blacks were in charge (perception of participants). An example of this could be witnessed through Geraldine who stated explicitly, “I guess for me being a Black administrator, I had the challenge of having to deal with White parents.” She stated the former principal of her school was a White male and they were used to him (being in charge). See Table 5.3.

Continuing the discussion on community, five of the participants also reported gender or racial challenges with the Black parents, who were the majority of their communities. These challenges included very low participation with school matters, use of disrespectful and obscene language, questioning their knowledge on school matters, and resentment because Black females were in charge (perception of participants). An example of this could be seen through Felicia referring to one of her appointments and gender challenges by stating, “I had some rough parents there. So the majority of them I got along with, but the others, a lot of times they didn’t want you to discipline their kids.” See Table 5.3.

Josephine also realized the initial resentment of the Black community towards her appointment by stating, “They were accustomed to a male being the principal.” She continued by stating even race might play a part in the Black community because “They were trained that White is better.” Grace experienced more aggressive actions from the Black community due to race based on an allegation that the new principal (Grace) was changing the mascot. Grace has a very light complexion and a slight accent that is not considered a familiar tone or dialect within the Black community. When the Black parents of the community “heard” she was changing the name of the school mascot, they called the NAACP. Recalling this event, Grace was very upset and stated to them,
“That’s interesting that you all would call the NAACP on me for an issue. I’m Black! I may not be as dark as some of you are, but I’m still Black!”

Summary

The experiences of the participants in reference to the intersections of gender and race illustrated their realities included challenges based both on race and gender. Next, I will use my second lens, the Womanist Tool, to further understand how the former principals interpreted their principal experiences and its affect on their self identity as African American female administrators.

Womanist Tool: Progression of Identity Models

In order to ascertain their level of self-definition in reference to identity, I analyzed the participants’ interview data and used an adaption of the Womanist Identity Development Model, originally developed and listed by Helms in 1991 (Parks, Carter & Gushue, 1996). This identity model was a progressive tool based on Cross’s Black Racial Identity Theory from 1971, and Downing and Roush’s Feminist Identity Model from 1985 (Downing & Roush, 1985; Parks, Carter & Gushue, 1996). See Table 5.4

Participant Identity: Womanist View

The interview data was separated into fifteen questions that elicited responses in reference to the participants’ experiences and their interactions with gender and race. In addition, five more questions were designed to explore their racial or gender experiences, two centering on race, and the other three on gender respectfully (Felicia and Grace did not sit for the 2nd interview and only answered ten questions centered on gender and race, two centered on gender exclusively, and two on race exclusively).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Racial Identity Model</th>
<th>Adapted Black Racial Identity Model, Various Researchers</th>
<th>Feminist Identity Model</th>
<th>Womanist Identity Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971, Cross</td>
<td>Pre-encounter</td>
<td>Passive Acceptance</td>
<td>Pre-encounter (Womanist I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposition accepted, self concept is negative, person is unaware.</td>
<td>Acceptance of traditional sex roles, women are considered inferior.</td>
<td>Societal biases are denied. Traditional sex roles accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounter</td>
<td>Encounter</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>Encounter (Womanist II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposition is rejected, feelings of anger and guilt.</td>
<td>Questioning of self and roles brought on by a series of crisis, feeling of anger and guilt, men are negative.</td>
<td>Confusion, gender roles are questioned. Solutions to role conflicts are tentatively explored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion-Emersion</td>
<td>Immersion-Emersion</td>
<td>Embeddedness-Emanation</td>
<td>Immersion-Emersion (Womanist III)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Person withdraws from dominant culture. Hostile towards Whites.</td>
<td>Relationships formed with select women, interactions with men are done cautiously, strength in new identity.</td>
<td>Women are idealized and intense relationships with women are formed. Feminist stance is externally based and causes hostility towards men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Internalization (Womanist IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive self image, more objective towards Whites (non-racist).</td>
<td>Transcendence of sex roles, men are evaluated individually, positive feminist identity.</td>
<td>Female identity is internally defined and integrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization-Commitment</td>
<td>Internalization-Commitment</td>
<td>Active Commitment</td>
<td>Traditional roles and feminist viewpoints are not relied upon and don’t dominate views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment, focus on new self and benefitting the minority community.</td>
<td>Men are viewed equally, social change becomes priority, solid feminist identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After analyzing this specific data set, I found all seven participants to have an identity that supported the belief that African American females could be efficient leaders and professionals in educational leadership. In addition, they also held their own individual
beliefs on the roles and practices of female administrators that differed from male administrators. Each of the participants’ overall views did not contain traditional outlooks on female roles or feminist points of view. For example, for all participants, nurturing was treated as an empowering leadership strategy and embraced as a strong leadership quality.

Further exploring this collective and individual identity using the Womanist Tool confirmed each participant held an internally defined concept of self which placed them in the fourth progressive stage, internalization. This conclusion was drawn through an examination of all four stages of the Womanist Tool and the interview data. For example, in the pre-encounter stage (Womanist I), the individual accepts traditional sex roles and has a denial of societal bias (Parks, Carter & Gushue, 1996). In this study, all seven participants were aware of societal biases and openly identified and held the perception they experienced challenges due to race and gender. The positions and understandings of the participants did not fit this stage.

In the encounter stage (Womanist II), the individual is in a state of confusion and questions gender roles. She also initiates tentative exploration of solutions to role conflicts (Parks, Carter and Gushue, 1996). No participant was confused about their gender role. In fact, all participants believed they were good leaders and socialized in their youth to believe in female forms of leadership, as good leadership. In addition, the participants used sensitivity and feminine styles of leadership as the direct opposite of masculinity for methods of strategy to operate their schools and interact with communities. This suggests each participant was beyond tentative exploration for “role
conflicts” and embraced alternative ways of leading. This further suggests the participants were resolved, the exact opposite of confused.

In the immersion-emersion stage, the individual is focused on: an externally based feminist stance; hostility toward men; idealization of women; and intense relationships with other women (Parks, Carter & Gushue, 1996). No participant exhibited overt or underlining negative feelings towards all men. Also, no participant expressed an ideal notion of women. However, through the interview process, it became evident that all seven participants believed women were more “in tune” when leading schools from a “whole community” perspective, attending to the social and educational needs of the community. This potential bias of female leadership being more effective, still carried high levels of objectivity when the participants discussed relationships. The participants exhibited an objective view of positive and negative relationships with men and women, both Black and White. This objective view even extended to their childhood through the recognition of “good” administrative leadership as exhibited by Black male principals.

In the fourth and final stage, internalization, the individual’s views evolve into an internally defined and integrated female identity without undue reliance on either traditional roles or feminist points of view (Parks, Carter & Gushue, 1996, p. 625). Each participant exhibited a confidence and belief in female leadership and the attributes that accompanied female ways of leading, such as nurturing. They embraced this style as empowering, not deficient as traditionally viewed in reference to leadership qualities. This belief suggested a double meaning. By embracing feminine styles of leadership, the participants simultaneously rejected traditional views on effective leadership through
masculine principles, and feminist viewpoints by using strategies “as females” to manage faculty, teachers, and students. This suggests traditional masculine views of leadership and feminist points of view could be used interchangeably. This further suggests the willingness to operate in this fashion shows an internally driven identity that rejects the external identity that encourages an “either or” attitude in reference to use of masculinity and feminine styles of leadership.

**Summary**

In reviewing the first research question, I found the participants realities to be consistent and similar to existing research on African American female principals. In reference to roles and understandings, like previous research on African American female principals, the participants of this study received their ideas of leadership from the socialization of their families and schooling in their youth (Adkison, 1981; Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Hackett & Byars, 1996). In addition, the emergent findings in this study on principal practices and concepts of power were also consistent with previous research on African American female principals. According to the literature and current understandings, African American female practices in the principalship involves shared leadership styles, a communal focus based on nurturing, and central principal activity based on the ethno-humanist role. In addition, the African American female principals' nurturing was found to be centered on a special type of nurturing labeled othermothering (Lomotey, 1993; Case, 1997; Parker, 2001; Tillman, 2004; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

In reference to race and gender, the findings in the study supported previous research that stated women of color could be heavily impacted in their careers by racial
and/or gender challenges, increasing their chances for double marginalization (Hite, 2004). In this study, all seven participants experienced marginalization to some degree through racial and/or gender challenges. In addition, based on their collective experiences, when examining their self-identities, each participant’s interpretations of their realities and self, placed them in the internalization (Womanist IV) stage of the Womanist Identity Model. According to Parks, Carter and Gushue (1996), in this stage, African American females have an identity that is based on self-definition and contain an integrated female identity that is not centered on traditional roles or feminist concepts.

Furthermore, in reference to identity, each participant identified themselves using a term that placed them in the African American category. These terms ranged from African American, Black, to Negro. Also, when five participants were questioned on whether they would advocate for gender or racial issues, giving the option of only one, four of the participants stated race and the remaining participant stated it would have to be situational (two participants did not sit for the 2nd interview which contained this question). The latter participant indicated in some instances it would be race, and in other situations, she would advocate for gender equality. These responses are clear examples the females were attuned to the overall racial identity of being African Americans, and their activities were based on conscious decisions as African American females. Overall, this study overwhelmingly showed that each participant was well aware of their status as African American females in their respective school communities which included professional interactions with administrators, teachers, and parents.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

My study was designed as a narrative life history to explore and document the experiences of veteran African American female principals according to their own words and centered on two primary research questions:

1. How do African American female principals conceptualize principal roles, practices, and concept of power as educational leaders in the various communities they serve?
2. How do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions?

While there were areas in which my findings were consistent and built on prior research, there were others that were different and provided new perspectives on the experiences of African-American female leaders. These areas will be illuminated as I summarize the findings of chapters four and five. Specifically, I will begin this chapter by identifying the findings that are consistent with and build on prior studies. Second, I will explore new findings to the field of inquiry and discuss findings that were not consistent with prior research. Following this, I will discuss the implications of my findings by discussing this study’s contribution to research on leadership, practice and theory as well as areas for future research.

Consistent with Prior Research

Through the exploration of the research questions, this study has added to the current literature on principalships by giving African American female principals a voice both consistent and different from those found in prior research on administrative
leadership. The experiences of the former principals detailed several realities that have been noted in previous literature but also illuminated other professional realities that have not been addressed. The following sections detail the consistent and additional findings of this study and their contributions to the literature on leadership.

In the first part of the study, I detailed the participant’s demographic information which included elements of their family life and details surrounding their principal appointments. Based on the findings from the participants’ experiences with principal appointments, I found several areas that were consistent with prior research. The literature on African American female principal appointments detailed they were more likely to be assigned to elementary schools and/or schools that characteristically shared the challenges or traits of urban schools. These challenges included schools with a: majority of Black students; high percentage of students with families placed in the lower socioeconomic category; and, reputation for being a challenge or considered tumultuous situations (Adkison, 1981; Collier-Thomas, 1982; Bloom and Erlandson, 2003; Tillman, 2004; Gooden, 2005; Loder, 2005a).

The findings of this study supported previous research in those areas listed above. Five of seven participants received principalships in elementary schools. In addition, all seven participants received Title I principalships with a majority of African American students. Taken collectively, these findings suggest that administrative opportunities for African American female principals are not only consistent, they may also be prescriptive as detailed by the types of appointments African American females receive for their principalships.
Next, I will discuss the findings that were consistent with prior research according to the research questions.

**Roles and Understandings**

The literature on African American females and leadership stated their concepts and understandings of leadership originated as young girls in their communities (Adkison, 1981; Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995; Hackett & Byars, 1996; Trinidad and Normore, 2004; Chin, 2004). The findings in my study supported this prior research. Illuminating the participants' early influences, all seven participants could trace their understandings of leadership back to their family life. Each participant also had the common element of strong female leadership through their mothers or grandmothers. In addition, the matriarchs of the participants' families exhibited leadership that was not illustrated according to traditional masculinity.

Instead, the African American female matriarchs exhibited this leadership proudly as nurturing mothers and grandmothers. As a result, my study also found that all seven participants believed they could be effective administrators without conforming to traditional male forms of leadership. This finding was consistent with Hackett and Byars (1996), and Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey (1995) who noted the same perceptions approximately two and a half decades ago. This finding also suggests that the socialization of African American females may still be consistently geared towards a strong emphasis built on female leadership in African American communities.

Expanding the area of early influences, the participants’ understandings of leadership from a schooling perspective began with their childhood administrators and teachers. Six participants traced their example of good school leadership to their
childhood administrators who were all Black males. This supported the literature that stated African American principals were found to provide positive leadership in the school communities (Tillman, 2004; Loder, 2005a).

The view of the principalship and overall motivations of the participants in reference to the principalship, were centered on the participants’ belief of success in education as a profession and focus on uplifting their school’s community through involvement. All seven principals were influenced by the belief that education was a good and viable profession for African American females. In addition, each participant also had a desire to improve the academic welfare of their schools’ communities through nurturing which also supported previous findings on African American female principals (Case, 1997; Tillman, 2004; Loder, 2005a).

Next, I will expand the discussion to explore the findings based on the participants’ actual practices.

**Principal Practices**

Principal practices were found to be exhibited through two major functions, administrator/bureaucrat and ethno-humanist roles. Discussing principals’ function, all seven participants were found to have engaged in both roles with a higher focus on the ethno-humanist role. This supported previous research that identified African American females as actively practicing both roles, centering their principalships on the latter (Lomotey, 1993, Tillman, 2004; Gooden, 2005). As a central piece of their function, each participant held the view of educating the whole child from a community perspective. Examples of this included providing childcare for parents during school meetings held in the evening, to finding shelter for the homeless. The function of the
participants was clearly centered on the vision of advancing Black communities. This suggests that African American female principals, as African Americans, still have a high sense of obligation towards uplifting or advancing Black communities.

Furthermore, all seven believed female leadership was more sensitive and focused on interpersonal interactions and nurturing. In addition, they also believed the feminine style of principalships was more helpful to the community, embracing traditional feminine concepts of leadership. This suggests that although the majority of the participants identified strong leadership in schools through Black male principals in their early influences, they were more influenced by the concepts and messages of leadership through their matriarchal figures. Reason being, this same majority of participants perceived their greatest success as a leader had to include a democratic form of leadership patterned after feminine styles of leadership, in order for them to be most successful. This suggestion leads us to my next area of findings, the participant’s concepts of power.

**Concepts of Power**

In this study I found the former principals’ concepts of power was heavily rooted in their chosen styles of leadership. Prior research on principal styles identify two traditional contrasting forms of leadership based on male and female leaders. According to this strand of research, male principal behaviors and practices are deeply rooted in masculinity and a more linear approach to leadership (Adkison, 1981; Parker, 2001; Chin, 2004; Northhouse, 2004, Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Male leaders exhibit a more linear style of leadership that included a hierarchical approach based on initiating structure and being autonomous. This style of leadership also included an emphasis on
aggressiveness, independence, and unilateral or directive communication with the intent of control (Adkison, 1981; Connor & Sharp, 1992; Grogan, 1999, 2000; Parker, 2001; Fennell, 2002; Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

In contrast, female leaders' styles are centered on relationships which include interpersonal caring and communication centered on collaboration and support. Female principal leadership held a consistent theme based on democratic leadership, more collaborative behaviors, more concern for students, and a higher level of community activism (Adkison, 1981; Grogan, 2000; Parker, 2001; Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). In addition to these general female leadership styles, studies find that African American female principals exhibit a specific type of caring for students and their communities that Loder calls “othermothering” (Loder, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). As part of this, African American females’ styles also include being direct, confrontational or assertive and straightforward in their communication (Case, 1997; Chin, 2004; Loder, 2005a).

My study found that all seven participants believed the most appropriate way to accomplish the overall goals of improving those communities was by practicing shared or democratic leadership. This finding supported previous literature that asserted African American female principalships were focused on shared leadership instead of masculine dictatorial control (Adkison, 1981; Parker, 2001; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). Reviewing the participants’ principal styles revealed all seven participants chose to actively employ the use of feminine styles of leadership as the best way to reach their communities. All seven participants’ principal styles included this shared leadership as well as interpersonal caring and communication centered on collaboration and support.
As a result, all seven styles of leadership were consistently focused on an overall goal of democratic leadership, high level of concern for students, and a high level of community activism. This supported previous findings in the literature that stated African American female principalships contained those aforementioned characteristics (Adkison, 1981; Grogan, 2000; Parker, 2001; Chin, 2004; Northouse, 2004; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

In addition, my findings also supported the findings of Case (1997), Chin (2004) and Loder (2005a) who contended that African American female styles also included being direct, confrontational or assertive and straightforward in their communication. This communication was found to be the centerpiece of seven of the former principals. This suggests that the former principals were not only comfortable with their perception of strong female leadership, they purposely employed it as effective ways of leading as an administrator.

**Intersections of Race and Gender**

Previous research on African American female leaders found that many of them felt marginalized due to their gender and racial make-up (Parker, 2001). This study supported that line of research through each participant. Each former principal described feeling marginalized at some point of their career, reporting challenges due to race and/or gender. Although the term marginalized was not used explicitly, by reporting their challenges, they described an atmosphere that adversely affected them because of both of their characteristics. Most of these challenges occurred through their relationships with fellow administrators, teachers, or the community.
In reference to fellow administrators, all seven participants experienced challenges with their colleagues due to race and/or gender. Collectively, the group of administrators that posed the highest level of challenges for the participants were White males. The majority of participants that experienced challenges from this group of males stated their difficulties were due to race and gender. Part of these challenges included being ignored at district meetings and difficulties with attaining equal pay. These challenges also included a power struggle between White male assistant principals who were perceived as “undermining” the authority of the participants. It was perceived that the assistant White male principals would act as if they were in charge and resent the African American female principals for taking charge when necessary. This suggests the tensions between White male administrators and African American female principals may be still be occurring as traditionally documented.

**Findings Not Consistent with Prior Research**

In the previous section I discussed my findings that were consistent with prior research on African American female principal experiences. In this section, I will list the findings that are not consistent with the literature on their experiences.

Reviewing the data on African American experiences and relationships, I found they also experienced good relationships with administrators and teachers. Generally, participants reported that African American male and White female administrators were found to be the most respectful and helpful in terms of leadership assistance. Collectively, the participants believed these two groups of fellow administrators were the most cooperative and focused group of leaders in the school system. In reference to teachers, the participants’ experiences mirrored the same positive experience with
administrators. African American males and White females were perceived to be the most respectful, helpful, and driven. This finding suggested racial and gender relations for African American female principals could be positive and accepted from two groups that have been documented to traditionally marginalize them. This further suggests a progressive atmosphere for the acceptance of African American female principals and their associated leadership.

Reviewing the relationships of teachers, my study also found that participants described challenges or difficulties that they attributed to tensions around race and/or gender. Collectively, the group that posed the highest level of challenges for the participants were African American female teachers. My study found the participants overwhelmingly had great difficulties with this body of faculty. This finding did not support the literature by Dill (1983) who suggested African American women were found to have a “sisterhood” based on common oppression. This reality of a sisterhood was not found in my study.

Expanding the realities of the participants with the intersections of race and gender to the community, my study found that three of the participants experienced challenges, difficulties and tensions with their White population. According to the participants, these challenges were due to race. In addition, five of the participants experienced the same exact challenges with the Black population due to race and the added tension of gender. The behavior of the White and Black parents included challenging the participants' authority, competency, or leadership capabilities on school matters.
Each participant that reported these challenges believed the White parents within their schools’ communities were basing their behavior solely on race, holding a traditional view that Whites were more competent. The Black parents were perceived to prefer male leadership and also challenged competency levels due to social conditioning on race. However, the participants experiencing this reality with the Black community placed gender tensions before racial tensions. Even still, the participants perceived a White principal would not have experienced as much tension. On this subject, one participant explicitly stated, “A lot of our people were trained that White is better.” Sections of both White and Black parents would use obscene language, openly question the knowledge of the principals on the principalship, and held resentment for the participants because they were African American and in charge.

**Contributions to Research**

Through the exploration of the research questions, this study has added to the current literature on principalships by giving African American female principals a voice, illuminating alternative realities in administrative leadership. Some of the findings within this study supported previous research findings on the African American female principalships. However, the overall experiences of the former principals detailed a professional reality that included leadership understandings and practices that deviated from traditional leadership set according to masculine and majority racial understandings.

In this study all seven former principals reported feeling marginalized and dealt with challenges associated with the intersections of gender and race. The former principals discussed their interactions with Black and White faculty, and the community.
They also discussed their interactions and dealings with females and males of both racial groups. In their discussions, they collectively described navigating between the different groups by changing their assertions and levels of direct confrontation to examples of compassion in order to be effective principals. These findings suggest African American female principals have to operate in at least two worlds based on race. However, their worlds may also contain an additional intersection when dealing with gender in both communities. As illustrated with the participants relationship with the African American professionals and parents, at times their gender caused more challenges than their race, especially when they experienced these challenges with other African American females.

For example, when reviewing relationships, the participants experienced a majority of administrative challenges from African American female teachers based on gender in reference to faculty. In addition, they also experienced more administrative challenges from the African American community than White communities based on racial and gender issues. These issues suggest that African American female challenges, tensions and support cannot be prescriptively assigned to one race or gender. The current findings invoke questions about African American female principalships that have not been fully explored. Why were African American female principals found to have the greatest challenges with African American female teachers in reference to faculty? Why were African American female principals found to have the greatest challenges with African American female parents when comparing the Black community with the White community?
Future researchers may want to further explore the relationships of African American female principals with those who are appointing and working with them to ascertain a better understanding to those questions. One recent example of this kind of scholarship is Brockenbrough (2012) who used narrative life history and explored the relationships between Black male teachers, female teachers and administrators in various public schools in a large urban setting. According to the findings within his study, the majority of the African American male teachers showed a disdain for female authority, had confrontational encounters with their female colleagues, and a willingness to undermine female authority based on their views of female power.

Lastly, future researchers may also want to further explore the relationships between African American female principals and the African American communities. Lomotey (1993) suggested former successes of African American principals in African American communities may have been attributed to homophily. This referred to effective communication and interaction between school leaders and the community based on commonalities. The findings of this study suggest this may no longer be the case. The racial and gender challenges received by the participants from the African American communities in this study were not consistent with traditional findings on African American female principal experiences. However, their leadership focus on community was still found to be consistent with previous research.

As stated previously, prior research found the main role of African American and African American female principals was centered on helping to uplift the African American community (Lomotey, 1993; Tillman, 2004; Gooden, 2005). The previous research findings and realities, coupled with the realities found in this study, have
formed new questions in reference to how the community views African American female leaders. Researchers should further explore why African American female principals experience the most challenges from the section of the communities they are placing most of their efforts for improvement. The answer to this question and similar questions, could potentially increase parent participation levels, academic achievement, and overall, the African American community as a whole.

**Contributions to Practice**

This study has added valuable evidence to current understandings on African American female principal practices identified in the literature. By examining the former principals’ experiences through their roles and understandings, practices and concepts of power, I was able to document their unique learning stories that helped shape their realities (McGough, 2003). Although unique for each participant, several consistent realities and experiences developed that illustrated a possible common core experience for African American female principals. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the implications of the findings and future research in reference to leadership practices.

The successes and positive leadership experiences by the participants illuminated a collective practice of leading through community involvement. As previously discussed, each participant consciously chose to involve and become involved with the community as a way of educating the whole child. These practices were described through the ethno-humanist role and specifically delivered through othermothering which is a maternal, nurturing type of leadership focused on meeting the needs of students. It was also noted that othermothering was a common practice traced to slavery and involved African American females fulfilling the needs of children in their
vicinity, within their respective communities (Case, 1997; Loder, 2005a). This suggests that leadership, and particularly school leadership in African American communities, is traditionally and culturally intertwined with a communal focus and community activism delivered through maternal caring. Educational leaders that are placed or will be placed in African American neighborhoods should be aware of this common form of leadership practiced in African American communities.

Professional development programs for school leaders might want to include the practices of African American female principals as a part of their training programs for the principalship. Green and King (2001) argued that development programs for African American female leaders often fell short of being adequate and inadequate in preparing them for leadership in comparison to their male counterparts. Due to increasing populations of African American students in America’s school system as a collective, collectively school leadership could benefit exponentially in the area of effective practices by becoming aware of how to relate to a large percentage of its students. Through the sharing of African American female philosophies and leadership understandings, approach to the communities in which they serve, and how they yield and wield their leadership authority, the larger body of educational administration could benefit from positive examples of success.

I am further suggesting a component including the experiences and practices of African American female principals within professional development programs could begin the process of addressing the inadequacies and lack of information in educational administration. This component would specifically include an in-depth view and examination into effective feminine styles of leadership focused on successful female
leaders in urban or Title I schools. Since there is a higher concentration of African American female principals among this group of leaders, by default, African American female leadership would be illuminated and explored.

Tirozzi (2001) recognized a need for increasing minority leadership in schools due to the increase of minority student populations. I am suggesting a sound and stronger development program should also be included. Increased awareness may yield higher school achievement and parent participation levels for schools that have historically been viewed as underachievers.

**Contributions to Theory**

Through this study, the findings indicate a need for further research to better detail the commonalities and levels of sisterhood for African American and White females. I am not stating the theoretical tenets of Black feminism or sisterhood are no longer valid or legitimate. I am suggesting based on my current findings, leadership research and theoretical constructs could benefit from addressing the different levels and types of sisterhood that exist across and within racial and gender intersections.

The participants of the study defined themselves as African Americans and embraced being African American female leaders in a field traditionally dominated by males. Even though they felt marginalized within and by various school systems, they all believed they had rewarding careers that they would repeat. Many of the challenges they discussed were traditionally defined in the literature such as challenges due to race and gender. The challenges commonly listed in the literature for African American female principals were often caused by White males, Black males, or White females (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003; Case, 1997; Delany &
Rogers, 2004; Loder, 2005a; Loder, 2005b; Tillman, 2004). However, my study found that the intersections of race and gender involved racial and gender challenges being invoked in two distinct ways (from different groups) that have not been the focus of leadership studies. As stated previously, these ways involved the challenging relationships between African American female principals and African American females in both faculty and the community.

From an overall perspective, based on the findings of the study, the participants had the most challenges from White male administrators, African American female teachers, and African American communities. The challenges with White male administrators have been documented as mentioned previously. However, an experience with more challenges from African American female teachers and African American communities in comparison to White teachers and White communities has not been documented. In this study, the participants held a perception that both the African American female teachers and African American communities were challenging them because they were female and/or African American.

Traditional theory has emphasized racial and gender discrimination occurring from Whites and males respectively. The findings in this study do not refute those traditional understandings. However, based on the challenges of the seven participants, the suggestion is that theories built on racial and gender tensions between different races, should also expand and explore these tensions within races. For example, the most helpful and respectful administrators for the participants were African American males and White females. Mirroring those same groups, African American male and White female teachers were also found to be the most helpful and respectful. The
findings in this study on the participants’ relationships with African American female faculty and parents in the communities could indicate that racial and gender tensions exist among African American communities and their African American female leaders based on gender and race.

The relationships described above were illuminated because they helped shape the racial and gender understandings of the principals. When exploring how they defined themselves, all participants identified with being African American females as individuals and professionals. They held the belief that their experiences were unique in comparison to African American and White males, and White females because they had to deal with race and gender issues. Their identity with internalization, the fourth stage of the Womanist Model, was a result of social conditioning as children and their experiences with race and gender within and beyond their communities. This result was an identity based on being between both a majority and minority culture that accepted and rejected them simultaneously.

To the participants, the tensions within the intersections of gender and race were not experienced as commonly listed in the literature with race being a point of contention with just Whites and gender being a point of tension with just males. Instead, their experiences involved realities that were based on tensions not commonly listed in the literature. These findings could add to several current understandings in reference to African American female professionals and Black feminism.

According to the research of Dill, (1983), Collins (1986, 1989), Banks-Wallace (2000), Parker (2001), and King and Ferguson (2001), Black feminists are placed in a specialized category confronting both racial and gender stereotypes and challenges.
Collins (1986) suggested Black feminism was developed by African American females because feminism failed to address marginalization due to gender and race. Womanist Theory is an approach within Black feminist thought. The findings of my study illuminated the identity of the participants in the internalization stage of the Womanist Model included a reality not indicated by previous researchers. The participants received most of their challenges from African American females in the profession and in the community. This experience usurped all other challenges from every other demographic of professionals and community members, including White male administrators that posed challenges to them because of their race and gender.

Through African American teachers and African American females in Black communities, the participants’ intersections of gender and race were intertwined within and outside of: White professionals and communities; African American professionals and communities; and, males and females from both majority and minority areas. In terms of greater significance, gender and racial challenges occurred with African American females. Gender acceptance occurred with African American males with no signs of racial discrimination or challenges. Lastly, White females overall, were found to accept the participants, not engaging in challenges due to race or gender. This could support Davis (1983) who suggested a sisterhood between White and Black women was a possibility. It also suggests this sisterhood could be occurring more frequently than the research has documented and there could be a divide or different understanding between African American female professionals. Dill (1983) indicated a sisterhood among African American females existed based on a shared oppression. Davis (1990) indicated that Black feminism illuminated Black women maintained a
certain commonality as a group. This suggests that a universal sisterhood among professional African American females may not longer exist. However, as noted, further research is needed to address this issue.

**Conclusion**

Through the exploration of the research questions, this study gave seven African American female principals a voice, illuminating their standpoints and alternative realities in administrative leadership. Some of the findings within this study supported previous research findings on the principalship and some of them shed new light on possible new findings. This conclusion gives credence to the notion that research on African American female principals is vital and necessary to understand a growing population of professionals that have traditionally been omitted from leadership literature on two counts, by race and gender. As researchers further understand their unique standpoints and realities, the field of education becomes more equipped to better serve its people and purpose.
APPENDIX A

STUDY SYNOPSIS

African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study

Hello, my name is Curtis Williams, a Ph.D. candidate from the College of Education, Florida State University. I am currently involved in a research study entitled African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study at Florida State University. We received your name as a former practicing administrator and are currently asking you to participate in this research study. You were selected as a possible participant because you were identified as a former practicing African American female principal in the States of Florida, Georgia and/or referred through one of your former colleagues.

The purpose of this study is to explore the specific African American female leadership in the field of education with a centralized focus on principals by describing their lives and experiences as leaders. African American female leadership has been overlooked in the field of education and needs to be isolated, illuminated, and dissected for a more comprehensive view of leadership. In order for the field of education to be effective, it must be inclusive, ultimately emphasizing the diverse body that comprises the make-up of the institution.

The primary focus of this study is to address the omission of research on African American female principals in the field of education. Although the field of education is beginning to address the traditional research pattern of racial omission in the area of educational research, the focus of inquiry is still in its infancy and this project will actively engage in a campaign to include more diverse voices for an ever changing and diverse culture.

If you are interested in sharing your leadership experiences, you will be asked to participate in two individual interviews set approximately two (2) to three (3) months apart. The interview questions will focus on your experiences as an administrator in the field of education and early life events that involved examples of leadership. In the initial interview session, I will ask exploratory questions to understand your experiences with leadership prior to and as an administrator. The second set of interview questions will be focused on themes from the first session and further explore your experiences. If you are interested in participating in this study, please write your contact information in the designated areas listed on the second page and return this form with the enclosed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Curtis Williams at XXX or XXX-XXXX. Thank you.

Curtis Williams
Ph.D. Candidate
Florida State University
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APPENDIX B

EMAIL AND LETTER RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study

Hello, my name is Curtis Williams and I am involved in a research study entitled *African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study* at Florida State University. We received your name as a former practicing administrator and are currently asking you to participate in a research study.

We are asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about the experiences of African American female principals. You will be asked to participate in two individual interviews that will last approximately 2.5 hours per session. The interview questions will focus on your experiences as an administrator in the field of education and early life events that involved examples of leadership. In the initial interview session, I will ask exploratory questions to understand your experiences with leadership prior to and as an administrator. The second set of interview questions will be focused on themes from the first session and further explore your experiences. Each interview session will be audio recorded and conducted in the most convenient location of your choosing. Although each interview session will be recorded, your answers will be reported anonymously and any personal information such as your name will be treated as confidential information. If you prefer to not be recorded, you may still participate in the study and I will honor your request. Your participation is voluntary, and you can stop the survey or interview at any time without any penalty to you.

You will not benefit directly from participating in this research study. However, the field of education will benefit from your participation in research on African American female principals. In addition, you will not be paid for participating in this research study.

As stated previously, your information will be treated in a confidential manner. Dr. Stacey Rutledge, Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies will have access to your information to verify your participation. In addition, for the audio recorded interviews, you have the right to review and edit the final product. Once I have listened to the recorded interviews and compared them with my notes, I will document the information and erase the recordings. As a note, Dr. Stacey Rutledge can request to hear the recordings to verify their validity. If that is the case, the recordings will be erased after she listens to them and reviews the documentation.

All personal information and other data collected for this project will be coded using numeric identifiers and placed in a password protected data drive (hard drive). Dr. Stacey Rutledge and I will be the only individuals with access to the data drive. In addition, the data drive will be stored in a secure location in a locked file cabinet located in a room with a lock on the entrance door. These measures will be taken to further ensure access is only granted to me, the principal researcher, and Dr. Stacey Rutledge. We will take these appropriate measures so that reasonable assurance for confidentiality will be maintained. Confidentiality can be protected only to the
extent permitted by law. The audio recordings will be erased as described earlier. However, all documented information will be kept in the secure location with the confidentiality measures for the recommended time of three years. After the three year period, the information will be discarded appropriately. Lastly, the information used in this study will only be used for the purposes of this research project.

Do you have approximately five hours to participate in this research study? Would you like to participate now or at a later time? If so, let’s schedule the two interviews for August and October 2012.

**Answering the survey/interview questions that I will ask means that you consent to participate in this research project. Do you have any questions?**

The following questions will be discussed in the initial interview:

a) What is the role of leadership?

b) Who can you attribute with framing your view of leadership?

c) Did you experience good leadership in education as a youth?

d) What was your perceived role as principal in this school community and neighborhood?

e) What was your greatest strength in reference to the principalship?

f) What was your greatest challenge in reference to the principalship?

-g) How did you become an administrator?

h) Did you perceive and/or experience any barriers while trying to attain an administrative position? If so, what were they?

i) What challenges did you experience as an administrator?

j) Please describe your leadership style.

k) Please describe your relationship with your fellow administrators, teachers, and students.

l) In the case of disagreements or conflicts among staff and/or students, what methods were used for resolution?
m) Do you feel any of your challenges or conflicts were because of your gender and/or race? If so, please explain.

n) Did you have any mentors prior to becoming principal? If so, how were they instrumental?

o) Did you have any mentors that assisted you with challenges in administration?

p) Do you think the “playing field” has been leveled for female administrators?

q) Do you think the “playing field” has been leveled for African American administrators?

r) Do you think the “playing field” has been leveled for African American female administrators?

s) Is there any skill or mechanism that has assisted you with being an administrator (i.e. life skills, childhood development, professional training)?

t) In comparison to other principals, do you think males and females practice leadership differently? Does race effect leadership or how leaders are received and/or perceived?

u) How effective were you as principal of your assigned school(s) and within the school(s) community?

v) What advice, if any, could you offer future African American female administrators?

w) What advice, if any, could you offer all future administrators?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Curtis Williams at XXX or XXX-XXXX.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the FSU IRB at 850-644-8633 or humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu.
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

FSU Behavioral Consent Form
African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study
You are invited to be in a research study of African American female principals and their leadership experiences. You were selected as a possible participant because you were identified as a former practicing African American female principal in the States of Florida, Georgia and/or referred through one of your former colleagues. We encourage you to read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study.
This study is being conducted by Curtis Williams, a Ph.D. candidate from the College of Education, Florida State University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the specific African American female leadership in the field of education with a centralized focus on principals by describing their lives and experiences as leaders. African American female leadership has been overlooked in the field of education and needs to be isolated, illuminated, and dissected for a more comprehensive view of leadership. In order for the field of education to be effective, it must be inclusive, ultimately emphasizing the diverse body that comprises the make-up of the institution.
The primary focus of this study is to address the omission of research on African American female principals in the field of education. Although the field of education is beginning to address the traditional research pattern of racial omission in the area of educational research, the focus of inquiry is still in its infancy and this project will actively engage in a campaign to include more diverse voices for an ever changing and diverse culture. Based on the dearth of literature and body of knowledge in reference to African American female leadership, the primary focus of the project will be centered on two questions:

1. How do African American female principals conceptualize principal roles, style, and concept of power as educational leaders in the various communities they serve?

2. How do African American female principals make sense of race and gender in their leadership positions?

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in an in-depth, audio-taped interview focused on your childhood experiences, leadership experiences, and leadership practices. The interview should take approximately 2.5 hours to conduct.

2. Participate in a follow-up audio-taped interview based on themes and patterns discovered during the first in-depth interview to further explore your leadership experiences and influences. This interview should take approximately 2.5 hours.
Risks and benefits of being in the Study:
The study will involve minimal risks because only your name, contact information, and formerly assigned school name and address will be obtained. This information will only be available for Curtis Williams, the primary researcher and faculty advisor. However, the information of the study will be handled in a confidential manner in which all participants and schools will be assigned a pseudonym and number respectively. The questions are designed to elicit participant responses in reference to their leadership influences and experiences. Every participant will be a former practicing administrator in the field of education. The project will handle all retrieved and obtained information in a confidential manner and conduct the interviews at the discretion of the former African American female principals.

The benefits to participation are based in the form of contributions to a growing area of educational research. Continued research on African American female leaders, principals in particular, is important because not only is it understudied, many opportunities for African American females in leadership positions occur in schools that are very challenging, plagued with problems (especially inner city schools), and contain a large percentage of minority students. Understanding of African American female principals’ experience through a descriptive analysis of their perceptions and experiences enables researchers to raise awareness of issues that are paramount to their successes, impediments to their existence, and act as barriers within the administrative field. Your participation will enable you to take an active part in this understanding.

Furthermore, women in general have continued to advance in educational administration increasing the need for scholarship focused on a more diverse set of issues. By focusing on the perceptions of the issues associated with being an African American female principal (singularly and collectively), those aforementioned issues will be defined through the experiences and interpretation of individuals involved with everyday challenges of being a principal in a profession that was traditionally modeled after male leadership. By denoting your experiences and perceptions according to your interpretation of your circumstances and existence, the field of education can more accurately document the intricacies involved with being African American, female, and a principal, simultaneously. Your participation is not only paramount because you are an educator, it is also extremely important because the information obtained in the study will be used appropriately. In other words, African American female leaders will detail experiences for African American female leaders. Your voice and experience will be used in a specific form versus the traditional method of using a specific demographic model to explain experiences for all practicing administrators, regardless of demographics and circumstances.

Compensation:
Due to the nature of the research project, no compensation will be offered. The project will be based on voluntary participation.

Confidentiality:
All records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will
have access to the records. The audio records of the interviews will only be accessible to me, the principal investigator, and the overseeing administrator of the project, Professor, Dr. Stacey Rutledge.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Florida State University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Curtis Williams. You may ask any question you have now. If you have a question later, you are encouraged to contact him at: XXX; Phone, XXX-XXX-XXXX; and, XXX. In addition, the academic advisor for this project is Professor, Dr. Stacey Rutledge who can be reached at Phone, XXX-XXX-XXXX; and, XXX.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB at 2010 Levy Street, Research Building B, Suite 276, Tallahassee, Fl. 32306-2742; or Phone, 850-644-8633; or by email at humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_________________________   __________________
Signature      Date

_________________________   __________________
Signature of Investigator    Date
APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions will be discussed in the initial interview:

a) What do you consider your ethnicity?

b) What is your age, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, or 70-80?

c) What is your highest degree earned?

d) Do you have a specific area of certification?

e) How many total years did you spend in education?
   What year did you retire?

f) How many years of teaching experience did you have?

g) How many years were you an administrator?
   How many head principal appointments did you have?

<table>
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224
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</tbody>
</table>

h) Would you consider your childhood family a middle-class family?

i) Please describe the “make-up” of your childhood family?
APPENDIX E

FIRST SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

To guide the semi-structured interviews, the following protocols and questions will be presented to the participants:

a) What is the role of leadership?
b) Who can you attribute with framing your view of leadership?
c) Did you experience good leadership in education as a youth?
d) What was your perceived role as principal in this school community and neighborhood?
e) What was your greatest strength in reference to the principalship?
f) What was your greatest challenge in reference to the principalship?
g) How did you become an administrator?
h) Did you perceive and/or experience any barriers while trying to attain an administrative position? If so, what were they?
i) What challenges did you experience as an administrator?
j) Please describe your leadership style.
k) Please describe your relationship with your fellow administrators, teachers, and students.
l) In the case of disagreements or conflicts among staff and/or students, what methods were used for resolution?
m) Do you feel any of your challenges or conflicts were because of your gender and/or race? If so, please explain.
n) Did you have any mentors prior to becoming principal? If so, how were they instrumental?

o) Did you have any mentors that assisted you with challenges in administration?

p) Do you think the “playing field” has been leveled for female administrators?

q) Do you think the “playing field” has been leveled for African American administrators?

r) Do you think the “playing field” has been leveled for African American female administrators?

s) Is there any skill or mechanism that has assisted you with being an administrator (i.e. life skills, childhood development, professional training)?

t) In comparison to other principals, do you think males and females practice leadership differently? Does race effect leadership or how leaders are received and/or perceived?

u) How effective were you as principal of your assigned school(s) and within the school(s) community?

v) What advice, if any, could you offer future African American female administrators?

w) What advice, if any, could you offer all future administrators?
APPENDIX F

SECOND INTERVIEW NOTIFICATION

African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study

Hello, the purpose of this email is to inform you of the current steps in the study entitled *African American Female Principal Leadership: A Qualitative Study*, being conducted at Florida State University. The time has come to conduct our second and final interview. Please be advised, the second interview will be used as a “follow-up” to the first interview and should not be as lengthy. Its main purpose will include clarification on some issues previously discussed to accurately capture “your story.” I will attempt to contact you this week to establish a time and place that is convenient for you in reference to the second and final interview. Once again, your input is invaluable and the College of Education at Florida State University extends its gratitude to you for your valued participation. The following paragraph will explain in more detail the current stage of the process.

I have read the transcript of your initial interview, examined my notes, and recorded the results. To ensure accuracy, I have included a “Principal Profile” as a short summary for your review. Please examine the information and make note of necessary changes or misinterpretations. In addition, on the “Principal Profile,” if you have a highlighted area with missing information, please write the correct information in the space provided. The forms will be collected during our second interview. For your convenience, the primary questions that will be used in the final interview are listed below:

a) How did your family background and socio-economic status (poor or middle class), affect your views on education and leadership?

b) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the respect exhibited to you by African American Male Administrators? Teachers? Please Explain.

c) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the respect exhibited to you by White Male Administrators? Teachers? Please Explain.

d) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the respect exhibited to you by other African American Female Administrators? Teachers? Please Explain.
e) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the respect exhibited to you by White Female Administrators? Teachers? Please Explain.

f) If you had to choose between being an advocate for racial equality or gender equality, which one would you choose? Please explain.

g) From a professional perspective, please identify which group you would relate to the most in reference to experiences and/or understandings: African American Females, White Females, African American Males, or White Males. Please Explain.

h) Was there ever an event or pivotal moment in your experiences as an administrator that revealed being an African American female principal was unique compared to all other administrators (White, Black, Male, Females of other Races)? Please Explain.

i) Were all of your appointments in Title I Schools?
APPENDIX G
SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER PARTICIPANT

FAYE

To guide the semi-structured interviews, I will administer the following protocols and questions to the participants in the second and final interview along with the approved general questions. These questions will be used to follow-up on themes or clarify issues discovered during the first interview.

Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) What year did you receive your first teaching job?

b) How many brothers and sisters were in your childhood home?

c) In reference to views on education, please describe your family atmosphere?

d) In the first interview, you stated you were a “risk-taker” as an administrator. Can you elaborate on this?

e) In the first interview, you stated an administrative challenge was staffing issues? Can you elaborate on this challenge?

f) In the first interview, you stated another administrative challenge was lack of student motivation. Can you elaborate on this challenge?
g) In the first interview, you stated a third administrative challenge was a lack of parental involvement. Can you elaborate on this challenge?

h) In your earlier interview, you described receiving challenges from your Black female faculty? Can you elaborate on this issue?

i) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?

j) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
APPENDIX H
SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER PARTICIPANT
FELICIA

Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) What year did you receive your first teaching job?

b) What was the view of your childhood family on education?

c) In your first interview, you discussed experiencing challenges in receiving a head principalship. Did you attribute those challenges to racial or gender discrimination? Can you elaborate on this?

d) In your first interview, you discussed some challenges with the community and parents at HA Elementary? Can you elaborate on this?

e) In your first interview, you described having challenges with one of the school’s union representatives. Do you think your challenges with the union leader was due to your race or gender? Can you further explain why you had challenges with this particular leader?

f) In your earlier interview, you described receiving challenges from your Black female faculty? Can you elaborate on this issue?

g) In your first interview, you stated other White male administrators would de-value your statements at District meetings and then later a male would suggest your same
thoughts. Can you elaborate on how this made you feel and your thought process when this would occur?

h) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?

i) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
APPENDIX I
SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER PARTICIPANT

FLORIDA

Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) What year did you receive your first teaching job?

b) In your first interview, you discussed receiving encouragement and help from a White male administrator during the beginning of integration. Can you elaborate on this?

c) In your first interview, you discussed having your car damaged by the Black community that you were trying to assist as a principal. Can you elaborate on this issue, including your thought process as it occurred?

d) In your earlier interview, you discussed an administrative challenge of maintaining a competent and effective teaching staff. Can you elaborate on this?

e) In the first interview, you discussed another administrative challenge of dealing with older teachers resisting the atmosphere of change? Can you elaborate on this issue?

f) In the first interview, you stated a Black female administrator has to have extra talent in order to be a successful administrator. Can you elaborate on these thoughts?

g) In the first interview, you stated it appeared some of the White administrators didn’t “look at the child” and had negative thoughts about Black students. Can you elaborate on this issue, including your thought process whenever you encountered this circumstance?
h) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?

i) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) What year did you receive your first teaching job?

b) What was the highest education level achieved by your parents?

c) In our first interview, you stated you were a former basketball player. Did sports have an impact on your leadership view?

d) In your first interview, you stated the superintendent had a different leadership style and some of the parents and teachers that disagreed with you went to talk with him. Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process when you found out about them talking about your leadership decisions?

e) In your first interview, you stated you were the first female principal in the district when you received your appointment. Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process about being the only female and what you may encounter?

f) In your first interview, you stated the superintendent didn’t want to pay you a higher salary when you clearly deserved it. Can you elaborate on this, including your initial thought process on the resistance?

g) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?
h) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
APPENDIX K
SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER PARTICIPANT

GRACE

Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) What year did you receive your first teaching job?

b) In the first interview, you stated some of the BA community had never seen a Black person in the school system before you? Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process when you encountered this situation?

c) In the first interview, you stated some of the parents would say, “Oh you’re Black,” the first time they met you. Can you elaborate on those encounters, including your thought process the first time you heard this statement?

d) In your earlier interview you stated some of your teachers challenged you by saying they were older, and “You don’t tell me what to do.” Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process whenever you encountered this situation?

e) In the first interview, you stated that you did not hang out with “the boys.” Can you elaborate on your thought process when you realized that you were 1 of 2 female principals in the entire county?

f) In the first interview, you described a situation where you were navigating between not being White enough for some parents, and not Black enough for others. Can you elaborate on this?
g) In your earlier interview, you described how the Black school “called the NAACP on you.” Can you elaborate on this including how it made you feel as a self described African American?

h) In the first interview, you stated that you only had White assistant principals during your entire head principalship. Can you elaborate on this issue, including how it made you feel in reference to the community being served?

i) In your first interview, you stated Black administrators have to work “double-time” in comparison to White administrators. Can you elaborate on this?

j) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?

k) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
APPENDIX L
SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER PARTICIPANT

GEORGIA

Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) In what years did your parents have four children at HBCU?

b) In the first interview, you stated you were assisted by a White male principal with training and mentorship. Can you elaborate on this?

c) In the first interview, you described how the district did not respond to your facility and maintenance needs as quickly as their response towards more “affluent schools.” Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process while this was occurring?

d) In the first interview, you stated a White male history teacher referred to a Black student as “Nappy-Head.” Can you elaborate on this, including how it made you feel as an African American female principal serving that community?

e) In the first interview, you discussed receiving challenges from your African American female faculty? Can you elaborate on this, including how it made you feel as a self-described Black (person)?

f) In the first interview, you stated you were the only Black female high school principal in your district. Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process behind being the first?
g) In your earlier interview, you stated the perception of White leaders can be inaccurate (negatively) in Black communities. Can you elaborate on this, including your perception of the cause?

h) In your first interview, you stated some of your White parents openly expressed they wanted separate gym classes for their children. Can you elaborate on this, including your initial thought process when they voiced their demand?

i) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?

j) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
APPENDIX M
SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER PARTICIPANT

JOSEPHINE

Script:

Thank you for participating in the first interview and providing your experiences throughout your career. Based on the analysis of the information from the first interview, I have a few follow-up questions so that I may better understand some of your experiences previously discussed.

a) What year did you receive your first teaching job?

b) As a professional, when did you move into an integrated school system?

c) In your first interview, you stated some White teachers were being negative towards Black students. Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process whenever you would encounter situation?

d) In your first interview, you indicated some Black teachers were being negative towards Black students. Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process whenever you would encounter situation?

e) In your earlier interview, you stated you received challenges from your African American female faculty? Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process when you would encounter these situations?

f) In your first interview, you described being re-assigned during integration and only had one Black student in your class. What were your thoughts when you were re-assigned to W.N.?
g) In your earlier interview you described how one White parent tearfully asked why her child had to have a Black teacher. Can you elaborate on this, including your thought process as a self-described Negro when it occurred?

h) Where you an AP at W.N.?

i) In your first interview, you stated the Black community believed that a White male would make a better principal for schools. Can you elaborate on this, including your overall thoughts as a Negro?

j) How did your experiences with segregation and integration affect your view on leadership in education?

k) How do you think affirmative action has affected your career?
APPENDIX N

SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE GUIDELINE

When both sets of interviews were conducted, coded, and analyzed, I compared the similarities and differences between each participant experience. As a guide to meet this objective, I used the following questions:

a) What differences or similarities do the participants have in reference to their professional experiences?

b) What differences or similarities do the participants have in reference to their family life?

c) What role did mentoring play in the development and acquisition of their administrative position?

d) What differences or similarities do the participants have in reference to leadership style and conflict management (communication)?
APPENDIX O

IRB APPROVAL MEMORANDA

The Florida State University
Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673, FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 7/27/2012

To: Curtis Williams [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
Dept.: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Women's Leadership: A Study of African American Female Principal Experiences

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR A§ 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 7/24/2013 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.
By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: Stacey Rutledge, Advisor
HSC No. 2011.7478
APPROVAL MEMORANDUM (for change in research protocol)

Date: 03/05/2013

To: Carla Williams

Address:

Dept: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
Project entitled: Women's Leadership: A Study of African American Female Principal Experiences

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the requested change/amendment to your research protocol for the above-referenced project has been reviewed and approved.

Please be reminded that if the project has not been completed by 07/24/2013, you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocol as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Stacy Rudek <srudek@fsu.edu>, Advisor

HSC NO: 2013.9990
RE-APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 08/02/2013

To: Curtis Williams

Address: 

Dept.: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Re-approval of Use of Human subjects in Research:
  Women's Leadership: A Study of African American Female Principal Experiences

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 08/01/2014, you are required to submit renewal application to the Committee.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your renewal request, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this re-approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting of research subjects. You are reminded that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chairman of your department and/or your major professor are reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols as often as necessary to ensure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc:

HSC No. 2013.10981
REFERENCES


Clark, M. C., Caffarella, R. S., & Ingram, P. B. (Spring, 1999). Women in leadership: Living with the constraints of the glass ceiling. *Initiatives, 59*(1), 65-76.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I am a proud graduate of Florida State University in the year 2013.