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A multiple case study analysis: the perception of female principals of the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness and secondary school instructional leaders

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

BROWN, CALANDRA LEANN B.S. ALABAMA A & M UNIVERSITY, 2001
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A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: THE PERCEPTION OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NORMS AND GENDER ROLES ON THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AS SECONDARY SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Committee Chair: Dr. Barbara Hill
Dissertation dated July 2012

The purpose of this study was to examine how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders. This study sought to contextualize the experiences and perception of women as secondary instructional leaders to provide insight to leadership preparation programs, aspirants, and school systems. This study used a multiple case study analysis of two female principals by collecting data through interviews, observations, and document reviews. The researcher found that the female principals in this study do not perceive the influence of social norms nor gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders; however, both principals spoke about and were observed altering their behavior based on previous experiences.
A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: THE PERCEPTION OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NORMS AND GENDER ROLES ON THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AS SECONDARY SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

CALANDRA LEANN BROWN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WOW! I did it! Thank you God for your guidance and direction! I am more than convinced that without Him, none of this would be possible.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The role of today’s principals is consistently changing. Present-day principals’ are taking on various roles that were once delegated to others in the building. With the pressure to reform schools into high-impact institutions, principals are required to successfully manage, lead, and provide vision to improve instruction and student achievement.

More than ever, in today’s climate of heightened expectations, principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning. They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives. They are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, para. 1)

While adjusting to the various roles and responsibilities required for running a successful school, principals are also faced with the looming pressure of meeting federal legislation concerning student achievement.
Such demands to reform schools have taken shape in the form of the reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Education Act, most commonly regarded as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). “The objective of the law was to demand higher standards and accountability through improved teacher training and test-based certification” (Keller, 2006, p.43). Under these terms, schools are required to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on high-stakes standardized testing. “Such a provision has placed pressure on school leaders to raise student, teacher, and school expectations to close the achievement gap” (Smith, 2005, p. 509). With such high accountability, principals are faced with the anxiety of improving student achievement or facing “curative measures . . ., including alternate staffing and school reformation” (Merturi, 2010, p. 57). Notably, “with the increased accountability, school leadership has become an area of focus in helping to form a school culture in which the mandates of NCLB may be met and in which students may progress academically” (Di Vincenzo, 2008, p. 81). As the nation strives to leave no child behind, “the role of the principal will continue to be central to the ongoing success of schools” (Campos, Gomez, & Shen, 2005, p. 311).

Women and School Leadership

Leading the Chicago Public School System in 1909, Ella Flagg Young concluded the field of education was “woman’s natural field” (as cited in Carter, 2010, p. 63). Young was displeased with women doing the greatest work in the field, yet being prevented access to school leadership (Ella Flagg Young, 1909, in Carter, 2010).
Women are destined to rule the school of every city...In the near future, we will have more women than men in executive charge of the vast educational system. It is a woman's natural field, and she is no longer satisfied to do the greatest part of the work and yet be denied leadership. (p. 63)

Since Young's declaration of the early 1900s, little has changed regarding women and school leadership. Women comprise 75% of the workforce in education; however, data suggest women are disproportionately underrepresented as educational administrators, especially in secondary schools (Eckman, 2000). Scholars suggest that women, once teacher and administrator of early schools, are disregarded in current school leadership because of the increased complexity and bureaucratization of modern-day schools. “In the early days of public schooling in the United States, the teacher did everything, including administration. However, as schooling became more complex and as bureaucratization was imposed upon schools, the functions of administrator and teacher became more distinct” (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 30).

While women appear less in roles of school leadership on the secondary level; historically, women seem to thrive as elementary school leaders. In 1971, one in every five elementary school principals was female, while only 6.5% of secondary school principals were women (Porter-Gehtrie, 1979). During the 1987-1988 school year, women made up 30% of elementary school leaders; yet 9.4% were secondary leaders (NCES, 1994). Increasing slightly in the 1990-1991 school term, women consisted of 32.4% of elementary school principals and 11% of secondary school leaders (NCES, 1994). In 2000, the US Department of Education reported that women comprised over half of all elementary principals,
but only made up 21.6% of secondary principals. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that in the 2007-2008 school year, the percent of women serving as elementary principals increased to 58.9% and 28.5% of secondary school principals.

What has contributed to the significant difference in women serving as elementary school principals and those leading secondary schools? Do we attribute such disparity to the perceived notion that women are more caring and nurturing; therefore better equipped to manage the needs of younger children? Or is it the socially perceived idea that women are too emotional and indecisive to handle the demands of the students, parents, and teachers of secondary schools? Despite great speculation and historical debates, what does remain certain is “the proportion of women administrators [in academic administration] decreases as the level of position and responsibility increases” (Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007, p. 110).

Traditional societal views impede women’s entry into school leadership (Soberhart, 2009). Women are typically described as passionate, cautious, and discreet. These characteristics are often perceived as important traits for an elementary school principal. In a survey of elementary and secondary school principals, men and women administrators were asked to decide whether men or women were better suited for the role of elementary school principal. Of those asked, 78.3% responded that women were better suited to serve as an elementary school principal (Soberhart, 2009). “In the interview, quite a few principals mentioned that working in elementary school is more concrete and trivial and female principals just naturally have such attributes as being careful, being prudent, etc.” (Soberhart, 2009, p. 98). The very heart of a woman is her
innate impulse to empathize and care for others. Because of her distinct ability to build and maintain relationships, some consider women more apt to fulfill the role of an elementary school principal.

The Problem in Context

With the increasing demand on schools to improve instructional practices that greatly impact student achievement, school systems seek to employ effective school leaders with historical evidence of increasing student achievement on standardized tests. While many systems opt to employ male candidates, women have begun to make their mark on the role of secondary school principal. Once inhabited by the "white, male, Protestant, married" (Robinson, 2004), the face of the secondary principal is changing. While still disproportionate to the number entering into education, middle and high school principals' offices are now being occupied by women; yet literature documenting the experiences of secondary school principals supports the behaviors of men.

"Traditional time-honored bureaucratic organizational structures have focused on masculine characteristics" which has led to "unfavorable views of more feministic ways of leading" (Thurman, 2004, p. 24). Without documented research, women leaders may find it difficult to secure validation while challenged with being a woman and leading an effective school. Remaining focused on the shifting role of secondary school principals and striving to comply with the many mandates of NCLB is difficult for most secondary school principals. "Over the last few decades, more qualitative and quantitative research has been generated to show how women can and do lead educational learning communities in effective ways" (Eckman, 2000, p. 73); yet more research authenticating
their experiences is essential to the continued success of women as secondary instructional leaders.

**Statement of the Purpose**

The number of women appointed principals of middle and high schools has historically been lower than men. In 1971, of all secondary school administrators, only 6.5% were female (Porter-Gethrie, 1979). In a 1997 report, the U.S. Department of Education reported women accounted for 34.5% of all school principals in 1994. Table 1 depicts the percent of public school females by job title and level in 1999-2000. While this data is important to establish a precedent, it is relatively irrelevant to the focus of this study. This study seeks to characterize the experiences, barriers, and obstacles women face and how such influences their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders.

Table 1

*Percent of Public School Females by Job Title and Level, 1999 – 2000*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>All</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>74.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18.0</td>
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Dr. Marianne Coleman (2003) coined this notion best; “there is a continuing predisposition to expect that the leader or manager will be male, and that the experience of being a leader in education and elsewhere is qualitatively different for women and men” (p. 5).
This study focuses on an in-depth examination of two women serving as secondary instructional leaders and characterizes their perceptions of a woman’s experience as a secondary school principal. Providing an information-rich investigation of individual principals’ points of view on how social norms impact their behaviors and effectiveness as school leaders, these case studies assess and investigate the framework of instructional leadership and student academic achievement through the principal's personal and professional interactions with various stakeholders in their natural settings. Through actual observations and personal interviews conducted by the researcher, this research seeks to provide an account of the lived realities of women principals and their leadership responses to truths encountered, consequently collecting written records of their experiences. Such records will express, study, and assess the decisions made by these women principals as it pertains to instructional leadership and student academic achievement.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide this study:

RQ1: How do female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as a secondary school instructional leader?

RQ2: How do these female secondary school principals describe their instructional leadership practices?

RQ3: How do these female secondary school principals describe social norms and gender roles?
RQ4: How do these female secondary school principals perceive social norms and gender roles influencing their effectiveness as an instructional leader?

RQ5: To what extent does feminist theory assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

RQ6: To what extent does ethic of care assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

RQ7: To what extent does social role theory assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

**Significance of the Study**

Several researchers have sought to reveal the effects of decreasing the underrepresentation of women as secondary school leaders; however, literature seeking to understand how women experience their role of secondary school instructional leader remains limited. This study seeks to understand how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders. Such literature adds insight to how women may overcome barriers that impede their performance as instructional leaders. Findings from this study will inform aspiring women principals of potential obstacles and perspectives that may have a
potential impact on their effectiveness in the role of instructional leader. This study provides data that reveal female principals’ perspectives, feelings, and viewpoints of their experiences as secondary instructional leaders and the possible influence on their effectiveness. Educational leadership preparation programs searching for approaches to enhance their preparation of women for leadership may discover these findings valuable when designing instructional programs and courses. A woman aspiring to hold instructional leadership positions in secondary schools will have regard for these accounts as it provides precognition on factors that influence a woman’s effectiveness as a secondary school instructional leader.

**Definition of Key Terms**

The following definitions serve as an explanation of significant terms used in this study.

**Androgyny/Androgynous**: Men or women exhibiting high levels of both feminine and masculine characteristics (Bem, 1974).

**Dualism**: Merriam-Webster (2011) defines dualism as a theory that considers reality to consist of two irreducible elements or modes.

**Gender**: The mental and societal idea of the natural behaviors or a man and a woman (Buckmaster, 2004).

**Gender—Role Identity**: The extent to which an individual perceives their worth based on as masculine or feminine characteristics (Frome & Eccles, 1996).

**Instructional Leadership**: Blasé and Blasé (2000) expressed instructional leadership in specific behaviors such as making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling
effective instruction, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional
development opportunities, and giving praise for effective teaching.

No Child Left Behind: Federal legislation passed in 2001 as a part of the
reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This
reauthorization, entitled No Child Left Behind (NCLB) substantially increased high-
stakes testing requirements for all 50 states and set demanding standards for states, school
districts and schools. Student achievement is measured by yearly testing, which is
examined to determine if schools, districts and states have made Adequate Yearly
Progress. All students must meet the proficiency requirements of AYP, as well as
subgroups of students defined by socioeconomic background, race/ethnicity, English
language proficiency and disability. All students and all student sub-groups are required,
under the terms of the legislation, to reach 100% proficiency by the 2013-2014 school
year (United Department of Education, 2002).

Patriarchy: Merriam-Webster (2011) defines patriarchy as control by men of a
disproportionately large share of power.

Secondary School: Merriam-Webster (2011) defines a secondary school as a
school intermediate between elementary school and college and usually offering general,
technical, vocational, or college-preparatory courses containing grades 6–12.

Social Norms: Societal beliefs that males and females exhibit certain qualities
based on their gender (Lips, 2003).

Work-Family Conflict: A type of internal conflict in which the demands from
one role conflict with the demands of another role (Hammer & Thompson, 2003).
Summary

This chapter presents a review of the purpose of this study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and the research questions guiding this study. This research focuses on the actual lived accounts of women serving as secondary school instructional leaders and seeks to characterize their perceptions, feelings, and viewpoints of a woman's experience as a secondary school principal. This study seeks to characterize how social norms and gender roles influence the effectiveness of women as instructional leaders. While a wealth of research seeks to understand the underrepresentation of women as secondary school leaders, very little exists to distinguish the experiences of a woman in such role and the influence societal norms play on her decisions and behaviors as an instructional leader. It is the desire of the researcher to add such literature to attempt to provide insight to those women seeking instructional leadership roles in secondary school settings.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

Every leader exhibits a distinct set of skills and disposition that contribute to their personal leadership style. Leadership styles vary from person to person—male to female. Women are considered feminine affirming the many misconceptions and stereotypes about how women lead schools, especially middle and high schools. Since women now have begun to break the barriers that once held them back, "the amount of research into women's leadership styles and their ability increases focusing on communication needs and how to manage home and the workplace" (Smarr, 2011, p. 13). This review of research literature is comprised of three major sections. The first section focuses on gender and leadership. This section includes an in-depth look into gender, leadership styles, and social norms. The second section examines the exclusive manner in which women lead schools. This chapter concludes by concentrating on instructional leadership as it emphasizes behaviors of school principals.

Gender and Leadership

Leadership is as a process in which a group of individuals are influenced to reach a shared goal by an individual of authority (Northouse, 2010). The influence of the behaviors of others often deals with power or the capacity to lead others to do things not normally considered (Brown, 2010). Leaders possess unique skills and dispositions in which to persuade others to goal achievement. For this reason, the study of leaders has
provided an explanation of “a vast diversity in their style of leadership, personalities, and their culture” (Brown, 2010, p. 27). Important traits of any leader are intelligence, drive, persistence, motivation, insight, dominance, integrity, initiative, self-confidence, sociability, and influence (Northouse, 2007, as cited in Smarr, 2011). However, more feminine leadership traits of consensus building, collaborative, empathic, caring, emotional, sensitive, sentimental, relationship focused, strong, intuitive, verbal, and submissive are often omitted from ideal traits of effective leaders (Raveling, 1999; Rosener, 1990 as cited in Smarr, 2011).

**The Difference: Sex and Gender**

Traditional studies examine the differences in leadership skills in males and females; however, little consideration is given to the impact an organization’s social culture has on the behaviors and the decision-making process of men and women serving as school leaders. This results in undefinable accounts of individual behaviors within the organization. Robin Ely and Irene Padavic (2007) sought to define how researchers traditionally considered sex and gender. In a comparative study of the past twenty years, Ely and Padavic identified the need to further explore the idea of gender differences in leadership. Their investigation uncovered three major themes. Primarily, most studies used “gender” and “sex” interchangeably; not accounting for the theory that socialization influences one’s gender. Next, Ely and Padavic discovered that many scholars believed that sex differences only develop through childhood socialization. This premise eliminates the thought that socialization of sex roles continuously develops and cultivates throughout one’s life and career. Finally, their research revealed that researchers
presumed other differences between men and women were a result of other factors other than sex and gender.

For many years, gender was naturally identified as biological sex. Sigmund Freud was the first philosopher to express a difference between gender and sex. The induction of the term “feminism” provides further distinction between gender and sex where “sex is the biologically invariant factor and gender is comprised of various social, cultural, or historical variable components” (Korac-Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse, & Myers, 1998, p. 360). Dr. Linda Lewis (2004) refers to gender as “the psychological and social conceptions of what it means to be a man or a woman” (p. 9). She continues by citing “Many have noted that ‘doing gender’ begins at birth with the choice of a name and is an ‘... emergent feature of social situations’ as both an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements” (Lewis, 2004, p. 9). The sex of an individual does not change regardless of culture, group, or individual influence; unlike gender, which is highly influenced by social and cultural beliefs within groups and countries. “Gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting males and females as different in socially significant ways and organizing inequality in terms of those differences” (Ridgeway, 2001, p. 643).

**Gender Stereotypes**

Gender stereotypes are "shared beliefs about the psychological traits that are characteristic of each sex" (Powell & Graves, 2003, p. 118). Gender stereotypes impact work environments and the behaviors of women in leadership positions. “Stereotyping happens when individuals cognitively categorize people into groups and then acquire
beliefs that certain attributes are common among members of those groups, including their own” (Bullough, 2008, p. 41). Stereotypes exist in how women are viewed as leaders versus men based on gender roles. Krüger (2008 as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010) notes:

Women are said to be dependent, conformist, cooperative, passive, emotional, uncertain of themselves, kind, helpful, understanding, sensitive and weak, to name just a few of these preconceptions. Men are said to be independent, competitive, active, rational, sure of themselves, aggressive, dominant and strong.

(p. 12)

It is from these stereotypes that one perceives school administration as masculine positions and that in order for success, women must simulate male personalities. “In general, a number of researchers have emphasized that leadership roles are considered to be masculine-oriented with behaviors of authority and discipline, whereas females are considered to be more emotional and collaborative” (Sanchez & Thorton, 2010, p. 9).

According to Ealy and Mitchell (2004), sex-role stereotyping describes men as greater leaders because of masculine, agentic qualities that are needed to persuade others to follow; while women are likely to exhibit more feminine, communal qualities.

In a 2001 study, Merrick (2001) noticed that women have difficulty functioning as a leader when organization members perceive her best suited for a follower. As a result, women may maintain such stereotypical thoughts by being fearful of success, being reluctant to exercise authority, and having a tendency to minimize herself and her abilities. Self-minimization occurs in the following ways:
1. Use of names: Women often accept being regarded by their first name, while male leaders are granted their appropriate title.

2. Acceptance of sexist language: Women often accept references of the little lady while men are naturally regarded as man instead of being called the equivalent term of gentleman.

3. Surrendering one's own agenda, concealing resentment, being side-tracked, failing to exercise assertion, or throwing one's own power away.

4. Acceptance of non-person status: Operating with a lack of recognition and losing woman's personhood through cultural blind spots. This is personified in the idea that women are better fit to be wives and mothers and not leaders and professionals.

5. Minimizing one's own credentials; being a bystander in one's own life.

(Merrick, 2001, p. 132)

Gender stereotypes shape how society views the behaviors of men and women and may influence how women view themselves as leaders.

**Social Norms**

In the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2011), social norms are defined as the customary rules that govern behavior in groups and societies. Such rules are used to measure “appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors” (Durlauf & Blume, as cited in Weaver, 2011, p. 56). Social norms are unplanned, unexpected result of individual interactions within a group and have been likened to “a kind of grammar of social interaction” (Bicchieri & Muldoon, 2011, para. 4). Such norms seek
to ordain what is acceptable and what is not while behaving within the group. Submissiveness to the social norms preserves one's acceptance and esteem within the group; however, discounting the social norms risks one becoming unacceptable, unpopular, or even an outcast from the group.

Marianne Coleman (2003) suggested that three social norms exist related to gender and leadership: (a) Orthodox leaders are male, (b) Leadership style is stereotypically “macho,” and (c) Theorizing about leadership has a tendency to marginalize gender. According to Coleman, “The first and most obvious is the orthodox view that leadership is normally vested in the male . . . there are deep-rooted beliefs in our society that continue to support male dominance” (p. 17). Women feel the need to acquire male characteristics of assertiveness, dominance, and aggression in order to assert themselves as leaders. Historically, men are regarded as strong, assertive, and dominating; and women as soft, indecisive, and docile. Because society has associated such characteristics with various occupations, women typically land opportunities in service fields and men obtain most leadership roles. Social norms have come to prescribe the roles men and women should play in society.

**Gender Roles**

Historically, researchers have argued the impact gender roles have on the way women and men lead. “Researchers argue that social norms and gender-role attribution create differences in male and female leaders, while traditional scholars view leaders as being alike and genderless” (Smarr, 2011, p. 17). Women are often scrutinized for being
too masculine or too feminine as a leader. When having to exert authority, women are disregarded by men and women; yet a leader without authority is described as ineffective. This places women at a disadvantage and places them in the difficult position of learning how to balance their feminine and masculine leadership traits in order to fit into the leadership role and ultimately changing who they are to fit into an expected norm. (Smarr, 2011, p. 17)

The idea of male and female roles as depicted by society is fortified by the idea of patriarchy and dualism: “The concept of patriarchy and the dualism that underpins our thinking about men and women labels and influences our perceptions of the worth of both” (Coleman, 2003, p. 18). Paechter (2001) refers to dualism as “deeply implicated in gendered power/knowledge relations, aligning themselves with and underpinning the distinction between masculinity and femininity...participation in civil society versus rootedness in hearth and home, hardness versus softness, activity versus passivity, reason versus emotion...” (p. 252). Holistically, society considers ideas of hearth, firmness, and intelligence more suitable for men. “The cultural identification of women as caring, domestic, as and implicitly of lesser importance and status than men impacts on the experience of women in positions of leadership which are identified with stereotypical masculinity” (Coleman, 2003, p. 18). Schmuck (1996, as cited in Coleman, 2003) explores this idea further by indicating that:

Those women who have achieved positions which are held predominantly by men have realized, consciously or unconsciously, that there are social roles and expectations governing the role of females from the culture.
They must become ‘abnormal’ women; they must transcend the social expectations of femaleness in order to aspire to the socially prescribed role of leader. And because they do not fit the expectations of the attributes of leaders, they are also ‘abnormal’ administrators. Their position as administrators makes them ‘insiders’ to the organization, but their ‘abnormal status as women makes them ‘outsiders’ in their organizations.

(p. 19)

Female principals believe they must justify their value, qualifications, and ability to lead schools as instructional leaders; more than men. According to Coleman (2003), most “women feel 'noticeable' in their position as a leader.” but “they feel that they have to justify themselves as women and as leaders and that they have to prove their worth and work harder than the men” (p.19). The way an individual leads and how their leadership style is developed depends greatly on one’s gender role.

**Leadership Traits**

Research has identified different leadership characteristics between men and women (Eagly, 2007; Funk, Pankake, & Schroth, 2002; Reed & Patterson, 2007). “Aggression, logic, ambition, and competitiveness are considered masculine leadership traits; sensitivity, nurturing, emotion and intuitiveness are labeled as feminine leadership traits” (Smarr, 2010, p. 13). Androgynous traits blend the masculine and feminine traits together to create a blended style of leadership (Bem, 1974; Korabik & Ayman, 1989). Concisely:
Great leaders are communicators and relationship builders; they are creative and intuitive; they are collaborative; they are occasionally emotional and they are always supportive. Great leaders also are visionaries and risk-takers; they are decisive and highly competitive. In short, they are a blend of skills set where the formula tends to be masculine minority and feminine majority; even if they are men (Vukor-Quarshie, n.d., para. 3).

**Masculine and Feminine Leadership**

“Traditional male leadership has been identified as being aggressive, objective, highly competitive, logical, responsible, rational, ambitious, independent, and responsible” (Smarr, 2011, p. 14). Men are more likely to occupy the office of principal and are viewed as less emotional and more managerial than women leaders. Concerned with her relationship with others and less concerned with managing, women leadership traits include being caring, gentle, nurturing, accommodating, emotional, intuitive, dependent, sensitive, passive, and illogical (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Socialization and social norms are invaluable in how others perceive women exhibiting male leadership roles. Women renouncing their traditional role of nurturer and exhibiting more dominant characteristics are often viewed as ineffective leaders by men and women (Oakley, 2000).

**Androgynous Leadership**

“The distinction between biological sex and gender has allowed females to exhibit masculine traits and males to exhibit feminine traits” (Gregory-Mina, 2011, p. 25). Androgynous leadership traits are traits that both men and women can possess without being considered masculine or feminine. It is derived from the concept of androgyny.
The Oxford English dictionary defines androgyny as a term derived from the Greek words *andr-* meaning man and *gyné* meaning woman, referring to the combination of masculine and feminine characteristics. "The androgynous individual is independent and tender, aggressive and gentle, assertive and yielding, and masculine and feminine, depending on which behavior is appropriate in a particular situation" (Smarr, 2011, p. 15). Women benefit from the classification of being an androgynous leader as fitting into either masculine or feminine leadership styles come with scrutiny.

"As females have increased their presence in the management arena over the past two decades, the differences between feminine and masculine leadership styles have become increasingly evident" (Gregory-Mina, 2011, p. 25). Pounder and Coleman (2002) contribute certain characteristics to masculine, feminine, and androgynous leaders (Table 2). Three distinct characteristics of leadership traits result in leaders being classified based on the qualities possessed; however, women are often concluded as being a feminine leader only based on of their sex and gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Table 2

*Gender (Masculine, Feminine, and Androgynous) Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine Characteristics</th>
<th>Feminine Characteristics</th>
<th>Androgynous Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Adaptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Conceited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Conscientious</td>
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(continued)
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine Characteristics</th>
<th>Feminine Characteristics</th>
<th>Androgynous Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>Happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>Tactful</td>
<td>Inefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Receptive to Ideas</td>
<td>Jealous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Talkative</td>
<td>Likable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Solemn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunistic</td>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal</td>
<td>Empathetic</td>
<td>Unsystematic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Submissive</td>
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The Exclusive Manner Women Lead Schools

From the perspective of Growe and Montgomery (2000), leaders are those “who provide vision and meaning for an institution and embody the ideals toward which the organization strives” (p. 7). This thought suggests that leaders are similar and androgynous. In contrast, research exists to support the idea that women lead in an exclusive manner (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Women are expected to juggle the role of being a woman and being a leader. According to Eagly and Carli state (2007), “In general, people expect and prefer that women be communal, manifesting traits such as
kindness, concern for others, warmth, and gentleness” (p. 84); however research suggest that women exerting such characteristics are regarded as ineffective leaders.

Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) discuss several major themes that seek to explore how women lead schools. Through comprehensive literature reviews, they seek to describe traits that are commonly associated with women educational leaders. More closely related to this study are the themes of relational leadership, balanced leadership, and leadership for learning.

**Relational Leadership**

"Effective leadership is built on relationships, and the quality of relationships reflects the quality of leadership” (Ferch & Mitchell, 2001, para.1). Relational leadership emphasizes the importance of relationships and indicates that leading others is more about a horizontal relationship rather than a hierarchal one. In an earlier study of women leadership behaviors, Shakeshaft (1987) contends that women leaders focus more on individual student needs and teachers’ technical skills.

Women tend to be more concerned than men about academic achievement of students; to be more knowledgeable about curriculum; to value the productivity of their teachers; and to demonstrate greater concern for individual differences, developmental problems, and social/emotional development of students. (Eby, 2004, p. 35)

Women tend to be inclusive and transformative in leading schools. The most essential role of a principal is setting the initial course of the school and then inspiring and transforming others into developing a shared vision for the future. Such
transformation becomes difficult without interpersonal skills. Studying leadership traits in women, Williams and Best (2000) discovered interpersonal traits of kindness, affection, warmth, and understanding to be more closely related to women. Interpersonal skills are essential in developing relationships and transforming others to share a common vision for the organization. By nature, women want to personally know about others’ interests and goals. “Women . . . are far more likely than men to describe themselves as transforming subordinates’ self-interest into concern for the whole organization and as using personal traits like charisma, work record, and interpersonal skills to motivate others” (Smarr, 2011, p. 17).

Women portray relational leadership by utilizing decision-making strategies that are inclusive of other members of the school. “Women are inclusive rather than exclusive in their approach to decision-making, and they seek ways to decentralize the process of making decisions, while increasing the inclusiveness of all stakeholders in being a part of the vision of the school” (Eby, 2004, p. 35). Charters and Jovick (as cited in Shakeshaft, 1987) resolved that a more participatory leadership model existed in schools lead by female educational leaders. Their research suggests this model enhances the school culture and climate and broadens the stakeholders’ respect for the leader.

Williamson and Hudson (2002) believe that women utilize the same traits to nurture their families in the workplace. From childhood, girls are socialized into roles of caretakers and nurturers through play. As a result, Bornstein (2007) believes women display an ethic of care in the workplace. Williamson and Hudson (2002) support this idea in their study by the identification the characteristics of “feminine leadership style”
as: (a) being good listeners, (b) being attuned to instruction, teachers, and children, (c) having ethics of care grounded in relationships, and (d) using inclusive invitational language. “Women as leaders have great concern for subordinates and create work environments which are nurturing” (Smarr, 2011, p. 20).

More focused on relationships, research supports women shaping school culture into caring communities that allow teachers to flourish and empower them to take ownership in their school. In a study of female school leaders, Hudson (1996) asserts that female leaders enable individuals and cohesive groups to impact decisions that guide the day-to-day procedures of the school. By using empathy, the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another a person’s ability to identify with others and their feelings, thoughts, and perspectives (Webster’s Dictionary, 2010), women leaders understand other’s needs and are typically more supportive. “Empathy allows a leader to acknowledge the various situations and decisions necessary and how those decisions will affect others within the organization” (Smarr, 2011, p. 30).

Relational leadership can be described as a horizontal leadership approach that stresses the importance of involving all stakeholders in the processes of the organization and extending beyond the leadership team into the wider community. “Relational leadership is about facilitating the work of others who share the power and authority to collaboratively craft direction for the organization” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 33).
Balanced Leadership

“Women leaders strive for balance between responsibilities at work and at home” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 33). Unlike men, women leaders leave their offices to face another full-time job at home, that of mother and wife. “Like men, women experience the day-to-day activities of leading as all-consuming, but unlike many men, many women leaders go home to another ‘day’s work’ taking care of family and home” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 33). While many women leaders have supportive husbands, there still exists a personal responsibility of caring for home and family. Most women leaders seek to balance work and home. Grogan and Shakeshaft defines balanced leadership as the “the notion that women are better able to perform their educational responsibilities if they have found ways to manage their home duties as well” (p. 33). In a study of women principals, a principal describes her personal lesson on balanced leadership:

I always felt, number one, that I could only do this job in extraordinary amounts of time, and I felt that if I did it in less time, the effects would be disastrous . . . I think ’cause of my personal circumstances I absolutely spend much less time doing schoolwork . . . but in my estimation, to tell you the truth, I don’t know that it’s made that much of a difference. And I think I’ve learned a really good personal lesson: that you can walk out the door at four o’clock and things go on without you. (Smuylan, 2000, p. 599)

The lack of finding such balance can create a conflict between work and family. Hammer and Thompson (2003) defined such conflict as work-family conflict: “Work-
family conflict is a type of inter-role conflict in which the role demands stemming from one domain (work or family) are incompatible with role demands stemming from another domain (family or work)” (para. 2). Work-family conflict can be a result of three major factors:

1. Time-based conflict occurs “when either time pressures associated with membership in one role made it physically impossible to comply with the expectations of another role; or that pressures produced a preoccupation with one role even when one was attempting to meet the demands of another role.” (Nuosce, 2007, p. 51)

2. Strain-based conflict is “associated with symptoms such as fatigue and irritability and existed when strain in one role affected one’s performance in another role” (Nuosce, 2007, p. 51). Because of the incompatible nature of each role, the strain from one makes it impossible to fulfill the obligations of the other.

3. Behavior-strain conflict occurs “when specific patterns of behavior in one role were incompatible with expectations of behavior in another role” (Nuosce, 2007, p. 51).

Work-family role conflict is believed to “diminished satisfaction and lower levels of psychological well-being” (Nuosce, 2007, p. 51).

Finding balance between work and family is critical to the success of women as an educational leader. “Managing households and caring for family members, often seen as the work of women, have brought a dimension to women’s leadership that can enhance
their performance” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 24). Achieving this balance allows women to exert energy into both dimensions more effectively. “Many women argue that it is very important for women to be themselves and to figure out what leadership approaches they will need to embrace so that they can negotiate the competing demands of family and profession” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 24).

**Leadership for Learning**

Leadership for learning shares similar attributes of instructional leadership. In their comprehensive review, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) uncovered many studies in which women leaders characterize instruction as central to the effectiveness of the school. Women administrators are “likely to introduce and support strong programs in staff development, to encourage innovation, and to experiment with instructional approaches” and “likely to stress the importance of instructional competence in teachers and to be attentive to task completion within instructional programs” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 18). Focusing on instruction and student achievement, women leaders are more likely to push for the reform of instruction that changes student learning. Most often, the changes that women enact in their buildings impact the improvement of instruction for greater student achievement (Brunner & Grogan, 2007).

Women educational leaders often make decisions based on the priorities of student learning. They acknowledge that the school must be managed well, but their hearts are moved by watching students grow and develop. Indeed, many women learn leadership from serving as curriculum coaches or in curriculum and
instruction positions, and all draw on their knowledge of teaching. (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 18)

**Instructional Leadership**

For the past 25 years, instructional leadership has been the most researched model of leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Many of these studies involve the relationship of instructional leadership as principals’ behaviors and its impact on teacher and student achievement. Largely, instructional leadership behaviors include all activities performed by principals to promote student learning (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordan, 1998). Effective school principals have been characterized as those that can efficiently manage the daily activities within the school. With the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, the role of the principal has evolved from one of manager to that of an instructional leader. With greater accountability to reform schools and improve student achievement, principals must work to greatly impact the functions of the school that improve student achievement. “In the opinion of Jorgenson (2002), one of the most significant components in the realization of this achievement was instructional leadership” (Domsch, 2009, p. 27).

“Most school principals are expected to provide instructional knowledge and expertise that addresses all aspects of school leadership including the teaching and learning of all educators and students” (Herkert, 2009, p. 31). Many indications of instructional leadership exists, yet most share common components are: (a) developing and sharing a mission and vision that all students can achieve, (b) cultivating collaboration, (c) supporting teachers’ instruction, (d) providing professional
development, and (e) monitoring student achievement (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001, Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Herkert, 2009). Hallinger and Murphy (1987) defined instructional leadership as the role of the principal in three key dimensions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting the school learning climate.

**Defining the School Mission**

Instructional leaders have a clear and defined vision of how the school will run, impact student achievement, and simply function from day-to-day. Defining the mission involves leading stakeholders in developing school-wide goals and initiative that direct all functions and procedures of the school. “A strong instructional leader must be able promote a vision of learning and facilitate an environment that promotes the success and learning of all students” (Forrest, 2009, p. 39). The principal as an instructional leader is responsible for ensuring that every stakeholder—in or out of the building—has attuned their practices to improving student learning and achievement. Successful instructional leaders effect and nurture the vision to all stakeholders (Johnson & Uline, 2005).

**Managing the Instructional Program**

“The principal works with staff in areas specifically related to the evaluation, development, and implementation of curriculum and instruction” (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987, p. 55). Instructional leaders develop cultures of effective teaching and learning. They empower teachers to continuously improve instructional practices that impact student achievement. Instructional leaders provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and plan for effective instruction. Marzano (2003) asserts that leaders create
the environment that enables students to learn. Instructional leaders ensure that student learning is the premise for which all tasks of those working in the school rests on improving student achievement.

Instructional leaders show the importance of effective instruction through constant monitoring and supervision. Developmental supervision, coined by Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001), bids instructional leaders to use alternative supervisory approaches to ensure teachers improve their instruction. They further identifies five tasks of supervision that have explicit influence on improving instruction as direct assistance, group development, staff development, curriculum development, and action research.

Instructional leaders must have the skills to employ teachers that support the shared vision of all stakeholders. Providing support and staff development, instructional leaders nourish skills and dispositions of teachers to continuously grow and improve. In contrast, when teachers are not improving, instructional leaders must protect the school’s mission and remove ineffective teachers. “Strong instructional leaders accept the challenge and do what is needed to ensure high quality teaching and learning” (Forrest, 2009, p. 39).

Promoting a Positive Climate

A school’s learning climate is shaped by the norms and attitudes of staff and students that directly affect learning. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) identify ways in which principals directly and indirectly contribute by:

- maintaining high visibility in order to communicate priorities and model expectations;
• creating a reward system that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort;
• establishing clear, explicit standards that embody the school’s expectation of students;
• protecting instructional time; and
• selecting and participating in high-quality staff development programs consistent with the school’s mission.

For school effectiveness, principals must seek to establish a climate in which student learning grows and does not get absorbed in other common school tasks. Instructional leaders develop a climate in which students feel safe and respected and are therefore inspired to work hard and achieve. Ultimately, “the principal plays a major role in the development of a positive learning culture” (Forrest, 2009, p. 39).

Instructional leadership is considered the most effective model of leadership that influences student achievement (Elmore, 2002; Hallinger & McCary, 1990). Research examining instructional leadership behaviors of principals shows a significant relationship with students’ mathematics and reading achievement (Donnell & White, 2005). In their investigation of principals’ instructional leadership behaviors and student performance in eighth grade reading and mathematics, Donell and White indicated a strong relationship among all three dimensions of instructional leadership. Of the three, promoting a positive climate had the strongest relationship to reading and mathematics achievement.
Summary

The review of research literature has shown promise in the advancement of women in the role of an effective secondary instructional leader. Leadership traits once attributed only to a more feminine leadership style is beginning to become more ideal traits of effective instructional leaders. This shift will come to pave the way for women to further affirm their place in the office of a middle or high school principal. As instructional leadership provides more opportunities to create effective schools, women will become better fit for the role of instructional leader in a secondary school. “The leadership styles of women are very much entwined with the models of leadership that produce effective schools” (Eby, 2004, p. 17).

While androgynous leadership traits are becoming the norm for effective leadership traits, men will soon presume “feminine” traits once considered ineffective. “The leadership styles which were once hierarchical in nature and male dominated are now being replaced by leadership styles more favorable to women” (Smarr, 2011, p. 12). Research suggests that this will begin to make way for women in educational leadership positions once dominated by men.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 illustrates the concepts that structure the framework for this study. Beginning with the foundation—feminist theory, ethic of care, and social role theory provides the theoretical basis for the research. Further investigation into the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders exposes the possible relationship between social norms and gender roles. All the concepts illustrated in Figure 1 interact to represent the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders.

Definition of Variables

The independent variables for the study are social norms and gender roles. The following function as definitions for the independent variables:

Social norms are defined as “socially shared beliefs that certain qualities can be attributed to individuals based on their membership in the categories female or male” (Lips, 2003, p. 201). More commonly, social norms serve as the unspoken directives of an organization that shapes the behavior of the membership (Wang, 2011).

Gender roles are the extent to which an individual perceives their worth based on as masculine or feminine characteristics (Eccles & Frome, 1996). Women’s perception of how she fits into the social culture of an organization often predicts how she behaves within the organization.
The dependent variable is the **effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders**. This is defined by a scoring rubric (Appendix A). This rubric
was designed based on the current evaluation instrument utilized in the setting of this study and ISLLC Standards for School Leaders.

**Feminist Theory**

Feminist theory strives to understand gender inequality. Developing as early as 1972, feminist theory investigates women’s social roles and experiences as it critically investigates social relations and gender inequality. Supporting women’s rights, interests, and issues, feminist theory establishes a structure to critically analyze women’s oppression, discrimination, alienation, and equality (Tong, 1989). This serves as an appropriate framework for examining the influence of social norms and gender roles on the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders as it aligns with the struggles and challenges women face as they transition into the role of a school leader. The society of feminist theory includes several distinctions; however, liberal and psychoanalytic feminism and feminist standpoint theory were chosen to serve as the framework for which the research question will be analyzed and answered.

Fixed on the notion that society allows individuals to use personal autonomy to complete themselves as individuals (Tong, 1989), liberal feminists give emphasis to the importance of equity for both men and women. Liberal feminist seek to free women from the societal views of gender roles that deny them equal access as men. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1799), a liberal feminist, maintained that education “will allow a woman to assume responsibility for her own development and growth” (Tong, 1989, p. 29) and provides “the equally educated women with the same civil liberties and
economic opportunities a man has, she will be able to exercise her hard won autonomy only within the private, or domestic, realm” (Tong, 1989, p. 30).

Grounded in Sigmund Freud’s theory of sexuality, psychoanalytic feminists argue that women’s social position and power have little to do with the sex of an individual, but deals with the social construction of femininity (Tong, 1989). Unhappy with Freud’s theory of sexuality, Betty Friedan argued women do not need sexual freedom, but freedom to grow and develop their own personal character and personality (Tong, 1989). Juliet Mitchell, another psychoanalytic feminist, created a dual-systems theory that declares a “woman’s status and function are jointly determined by her role in production and in reproduction, the socialization of children, and sexuality” (Tong, 1989, p. 30). As a result, Mitchell declared women trailed men in production although equally physically and psychologically capable and being just as qualified for high-paying and prestigious jobs as men (Tong, 1989). Primarily concerned with gender inequality, this framework serves as a means to analyze how society’s norms and prescribed gender roles influence the productivity of a woman serving as an instructional leader in a secondary school.

The antiquity of feminist standpoint theory began with German philosopher Georg Hegel’s master/slave dialectic and Marx and Lukacs’s development of the standpoint of the proletariat (Griffin, 2009). Hegel “analyzed the master-slave relationship to show that what people ‘know’ about themselves, others, and society depends on which group they are in” (Griffin, 2009, p. 63). In his analysis, Hegel espoused that oppressed slaves can eventually have freedom of consciousness when he or she understands self-consciously the struggles against the master and through
participation in physical labor which enables the ability to shape society in various ways. He continued by concluding that those in bondage have self-consciously different views of the meaning of chains, laws, and punishment than their masters who take part in the same reality (Griffin, 2009). Hegel further suggested that since masters are supported by the established structure of the current society, they hold the power to shape the view of the world; “to write the story books” (Griffin, 2009, p. 63).

Primarily through their experiences, women are more aware of differences in gender than men. Scholars accredit this to how women experience the status and position of their professions differently from male counterparts (Martin, Reynolds, & Keith, 2002). Feminist standpoint theorists, Patricia Hill Collins, Dorothy Smith, Nancy Hartsock, and Sandra Harding, all share the belief that:

Certain socio-political positions occupied by women (and by extension other groups who lack social and economic privilege) can become sites of epistemic privilege and thus productive starting points for enquiry into questions about not only those who are socially and politically marginalized, but also those who, by dint of social and political privilege, occupy the positions of oppressors. (Griffin, 2009, p. 63)

Sandra Harding inserts that “starting off research from women’s lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women’s lives but also of men’s lives and of the whole social order” (Griffin, 2009, p. 65). Her belief is shared by standpoint feminist, Dorothy Smith, who through the investigation of the lives of female academics, began to set her attention to the development of the sociology of women.
Smith sought to look “at the social world from the perspectives of women in their everyday worlds and the ways in which women socially construct their worlds” (Macionis & Gerber, 2010, p. 187). In 1983, Nancy Hartsock argued that a feminist standpoint could be established on Marx’s construction of experience and used to critique the patriarchal theories; therefore, scrutinizing the systemic oppression and devaluing of female knowledge (Hartsock, 1997). Dr. Patricia Hill-Collins asserts that feminist social science should be experienced from the standpoint of women or defined groups of women (Hill-Collins, 2000). Hill-Collins further asserts that sexism should also be studied in a “matrix of domination” (Hill-Collins, 2000), as it is important to view it in relation to other systems of domination; analyzing how it interacts with classicism, homophobia, racism, and the like.

Feminist standpoint theory thrives off four assumptions about the nature of life.

1. Class position gives a limited perspective on social relations;
2. Ruling groups dominate subordinate groups and take the subordinate groups' opinions away from them;
3. Subordinate groups have difficulties in the social life by dominating by ruling groups; and
4. Ruling groups have more powerful standpoint than subordinate groups.

(Harding, 1987)

Feminist standpoint theorists propose that social locations impact men and women’s social lives. This framework investigated the perceptions of female principals and the
influence of social norms and gender roles on the behaviors as an effective secondary instructional leader.

Ethic of Care

According to Tong and Williams (2011), feminist theorists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Catherine Beecher, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton began engaging in debates regarding the “gendered nature of morality” (para. 7) as early as the 18th and 19th centuries. Such debates initiated the examination of the similarities and differences of male ethics and female ethics. Historically, theorists of morality suggested that “the more separate the self is from others, the more fully-developed that self is” (Tong & Williams, 2011, para. 7). For many care ethicists, the idea that the more abstract and rational knowledge is, the more closely it mirrors reality, was a notion that supported the idea that men tend to develop morality more appropriately than women (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983). Instead, care-focused feminist propose that “the more connected the self is to others, the better the self is” (Tong & Williams, 2011, para. 17) and suggest that the concrete and emotional knowledge tend to mirror how individual really experience the world. It is from this premise that the ethics of care was birth as “communal women” began to replace “autonomous men” in early feminist approach to ethics (Tong, 1993, p. 97).

“Proponents of feminist care ethics, including Carol Gilligan, stress that traditional moral theories, principles, practices, and policies are deficient to the degree they lack, ignore, trivialize, or demean values and virtues culturally associated with women” (Tong & Williams, 2011, para. 19). Carol Gilligan, an American ethicist and
psychologist, discusses the idea of the ethics of care, a feminist theory that emphasizes the importance of relationships. She suggests that the earlier contributions to moral development theories by Freud, Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg support the idea that men are morally inferior to women. Piaget and Kohlberg’s stages of development are outlined in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

*Piagetian Stages of Cognitive Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Age</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Typical Developments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to age 2</td>
<td>Sensorimotor</td>
<td>Children develop the concept of object. permanence and the ability to form mental representations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 2 to 7</td>
<td>Preoperational</td>
<td>Children's thought is egocentric; they lack the concept of conversation and the ability to decent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 7 to 11</td>
<td>Concrete Operations</td>
<td>Children can decent; they acquire the concept of conversion; but they cannot reason abstractly or test hypotheses systematically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begins at age 11/12</td>
<td>Formal Operations</td>
<td>Children begin to reason abstractly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Kohlberg Stages of Moral Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Social Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Obedience and Punishment Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preconventional Morality</td>
<td></td>
<td>The child assumes that powerful authorities hand down a fixed set of rules which he or she must unquestioningly obey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individualism and Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Morality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Children recognize that there is not just one right view that is handed down by the authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good Interpersonal Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teenagers see morality as people living up to the expectations of the family and community and behave in &quot;good&quot; ways; meaning having good motives and interpersonal feelings such as love, empathy, trust, and concern for others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Maintaining the Social Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The respondent becomes more broadly concerned with society as a whole. Now the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Social Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Social Contract and Individual Rights</strong> People want to keep society functioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postconventional</td>
<td></td>
<td>They begin to think about society in a very theoretical way, stepping back from their own society and considering the rights and values that a society ought to uphold. They then evaluate existing societies in terms of these prior considerations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Universal Principles</strong> The respondents are working toward a conception of the good society. They suggest that we need to (a) protect certain individual rights and (b) settle disputes through democratic processes. This stage defines the principles by which we achieve justice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emphasis is on obeying laws, respecting authority, and performing one's duties so that the social order is maintained.
Freud suggests that such inferiority is attributed to girls’ psychosexual development (Tong & Williams, 2011). Girls develop a close relationship with their mothers that remain intact throughout adulthood (Gilligan, 1982); in contrast, Gilligan proposes that “boys break their attachment to their mothers for fear of being castrated by their fathers if they fail to do so, girls remain tied to their mothers because the threat of castration has no power over them” (Tong & Williams, 2011, para. 23). Consequently, this implies that:

Girls are supposedly much slower than boys to develop a sense of themselves as autonomous moral agents, personally responsible for the consequences of their actions: as persons who must obey society’s rules or face its punishments. In other words, boys and men come to respect law more than girls and women do. (para. 23)

Likewise, Gilligan offers criticism to Kohlberg’s stages of moral development. Her efforts sought to understand how women tend to only make it through stage 3, whereas men make it through stage 4 or 5. Gilligan asserts that Kohlberg’s stages lend itself to a more male opinion and not female moral voices (Gilligan, 1982). “This distinctive moral voice, says Gilligan, speaks a language of care that emphasizes relationships and responsibilities” (Tong & Williams, 2011, para. 23). This directly contrasts the idea of Kohlbergian researchers who speak a language of justice and stress the importance of rights and rules.

Gilligan submits that men and women have tendencies to view morality in different terms because women stress the importance of connections with others. She
also asserts that women emphasize empathy and compassion over the constructs of
morality proposed by Kohlberg’s scale (Gilligan, 1982). Sometimes criticized for
reinforcing traditional stereotypes of feminine traits, care-focused feminists support
Gilligan’s ethic of care as it is essential to understanding how caring is socially
engendered to women (Tong & Williams, 2011). The fundamental principles of ethic of
care are:

1. All individuals are interdependent for achieving their interests;
2. Those particularly vulnerable to our choices and their outcomes deserve extra
   consideration to be measured according to the level of their vulnerability to
   one’s choices and the level of their affectedness by one’s choices and no one
   else’s; and
3. It is necessary to attend to the contextual details of the situation in order to
   safeguard and promote the actual specific interests of those involved.

(Gilligan, 1982)

Gilligan asserts that women are not inferior in their moral development but that women
actually go through a different process. For her, women’s development is focused on
connections with people rather than separation and with an ethic of care rather than an
ethic of justice (Gilligan, 1982). Accordingly, Gilligan constructs stages of moral
development for women that is driven by the changes in the sense of self and not changes
in cognitive development. Table 5 displays Gilligan’s stages of moral development for
women—ethic of care.
Table 5

**Gilligan's Stages of Moral Development for Women—Ethic of Care**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Preconventional</td>
<td>Goal is individual survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition is from selfishness to responsibility to others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not listed</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Self-sacrifice is goodness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition is from goodness to truth that she is a person too</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe never</td>
<td>Postconventional</td>
<td>Principle of nonviolence; do not hurt others or self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While some feminists have criticized care-based ethic for reinforcing traditional stereotypes of a “good woman,” others have embraced parts of this paradigm under the theoretical concept of care-focused feminism. This body of thought is essential to understanding how caring is socially engendered to women. “Care-focused feminists regard women’s capacity for care as a human strength” (Tong, 2009, p. 111). Many feminist researchers conclude that the ethic of care should be a social responsible to both men and women (Tong & Williams, 2011). This framework serves to analyze how gender roles and women principals perception of such roles influence their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders.

**Social Role Theory**

Appearing in the late 1970s, feminists began using *gender* to distinguish between biological sex and social behaviors of men and women (Marecek, Crawford, & Popp,
The inception of such idea allowed psychologists to begin exploring potential differences in gender roles and society's expectation of men and women behaviors (Rosenfeld, 2009). Birth from the efforts to understand the origins of sex differences in behaviors, social role theory gives emphasis to the impact of gender roles as cultural views of male and female behaviors and social roles as defined by the organizational hierarchy. With the maturity of scientific literature on sex differences and similarities in the 1980s, Eagly introduced social role theory from the balance between society's perceptions of men and women behavior and scientifically documented differences of sex in social behavior (Eagly, Woods, & Diekman, 2000). Many frameworks support the study of women and leadership behaviors, but social role theory proves to be the most appropriate for this study because, through observation, it seeks to explain why people behave in predictable ways based on their socially defined role. Inside the framework of an organization's expectations of how leaders behave and the societal expectation of gender roles, this study explores the instructional leadership behaviors of women as secondary school leaders.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) assert that people learn gender-specific behaviors at an early age. This is inclusive of behavior polarization which informs individuals of gender appropriate and acceptable behaviors (Eagly, 1997). Such polarization identifies the manner to which a girl learns a woman's role and the various ways boys and girls are conditioned through maturation (Rosenfeld, 2009). Society regulates specific behaviors of men and women based on prescribed roles. These behaviors are often learned through socialization and such behaviors become the norm (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).
In most societies, women are viewed as homemakers and men as breadwinners (Levinson, 1996). Consequently, as individuals learn societal expectations, they are more likely to select roles based on societal norms (Josselson, 1987). Such societal roles translate into organizational cultures. Societal views at the inception of an organization help shape its culture (Rosenfeld, 2009). Such norms pass through the members of the organization through values, rituals, and artifacts (Schein, 1983) and organizations preserve such culture through specific rules and structures (Clegg, 1981). Frequently, women face scrutiny when deviating from the "gender-specific customs in male-dominated industries" (Rosenfeld, 2009, p. 37).

"Social role theorists contended that beliefs concerning gender roles influenced one’s beliefs about the attributes of male and female leaders" (Ligeikis, 2010, p. 43). Such roles often predict the behaviors of men and women in performing particular functions of leadership; however, in some processes of management, individuals may decide to be more participative rather than directive. Such inconsistency asserts the idea that gender roles influence leadership behaviors. Society tend to expect behaviors from leaders based on their gender roles, ironically, male and female leaders tend to have individual expectations of leadership behaviors based on their social identity (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Engen, 2003). As a result, social role theory is suitable to understand how socially perceived ideas of female gender roles and socially perceived ideas of secondary instructional leadership behaviors have on the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders.
Summary

The theoretical framework of this study lies in the concepts of feminist theory, ethics of care, and social role theory. Seeking to understand how social norms and gender roles impact human behavior, social role theory facilitates an understanding of the influence of such on the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders. Concisely, this study seeks to analyze how the independent variables—social norms and gender roles— influence the dependent variable—the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders, while sex, gender, age, and ethnicity serve as intervening variables.

A feminist theory and an ethic of care approach along with social role theory provides a framework for this study as it offers an understanding of the lived experiences of women as secondary instructional leaders. Feminist theory and ethic of care provide the philosophical foundation, through first-hand descriptions and interpretations of the lived experiences as women. Social role theory offers a lens through which to consider the lived experiences of women as secondary instructional leaders. Connecting the beliefs of liberal and psychoanalytical feminists and feminist standpoint theory, social norms and gender roles were examined to measure how female principals perceive their influence on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders.
Women as educational leaders continue to be a trending topic in historical educational leadership research. Researchers approach the study from many perspectives. Traditional methods of research seek to challenge old standards by using the support of feminist, critical theorist, cultural studies, and post-modernist perspectives. Current research is either indirectly or openly critical of the more traditional methods that appear to “perpetuate the problem the research is seeking to understand” (Murphey, Moss, Hanah, & Weiner, 2005, p. 276). Conversely, by combining the traditional and current research methods, a researcher can “attempt to name and examine the experiences of women in leadership positions and/or of women taking or defining leadership roles” (Murphey, Moss, Hanah, & Weiner, 2005, p. 276).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology for this study, including description of the population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, and limitations. This research study focused on how social norms and gender roles, as they related to the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders. Intervening variables included sex, gender, age, and ethnicity. This research consisted of the interpretation and gathering of data collected from women in instructional leadership roles in 6 – 12 schools.
Research Method

Qualitative research is used to examine the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders. Qualitative research was selected for this study as it serves to initiate an understanding of an unstudied area. The use of qualitative research is most appropriate when inadequate research is known and it requires a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Creswell, 2003). Inadequate research of the impact of social norms and gender roles on the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders has been undertaken. A detailed account of the personal experiences of women as secondary instructional leaders is necessary to understand how such behaviors impact principal effectiveness. “The researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner” (Creswell, 2003, p. 7).

Research Design

Case study research generates an understanding of complicated issues and adds depth to findings of previous research. Case study is an inductive approach that uses narrative methods of data collection. It is most appropriate when researchers are more concerned in discovery, exploration, and interpretation of data than in testing hypothesis (Yin, 2003). Generally, a case study design is used to add knowledge of individual, group, or organizational phenomena and involves rigorous explanation of such phenomena in a real-life context (Yin, 2003).
Case study design is best suited when researches do not control the events explored (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This design examines the complications of processes, culture, and actual circumstances, rather than organizational goals, exploring not only the processes, but the actual meaning of the event (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Based on social norms and gender roles, women make decisions regarding student achievement and instructional leadership. For this reason, Marshall and Rossman emphasize, “One cannot understand human behavior without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings, and actions” (p. 3).

This study used actual observations and personal interviews by the researcher to provide an account of the lived realities of female principals and their leadership responses to truths encountered. Subsequently, the study of people in their natural setting thrives in the flexibility offered by qualitative methodology. “A case study also has the advantage of researcher objectivity over other types of qualitative research, such as participant observation, where unintentional manipulation might occur” (Hanson, 2010, p. 59). Utilizing a case study design afforded awareness of the experiences of women as secondary instructional leaders through their own perception.

Case studies are complex and typically contain significant amounts of data to analyze. Used to produce new theory, build upon theory, or explain a situation, researchers must determine if their study will be a single or multiple case studies. “In case study research, researchers determine a priori if the study is going to be single-case or multiple-case based, depending on the nature of the inquiry” (Yin, 1994, p. 11). This study concentrated on multiple phenomena and strived to comprehensively explain such
phenomena, which is the lived experiences of two women as secondary instructional leaders. Creswell (2003) explains that the unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, distinguishes a case study. The collective experiences of two women as secondary instructional leaders served as the unit of analysis for this multiple case study. A multiple case study provided the opportunity for the researcher to compare individual experiences and developed an awareness of shared themes in the experiences of the female principals.

**Participants and Ethical Considerations**

Limited participants are involved in a case study; consequently, Creswell (2003) indicates that researchers purposefully or intentionally select individuals for the population. For this study, a purposeful population of two female principals of middle and high schools working in one metro-Atlanta, Georgia county was selected to participate pending their consent. Utilizing email addresses listed on school websites, an initial letter of introduction was sent. This letter described the purpose of the study, the research methodology, and the proposed time-commitment. A letter of intent was also included in the email in addition to the researcher’s contact information. Upon receipt of the letter of intent, the researcher contacted participants to schedule interview and observation times.

To ensure ethical protection of participants, the researcher required the signing of an informed consent by all participants, discussed the interview agenda, and electronically recorded the interview to ensure accuracy. All signed consents, interview transcripts, and electronic recordings were kept secure in the researcher’s residence. Participants were sent a copy of their transcribed interview to make changes as necessary.
Data Collection

The first method of data collection was interviewing. Interviews were conducted in person in the principal’s natural-setting providing the researcher an opportunity to record each principal’s response personally. Interviews are described as “a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other” (Bogden & Biklen, 2007, p. 21). This purposeful conversation was used to gather descriptive data in each principal’s own words so that the researcher could acquire insight into how each principal interprets her role as a secondary instructional leader. Marshall and Rossman (2006) identify the most important characteristic of interviewing as the researchers efforts to allow participants to frame and structure their responses as a means to expose the participant’s personal assessment. Feelings, thoughts, intentions, and previous experiences cannot be observed; therefore, Merriam (1998) asserts that interviewing is the best to provide insight into how a subject thinks, feels, and interprets her world.

Semistructured interviews were used to gather personal accounts of women’s experiences as secondary instructional leaders. Semistructured interviews allow the researcher to present a topic and then guide the conversation by asking focused questions (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The format of a semi-structured interview involved the researcher beginning with a list of questions or issues to be explored. The order and wording of the questions was not predetermined allowing flexibility of how and when questions were asked (Merriam, 1998). In contrast, the researcher had the opportunity to adjust the order and the wording of the questions based on the responses of the
participants. An interview protocol (Appendix B) outlined the questions and topics; yet the order of the questions depended on each participant’s subjectivity.

While particularly strong for its ability to gather large amounts of data quickly, interviewing is weakened in that the researcher relies on the participant’s honesty and integrity. Yet, when combined with other methods, a variety of understandings are possible. In this study, a document review of the school improvement plan and participant observations were used for comparisons.

The second method for collecting data was through observations. Creswell (1998) suggest that qualitative observational research begins with developing a well-planned and well-understood relationship between the researcher and the participants. The researcher served as a participant-observer recording the behaviors of the principals to acquire a deeper understanding of their perception of their roles as a secondary instructional leader. The researcher conducted observations of each participant as she carried out her daily duties and responsibilities as an instructional leader. The researcher observed the participants’ interactions, relationships, leadership style, and managerial skills in her natural setting and examined how she interacts with internal and external stakeholders. The rubric created to measure the effectiveness of female principals as secondary instructional leaders was used during the field observations to ensure that:

- The researcher’s bias did not influence judgment. The rubric allowed for objectivity and was based on predetermined criteria;
• The data collection is valid as principals were being rated on behaviors expected of an effective instructional leader and can be validated by earlier research; and
• There was equity in rating each principal through the observations of the same duration.

The third method of data collection was a document review. In case studies, gathered documents prove to better fit as a supplement to data collected through other sources (Yin, 1994). Yin asserts that document review is often used to offer insight as to solidify data from other sources, verify correct spelling and titles regarded in the interview, and serves as a catalyst for a more detailed analysis of other topics. The school-wide improvement plans of each school lead by the female principal participants were reviewed. According to the 2006 U.S. Department of Education’s Local Education Agency (LEA) and Non-Regulatory Guidance, the purpose of the school improvement plan is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school, as to increase student achievement in core academic subjects of reading and mathematics. This plan offered a structure for investigating problems, identifying possible causes, and addressing instructional issues hindering the progression of student achievement. An intensive review of this document and comparison with data from the interviews and observations provided an insight as to the effectiveness of each participant as female secondary instructional leaders. Figure 2 illustrates the triangulation of data collected from interviews, observations, and document reviews.
Figure 2. Triangulation of Data Sources

Data Analysis

Data analysis served as a way to bring order and organization to the data collected. Data collection and data analysis happened concurrently. "Simultaneous data collection and analysis allows the researcher to make adjustments along the way" (Merriam, 1998, p. 17). Having such flexibility allowed the researcher to clarify emerging themes, concepts, and classifications. Thoroughly reading observation notes and interview transcripts, the researcher attempted to create an understanding of all collected data. This understanding was based on the emerging themes and issues acquired through reflective analysis. Creswell (2003) suggests the researcher to describe the data with great detail as a way to establish a context for it. Analytical techniques included within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.
Within-Case Analysis

Within-case analysis is the process of examining the data of each case individually. According to Merriam (1998), this allows the researcher to become more familiar with an individual case prior to cross-case analysis and be better prepared to compare and contrast findings. After conducting interviews, the audiotapes were transcribed to produce a written account. A coding system (Appendix C) was implemented to further organize the data gathered in the participant’s interviews.

Coding is essential to managing qualitative data (Merriam, 1998). Coding refers to the assigning of a symbol to particular parts of data to categorize units of meaning to the text (Merriam, 1998). Certain codes were assigned to the text based on common phrases, key words, and issues documented in the text. These were regarded as first-level codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After assigning first-level codes, pattern coding was used to group segments of data into smaller sets based on specific interpretive theories (Merriam, 1998). Pattern coding was essential to cross-case analysis as it allows common themes to surface.

Utilizing the research questions, review of research literature, and the theoretical framework, the researcher made an effort to recognize potential issues and group them into potential themes. The data were stored in NVivo9 to assist in coding and organization. This allowed for cross-case analysis more easily. The final step in within-case analysis examined the data and sought the connection between it and the theoretical framework of the study.
Cross-Case Analysis

Cross-case analysis is the process a researcher engages in to examine and build generalizations across cases (Merriam, 1998). After coding the data within-case analysis, data was examined to identify potential themes that emerge across all three cases. Placing the themes that emerge during the within-case analysis, the researcher was able to compare and contrast data from each case; therefore, allowing the researcher to make conclusions and suggest potential implications. Data collection, interpretation, and organization were critical to the researcher's ability to draw conclusions. The most crucial challenge of a qualitative researcher is "to know how to develop strong, plausible, and fair arguments that are supported by the data" (Yin, 2003, p. 9).

Validity

The validity of this study was strengthened in the use of multiple sources of data. Yin (2003) describes the important benefit of using multiple data sources as the emerging of "converging lines of inquiry" (p. 9). This is apparent in the data from different sources converging on the exact findings. Using multiple data sources strengthens others' belief in the study; therefore, the study becomes more convincing and accurate (Yin, 2003).

Internal Validity

Internal validity is referred to as creditability in a qualitative study and is typically used to identify how well the research matches reality (Merriam, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1998). Because there is not one correct understanding of reality, but the actual merging of several realities to construct reality, the description of the data must be credible. This is managed by precisely identifying and describing the study's participants
Utilizing Merriam’s (1998) guidelines, creditability was ensured by adhering to three processes: member checks, triangulation, and clarification of researcher’s biases.

- Member checks are essential to proving a study’s findings credible (Lincoln, Guba, & Guba, 1985). Member checks were satisfied by allowing the participants an opportunity to review interview transcripts and submit corrections.

- Triangulation lessens the chance for misinterpretation (Merriam, 1998). “Triangulation refers to the gaining of multiple perspectives through completed studies that have been conducted on the same topic and that directly address each other’s findings” (Creswell, 2003, p. 42). For this study, triangulation occurred by using three separate data sources to draw from different perspectives on the same idea or concept: interviews, observations, and document review. Additionally, triangulation occurred through various methods of data analysis—within-case and cross-case analysis.

- Clarifying the researcher’s bias increases the creditability of this study (Lincoln, Guba, & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). All researchers bring preconceived ideas of the topic of study; therefore, to ensure creditability, the researcher’s assumptions were outlined to counter the interference of personal bias and values.
External Validity

In qualitative studies, the external validity is referred to as generalizability (Merriam, 1998) and can be defined as the broadening of a study’s findings on a sample population to the population at large. Generalizability of this study was ensured by using Merriam’s suggestions.

- Rich, thick descriptions are provided for each woman serving as a secondary school instructional leader. This allows the reader to identify if the situation described applies to the reader’s situation; therefore, gauging the alignment of the reader’s situation and the research situation.
- This study analyzed multiple cases of women secondary school instructional leaders. This allows readers to generalize findings across cases.
- The researcher adhered to specific, replicable procedures for data collection and analysis for each case study. This process allows for generalizability to a larger population.

Reliability

Reliability tests the quality of a qualitative study (Golafshani, 2003). Trustworthiness is vital to the reliability. Yin (2003) indicates “the general way of approaching the reliability problem is . . . to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder” (p. 20). In qualitative studies, reliability is referred to as auditability. Merriam (1998) describes auditability as the level to which the findings of a study are consistent and dependable. Three techniques were used to ensure auditability
of this study: explanation of the researcher’s position, triangulation, and creation of an audit trail.

**Explanation of Researcher’s Position**

The researcher sought to investigate how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders because the researcher is a women aspiring to become an instructional leader in a secondary school. This topic allowed the researcher to explore lived experiences of practicing women principals to better understand how they perceived their roles as secondary instructional leaders. Likewise, the decision to collectively examine women and secondary instructional leadership was largely based on personal and professional interests of the researcher.

**Triangulation**

The use of several data sources and various data collection and analytical techniques allows for auditability of this study. Triangulation is described in detail earlier as it is another method that ensures this study is credible (internal validity).

**Creation of an Audit Trail**

Merriam (1998) defines an audit trail as a comprehensive description of the data collection and analysis process. She likens this process to the procedures for which business owners use to keep records for potential audits and suggest that researchers keep accurate accounts of how data is collected and how themes are developed (Merriam, 1998). Data collection procedures and analytical techniques were described to ensure
that other researchers understands the process and that it has the potential to be duplicated in a similar study.

Assumptions

Initially, it is assumed that in the interviews, all participants answered openly and honestly to questions asked of them. Although assured that their responses will be held confidential, anxiety about displaying such vulnerability still could have existed. Prior to participation, each principal signed an informed consent reinforcing anonymity (Creswell, 2003). Likewise, it is assumed that the participants understood the questions in the interview. Although provided an overview of the interview agenda and questions, participants may have been unclear of wording of questions (Creswell, 2003).

Limitations

One limitation of this study lies in the size and type of sample. Women are underrepresented as secondary school leaders. As a result, this study sought to include two middle school and one high school female principals in one Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia county; however, based on participant time restraints, this study is limited to two middle school principals of one Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia county. This limits the scope of the study; therefore, limiting the interpretation and the findings. Because of the nature of district bureaucracy, principals were hesitant to share their experiences for fear of jeopardizing their career. Principals who have such fear chose to not participate or refused to disclose information regarding their negative experiences. This limited the study to only those principals choosing to participate without inhibition.
Another limitation of this study is that the researcher is an employee of the school system to which the participants are employed. To limit researcher’s bias, an observation rubric (Appendix A) was created to objectively rate each participant during the observations. Likewise, interview transcripts were made available to both participants for their review and revision.

Summary

Qualitative research is used to gain understanding into people’s behaviors, attitudes, value system, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture, or lifestyle. Utilizing and interpreting unstructured information from interviews, observations, and document reviews sought to explain why individuals behave in particular ways. This methodology proved to be the most appropriate method for this study, as the researcher sought to understand the why social norms and gender roles impact the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders.

Multiple case study design allowed for the comparison of two principals’ accounts of their lived experiences to converge on common issues and themes. Such themes will be vital in preparing women for the role of secondary instructional leader. Educational leadership preparation programs will benefit from the data collected in this study. Common themes and issues can be further explored to classify the behaviors of women as secondary instructional leaders and to understand how such behaviors impact job performance.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this case study analysis is to investigate how female principals perceived the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as instructional leaders in secondary schools. Classified as the independent variables, social norms and gender roles are considered as they relate to the dependent variable, the effectiveness of women as instructional leaders in secondary schools. This chapter profiles the study’s participants and their individual responses to research questions. A detail account of within-case analysis of each case is presented and the chapter concludes with a cross-case analysis by the research questions and the study’s theoretical framework.

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected in three ways: interviews, observations, and a document review. Semistructured interviews were conducted for approximately an hour and recorded digitally. Digital recordings were later transcribed and sent to participants for their review. Thematic coding of transcribed text was the catalyst for the data analysis. NVivo9 was used to organize, store, and manage the data. The identification of the emerging themes uncovered in the interpretation of the data collected is presented in this chapter.
At least 16 hours of observations were conducted in the participant’s natural setting. Participants were assessed by an observation rubric (Appendix A). An explanation of how the observation rubric was created is presented in Chapter 3. The intent of the researcher was to uncover how effective both participants are in the exhibiting instructional leadership behaviors outlined in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and relating to the three dimensions of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Behaviors, outlined by ISLLC, are categorized into the three dimensions of instructional leadership: defining school mission, managing instructional program, and promoting positive school climate. Individual behaviors were scored on a scale of 1 to 4; with 4 being the highest. Sums of each dimension were then averaged to provide overall ratings. The overall ratings were then averaged to indicate a competency rating on a scale of 1 to 4; with 4 being the highest. Table 6 depicts the specific classification based on competency ratings.

Table 6

*Specific Classification Based on Competency Ratings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Rating</th>
<th>Description of Overall Competency as an Instructional Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.50 – 4.00</td>
<td>Exceeds Standard of an Effective Instructional Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.49 – 2.5</td>
<td>Meets Standard of an Effective Instructional Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.49 – 1.50</td>
<td>Needs Improvement in Behaviors of an Effective Instructional Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.49 – 1.00</td>
<td>Does Not Meet Standard of an Effective Instructional Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 shows the assessment of the effectiveness of each participant as an instructional leader through analysis of the observation rubric and a review of the school improvement plan.

**Profiles of Study Participants**

Two female secondary principals were selected to participate in this study, Cindy Smith of Middle School A and Louise Jefferson of Middle School B. Table 7 compares the personal demographics of the study’s participants.

Table 7

*Personal Demographics of Study Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cindy Smith</th>
<th>Louise Jefferson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Marital Status</td>
<td>Single; Never Married</td>
<td>Divorced; One Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2 Daughters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Background</td>
<td>B.S. in English; M.S. in Middle Grades Education; Add-on Certification in Educational Leadership</td>
<td>B.S. in Special Education; M.S. in Educational Leadership;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add-on Certification in Educational Leadership</td>
<td>Educational Leadership; Ed.S. in Educational Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience as Principal</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Secondary School Setting</td>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Cindy Smith and Louise Jefferson are fictional representations of the participants.
Profile of Participants' School Settings

This section provides an overview of the setting of each participant. This information is pertinent for establishing an awareness of the environment. Principals Smith and Jefferson were observed interacting with staff, students, parents, and the community. The racial composition of the student populations at both middle schools is displayed in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3. Racial Composition of Students at Middle School A

Figure 4. Racial Composition of Students at Middle School B
Table 8 displays institutional demographics of the study’s participants. Tables 9 and 10 summarize academic performance of students of both middle schools in English Language Arts/Reading and Mathematics as measured on Georgia’s Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT). Data in these tables were compiled from 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports located on the state department of education website, www.gadoe.org.

Table 8

Institutional Demographics of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution’s Name</th>
<th>Cindy Smith</th>
<th>Louise Jefferson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School A</td>
<td>Middle School B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>1292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Students with Disabilities (SWD)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of English Language Learners (ELL)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Gifted Students</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch (Economically Disadvantaged or ED)</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Rate</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Rate</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

*Academic Performance on CRCT of Students at Middle School A*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding in Mathematics</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>SWD</th>
<th>ELL</th>
<th>ED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School A</strong></td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>96.2%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

*Academic Performance on CRCT of Students at Middle School B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding in Mathematics</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>SWD</th>
<th>ELL</th>
<th>ED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School B</strong></td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 10 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding in Reading/English Language Arts</th>
<th>Middle School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both middle schools are located in the same school system, but in different regions. Historically, this system has experienced an academic divide and can be conceptualized by the reporting of the percentages of secondary schools making AYP in both regions. Middle School A is situated in Region A and Middle School B is situated in Region B. In 2011, 57% of middle and high schools in Region A made adequate yearly progress and 23% of middle and high schools in Region met AYP standards.

Middle School A has successfully made AYP every year since 2008. The school has been led by successful leaders, of which assisted in establishing, nurturing, and sustaining the climate. By Principal Smith's account, her successor was promoted to a higher position because of his effectiveness. Likewise, as a teacher, Principal Smith opened the school and is therefore familiar with the lineage of leadership to date. Greater academic performance suggests a well-established protocol for which the school can thrive successfully. As a result, Principal Smith has more autonomy to prioritize instruction and student achievement.
Middle School B has not made AYP since its establishment in 2006 and has had challenges with effective leadership since its inception. Prior to her appointment, Principal Jefferson spoke of her transition after the former principal was removed. She stated she spent most of her first year trying to establish routines and procedures to ensure the success and safety of students. During the time observed, Principal Jefferson spent a noticeable amount of time managing student behaviors. Because of a poorly implemented school-wide discipline policy and other safety procedures, ensuring building safety, establishing protocol for safety, and managing building procedures has become priority in Principal Jefferson’s second year of leadership.

To ensure the culture and climate of each school of which both principals lead is captured, potential factors (outlined in Tables 9 and 10) impacting student achievement and student learning are defined. Student mobility is defined as the phenomenon of students changing schools for reasons other than grade promotion (Student Mobility, 2004). Scholars suggest that students who transfer frequently are at an increased risk for academic and behavioral problems (Hartman, 2002; Rumberger & Larson, 2002; Kerbow, 1996). According to researchers, schools with higher mobility rates generally have one or more of the following properties:

- Large population of children of migrant workers,
- Large population of homeless children, and/or
- Large population of low-income families. (Student Mobility, 2004, para. 3)

The impact of higher student mobility rate on student learning and achievement are significant and include:
• Lower achievement levels due to discontinuity of curriculum between schools,
• Behavioral problems,
• Difficulty developing peer relationships, and
• A greater risk for dropping out. (Student Mobility, 2004, para. 5)

While studies have indicated the significant impact of student mobility of mobile students, some scholars suggest there is an impact on non-mobile students, teachers, and school climate (Student Mobility, 2004). In a 1999, California schools with high mobility rates (30% or higher) reported that the academic test scores of non-mobile students were considerably lower than schools with lower student mobility rates (Student Mobility, 2004). Such findings suggest that higher student turnover is disruptive to the learning environment and slows the learning process of students already on target as a result of teachers working hard to catch up new students. According to the research, both Middle School A and B have high mobility rates and as a result, likely experiences challenges in increasing student achievement.

“One crucial element of a child’s success in school is school attendance” (Atkinson, 1998, p. 28). Quantitative studies suggest that student non-attendance increases, student achievement decreases (Herberling & Shaffer, 1995). Other scholars have made an effort to define student attendance and its relationship to student achievement (Ziegler, 1972; Norris, 2000; Applegate, 2003). Consequently, research suggests that students with higher grades have higher attendance rates than students with more absences (Redick & Nicoll, 1990). Professors of the University of Kentucky under The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice conducted a study to
examine school characteristics related to lower student achievement (Christie, Nelson, Jolivette, & Riney, 2002). Data analysis "revealed that poverty (measured by the percentage of students enrolled in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program - FRLP) and attendance rate, accounted for approximately 40% of the variance in a school's academic achievement score" (Christie, Nelson, Jolivette, & Riney, 2002, p. 2). According to this study, a higher attendance rate and fewer students on free and reduced lunch results in higher student achievement (Applegate, 2003).

Middle School A has an average attendance rate of 87% and has less than half of their student population receiving free and reduced lunch. Conversely, Middle School B has a 71% attendance rate and 75% of students on free and reduced lunch. Such variances in data can potential impact the primary focus of the building leader.

Within-Case Analysis: Principal Cindy Smith, Middle School A

Cindy Smith was named principal of Middle School A on July 1 of 2011. Prior to her assignment, Principal Smith served as an assistant principal for 6 years and a classroom teacher for 6 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in education, both conferred at the University of Florida. During her tenure in the classroom, Principal Smith earned an added on certification in educational leadership from Georgia State University.

Description of Social Norms and Gender Roles: Leadership of Secondary Schools

Performing under the belief that social norms are those behaviors that society views as normal and gender roles as the roles society views acceptable for particular
genders, Principal Smith describes social norms of secondary school leadership by four notable ideas:

- Because leaders are solely consumed with school business, female principals must choose between their profession or their families,
- Leaders are always strong,
- Secondary leaders—especially high school leaders—are male, and
- Leaders are role models.

Principal Smith stated that society expects for secondary school leaders to continuously involve themselves in school business, even beyond normal work hours: “I think the expectation is that secondary school leaders’ life has to revolve around your job. To be frank, it almost does, to do this job well. It's a very consuming job.” She spoke to the idea that school stakeholders expect the building principal to always be on and ready to support and assist in any capacity needed.

My day is 12 hours, coupled with when you go home, the job is not over. It's a lot. And people know that when you take on a principalship, you have accepted that so it's an expectation. For example, somebody can send me an email at 10:00 p.m. and expect me to respond and be annoyed when I don't.

Consequently, Principal Smith was convinced that society believed female principals could not lead a school and nurture a family. She recalled a conversation with some individuals of her staff that believed she had chosen to become a principal, in lieu of having a husband and children. She also believes that others feel that because she does
not have a family, she does not know the value of one; yet she stated that female principals must work very hard to find the balance between work and family.

I have lots of new friends that are new principals that have families. And it's really hard [for them] to find the balance. And I think that when you're single with no kids, it's almost easier to lose the balance because you don't have anybody calling you saying why aren't you home yet? You don't have anybody saying close your laptop and pay attention to your family. So, it is a little bit easier to let life revolve around school when you're single. On the other hand though, when I talk with my friends who have families and children and they talk about going home and being emotionally depleted from being here and not feeling like they have as much energy for their family. I haven't had as much of a social life since I got this job, but I don't have a relationship that's suffering because of it, and I know there are people who do.

She recognized society feels strongly about the secondary school principals serving as role models in the community.

As far as what's expected from society of leaders in education, it's a very idealistic role model expectation. For example, if I am out with the assistant principals and we want to have a couple of drinks often we will go somewhere outside of our school community because if the parents see us, it's almost looked down upon that three grown adults have chosen to have a beer together. On the other hand, we are role models and we have to be conscious if our kids see us out in the community.
She also conveyed the idea that society expects secondary school leaders to always be strong and never show weakness or emotion; regardless of sex or gender.

There is that expectation that you're strong at all times. And I don't think that's because I'm a woman, I think that's because I'm a leader, whether I was a man or a woman. I'm expected to always have it together and always be strong. That doesn't mean I don't show them my personal side, but I don't show them my weaknesses.

She espoused that showing weakness is often perceived as being too emotional for the tasks of leading a secondary school. Principal Smith acknowledged that principals characterized as weak by school staff and students are often not respected as leaders in the building; therefore, to be an effective leader, a principal must be convincingly resilient consistently.

Finally, Principal Smith indicated that society deemed men more capable of leading secondary schools. She spoke about her initial experience as the new leader of Middle School A. When asked, do you believe that society views men to be better equipped for secondary school leadership, she replied:

I didn't until an experience I had when I started this job. I am in a very unique situation because my school, the initial principal who was here for the first nine years when the building was open was a woman, and unfortunately, the last few years she was here there were a lot of things about the school that were not working correctly. And a principal came in for one year and it was a black man, and he was seen as the saving grace and he did make a lot of positive changes,
and the school made Annual Yearly Progress for the first time in a couple of years and there were a lot of good things that happened. He now has moved on to the high school and now here I come. A woman. And add to it that I'm a white woman. When I took this job, I received the parent surveys and the teacher surveys where they openly talked about what they thought this school needed as a principal... ‘don't bring a woman in here, we need a man of color in this building to lead these kids.’ I received emails from parents, not blind emails, but with their name on it, owning it, saying I said that I didn't think a woman should be doing this and how are you going to lead this school, you're not strong enough. There was this automatic assumption and it floored me.

She also stated that society viewed women better suited to lead elementary schools.

At the high school level, it tends to be more men that are principals. I think there's something to be said for the fact that elementary school students do require more of a nurturing environment. In my experience, I have met male principals who are just as nurturing and loving as women are, but I think that's the flip side of the coin. There's the expectation of us, but there's also that belief that men can't be that way. And I've heard that as well, but I've seen it. I think that, again, goes back to norms being more about what society thinks than the reality of it.

**Description of Instructional Leadership Behaviors**

Characterizing herself as an instructional leader that bases every decision on its impact on instruction and what is best for children, Principal Smith identifies instructional leadership as the most important priority, aside from the safety of the
building and its occupants. She specified that key behaviors that principals exhibit to impact student achievement are making data-driven decisions, observing teachers and giving feedback, and supporting students and student behaviors. Because of other duties and responsibilities, she admitted to not being in classrooms as much as she desired, but recognized the importance of effective instructional leadership in reforming schools.

Unfortunately, there's so much administrative paperwork and duties that take away from that. I do think that I'm very involved in determining what our staff development is and leading some of the staff development, and bringing in local experts to train the teachers on different strategies. I think in that way I'm definitely affecting student achievement. And, of course, through observation of the teachers, but I wish it were more. I wish that I was spending my days in classrooms giving teachers feedback. And it's just not happening as much as I would like it to because of all the other stuff.

The three dimensions of Instructional Leadership are defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Principal Smith perceived her staff and students viewed her positively in regards of each of the three dimensions.

We have to do surveys as new principals to see how the staff is feeling about things and it was interesting to see that at the beginning of October they rated me low on trust. At first I was offended, and then I thought about it, 'Well, of course they don't trust me, they don't know me.' But I think that as time is moving forward, I've started to hear them make comments, 'We can tell that every
decision you make goes back to instruction.' They're bringing problems to me
now instead of gossiping about them and we're reaching that point of doing the
right work. I think they believe I'm an instructional leader, I think they believe
that we're heading in the right direction. We, as a school, are trying to figure out
what that is right now. When I first got here they also weren't sure that I was
going to be strong and able to handle discipline and now they know that I will.

**Observed Effectiveness as an Instructional Leader**

This section provides a within-case analysis of the effectiveness of Cindy Smith,
principal at Mason Middle School as measured using the observation rubric. Functioning
as a participant-observant, the researcher spent 15.75 hours in the field observing the
instructional leadership behaviors of Principal Smith. Such observations occurred in
administrative and/or leadership team meetings and also through interaction of Principal
Smith with parents, students, staff, central office staff, and community members. Over
the course of the 15.75 hours, Principal Smith's competency was measured in all three
dimensions of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987).

**Defining the School Mission**

Some leadership behaviors categorized as defining the school mission included:
monitoring student achievement and evaluating the school improvement plan,
communicating progress toward the vision and mission to all stakeholders, and using data
to assess the organizational effectiveness. Principal Smith was rated at 3.40 on a 4.00
scale for the subareas observed as outlined on the observation rubric. Her effectiveness
in defining the school mission was evident in her interaction with school stakeholders and her facilitation of leadership team meetings regarding student achievement.

Principal Smith was observed facilitating a leadership team (the assistant principals, content leaders, guidance counselors, graduation coach, instructional coaches, data support specialist, and a parent liaison) meeting to complete the mid-year assessment of their school improvement plan. At the opening of the meeting, she instructed team members to reacquaint themselves with the goals determined by the team at the beginning of the year. As members individually reviewed the goals outlined in the school improvement plan, Principal Smith provided each member with current data of various assessments to facilitate a discussion of the school's progress towards their goals, which in essence defines their school mission and vision. After allowing time for discussion and interpretation, she then directed team members to assess the current school improvement plan and revise current strategies to reflect the needs indicated by the data. Before the conclusion of the meeting, Principal Smith debriefed with each team in order to provide a review of the current review of Mason Middle School in the school newsletter to parents and community members.

Principal Smith was observed interacting with students and teachers throughout a normal school day. In her interaction and on-site decision-making, she remained attuned to the vision and mission. While monitoring class change, Principal Smith was approached by a teacher wanting clarity on conflicting demands—allow a student to attend an upcoming field trip for music, ultimately missing her reading class of which he
is failing. Without inhibition, Principal Smith indicated she would fully support her not signing for the student to attend in order to remain in her class.

Key behaviors measured on the observation rubric that support an instructional leader defining the school mission includes monitoring student achievement, evaluating the school improvement plan, communicating progress to stakeholders, and using data to assess the organization's effectiveness. Of those observed, Principal Smith rated higher in collecting and using data to assess organizational effectiveness and communicating progress toward the vision and mission to all stakeholders. Overall, she met the standards of an effective instructional leader in defining the school mission.

Managing the Instructional Program

Principal Smith was observed in her natural setting to measure how well she managed the instructional program. Some leadership behaviors that effectively manage the instructional program are:

- Identifying, clarifying, and addressing barriers to student learning,
- Supporting a culture of high expectations, collaboration, trust, and learning,
- Promoting the use of current and appropriate technology for teaching and learning,
- Making data driven decisions about instruction,
- Monitoring instructional program through classroom observations, and
- Maintaining a focus on improving instruction.

She was rated at 3.12 on a scale of 4.00 in the subareas observed on the observation rubric in her effectiveness to manage the instructional program as an instructional leader.
in a secondary school. Her effectiveness in this dimension was apparent in her day-to-day behaviors, her typical interaction with students, staff, and parents, and identified strategies in the school improvement plan.

Over the course of the 15.75 hours, the researcher observed Principal Smith primarily involved in behaviors associated with managing the instructional program. On one occasion, she was highly visible in mathematics classrooms monitoring instruction after attending their weekly collaborative planning meeting. She expressed a desire to observe because of her modeling of a best practice in differentiation. After observing several classes, Principal Smith held individual conferences to provide teachers with an overview of her observations. Because of trends in her observational data, she held an impromptu conversation with the curriculum assistant principal regarding the planning of a professional development that develops teachers in differentiating instruction.

In another instance, Principal Smith sat in her office reviewing the results of Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics Benchmarks administered by the county. Because of her limited knowledge of effective mathematics instruction, she requested the instructional mathematics coach assistance in the disaggregation of the math data. Trained as an English Language Arts teacher, Principal Smith strategically identified potential barriers of students mastering ELA standards and decided to spend time with the ELA teachers in their next collaborative planning meeting. She planned to facilitate, with the assistance of her data support specialist, a discussion of the current data and possible interventions to assist in student mastery.
During an administrative meeting, Principal Smith reminded the administrators of their focus of improving the use of technology to engage students in more active learning. She discussed the already established consensus of using additional funds to support the purchase and training of interactive boards and active voting devices for all math and science classrooms. Likewise, she also encouraged all administrators to identify teachers needing additional support in integrating technology in their classrooms regularly. Consequently, she was exploring opportunities to provide teachers in building instructional technology knowledge.

Similarly, Principal Smith addressed student behaviors immediately and consistently. She declared this as a potential barrier to student learning and ranked it as very important in relationship to managing the instructional program. It is evident that a school-wide discipline policy exists and student behavior is closely monitored, redirected, and if necessary, relegated to disciplinary consequences. On several occasions as she monitored class change, monitored the cafeteria during lunch, or monitored students during dismissal, Principal Smith closely and purposefully identified inappropriate student behaviors and held students responsible for their action's consequences.

Upon review of the school improvement plan, it was apparent that instruction and student achievement were primary to the administrative team; particularly Principal Smith. The school improvement plan identified 4 key areas of improvement for the current school year: closing the achievement gap between student subgroups in math, language arts and reading, science, and social studies. Listed as a prioritized action in each subject area is the responsibility of the principal, assistant principals, and content
chairs to conduct 3-4 observations for every teacher, providing feedback and support on standards-based instruction and student engagement in learning. Such prioritization supports the importance of instructional leadership in managing the instructional program as exhibited by Principal Smith. Of all the behaviors observed, Principal Smith rated higher on the scale for the subareas outlined on the observation rubric in her ability to:

- Promote professional development focused on student learning and consistent with the school vision and goals,
- Identify, clarify, and address barriers to student learning,
- Ensure the school is organized and aligned for success,
- Make data driven instructional decisions,
- Use benchmark assessments as a means to gather data to monitor instruction and student progress, and
- Monitor the instructional program through classroom observations.

Based on the competency rating of 3.12 on a scale of 4.00, Principal Smith met the standard of effectively managing the instructional program as an instructional leader.

**Promoting Positive School Climate**

A school’s climate is shaped by the norms and attitudes of the staff and students and directly influences student learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). During the span of the observational time, the researcher sought to notice instances when Principal Smith exhibited such behaviors that influence the school climate. According to the ISLLC standards, some principal behaviors that promote positive school climate include:

- Assessing student learning using a variety of techniques,
• Designing and managing operational procedures that maximize opportunities for successful learning,

• Managing time to maximize instructional program,

• Involving stakeholders in decisions affecting the school, and

• Building and sustaining positive relationships with parents, staff, students, and the community.

Principal Smith measured at 3.13 on a scale of 4.00 in the subareas outlined in the observation rubric in her ability to promote positive school climate.

Middle School A has a collaborative and positive tone. While it is likely that such climate existed under the former leadership since most staff remained, Principal Smith has the ability to identify the positives and work to eliminate the negatives. The most noteworthy example of her promotion of positive school climate is the implementation of her incentive program for teachers. "Above and Beyond" is a method to recognize exemplary teachers that are not only effective teachers, but work beyond the realm of their classroom responsibilities. During an observation, the researcher witness the Principal Smith's interaction with teachers, other staff members, and community members during the "Above and Beyond" reception. It was evident that her appreciation of the teachers and their dedication to improving the school and the community was highly influential to the motivation of all teachers present—those being honored and those desiring such recognition, even moving some to tears.

While monitoring the cafeteria during lunch, she took immediate action to ensure student safety as sixth graders played carelessly in the lunch line. She immediately
redirected the students by having some removed from the line. She explained to the students that such behavior could result in serious injury and asked them to consider more appropriate behavior while waiting to be served. Another incident of Principal Smith's promotion of positive school climate through ensuring building safety, transpired during her movement in the hallway as she observed classes. Entering the seventh grade pod, Principal Smith noticed an unfamiliar male standing outside near a back door. She quickly, but calmly had students enter back into their classrooms, called for the school resource officer, and radioed for the front office staff to activate school lockdown.

During "Coffee with the Principal," Principal Smith greeted parents and other community members and provided an update of the school’s academic performance. In her exchanges, it was apparent that she shared a very positive rapport with many individuals present. Through several conversations, it was obvious that she had put forth great effort to build positive relationships with the parents and community members in such a short period of time. The tone of the gathering was very positive and parents appeared to feel comfortable speaking with Principal Smith about the school and its performance.

Throughout the observation, Principal Smith acted in a manner to which she promoted positive school climate. She rated higher on the scale in the subareas outlined on the observation rubric in:

- Involving stakeholders in decisions affecting the school,
- Utilizing effective communication skills,
- Protecting and promoting the welfare and safety of students and staff,
• Advocating for children, families, and caregivers, and

• Utilizing an incentive program to recognize staff and students.

Overall, Principal Smith rated a 3.13 on a scale of 4.00. She met the standards of an effective instructional leader in the dimension of promoting positive school climate.

The rubric allowed the researcher to objectively observe and rate each participant on pre-determined criteria to determine the effectiveness of the principal as a secondary school instructional leader. Table 11 presents Principal Smith’s ratings in each dimension and her overall rating as an instructional leader. Based on the observation of the researcher, Principal Smith measures to be an effective secondary instructional leader.

Table 11

Principal Smith – Ratings as Secondary School Instructional Leader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Dimensions of Instructional Leadership</th>
<th>Rating (Scale of 4.00)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Hallinger &amp; Murphy, 1987)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining School Mission</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Instructional Program</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Positive School Climate</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rating</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of Perceived Influence of Norms on Instructional Leadership**

After personally defining social norms, gender roles, and instructional leadership, Principal Smith addressed how social norms and gender roles have influence her as an instructional leader.
An example would be a time when I received comments like, ‘Well, you don't have kids so you don't understand.’ A teacher said to me that the teachers are really intimidated by me because they see me as somebody who has chosen not to have a family, who has chosen to make her life about her career. The reality is I've just had bad luck with guys, but that's how they perceived me. That was the first time it really hit me . . . like teachers making comments of, well, of course she doesn't care if we're here till 6:00 p.m., because she doesn't have anybody to go home to, she doesn't understand. So, it does effect in that way that people assume that because I don't have a family I don't understand the importance of one.

Concerned with her staff's perception of devaluing the importance of time with family, she indicated she is always sensitive of the demands she places on teachers without sacrificing effective instruction for students.

Asked to identify a specific time when social norms and gender roles influenced her behaviors as an instructional leader, Principal Smith recalled her approach to addressing parents and community members after receiving emails concerning her inability to lead Middle School A because she was a woman.

The only time I can think of where I took action because of social norms was when I started at this school and I read all of those comments about ‘a woman can't do this’ and ‘you're not strong enough.’ I addressed it and I was really open it. I had a parent forum with about 40 parents where I said, ‘I know that some of you don't think a woman can do this job,’ and you could have heard a pin drop.
And I just talked about it and I said, 'I can stand here and tell you till I'm blue in the face that I'm going to be a strong principal, but until we've been together a couple of months and you see that I don't tolerate any nonsense in this building, you're not going to believe me. So, just know that you'll see it and let's move on' . . . But I did address it. And I think that just in choosing to address it, I showed strength and that some of those people who were apparently empowered enough to say something awful, were taken aback and thought, 'Oh, my goodness. I can't believe she just said that.'

She believed her assertiveness proved her ability to be strong and showed her strength as a leader to the community that was skeptical of her leading such a diverse school.

Principal Smith identified three key factors to how students, staff, and the community respond to her leadership: communication, relationships, and trust. She indicated that she has come to realize in her short tenure as a principal, that often it is all in the delivery and the relationship had with each individual. She believes that females exert more compassion and care in communicating needs and responsibilities to staff.

If there's anything I've learned it's that it's all in the delivery. With the staff, it's really hard to deliver things in a group because when you're delivering to the group—be it parents, students, or teachers—you have so many different personalities in that room and you can't address all of them. Whereas when I sit and talk with teachers one on one; I'm going to handle every teacher differently, every student differently, and every parent differently. You have to always know your audience, you have to always choose your words so carefully and be careful
about those off the cuff comments. You never know how it's going to be received and by whom.

She also suggested that often times; female principals do a better job of being compassionate in communication and relationships than male principals.

I've seen [my male assistant principals’] delivery be a bit abrupt, and not as conscious of their audience; where I would have had the conversation very differently and I know it would have been received the way it should have been.

When I think back on the assistant principals that I've worked with and the leaders I've worked with, I guess there is a little bit more of the men that have that issue, just not knowing their audiences well and maybe being a little bit more blunt.

The final factor in how she believes staff, students, and the community respond to her leadership is trust. As a new principal in a new assignment, she realizes her staff, students, and the community must trust her as an effective leader before they depend on her leadership to improve the school.

I think for us a lot of it right now is trust, that they don't know me yet. And I hope that will come, and I hope that in time they'll know and believe how much I love this school and how much I care about this community. It's taken me some time to come to terms with that. We've reached a point in this community where I believe they trust me now. Parents have begun to come in and share something pretty significant with me. It's because they trust me to fix it. The parents and the kids, I think, the trust is there. I think the staff—they're not sure yet and, like I said, I get it. And as somebody who helped pick out the color of this carpet 11
years ago, I really get it because I have an investment in this building like no other principal would have had. I voted for the mascot and the name of the school for Christ sakes. I think it'll come, and for those who it doesn't, maybe they'll move on. And that's okay with me.

Although she could not identify separate characteristics of male and female leaders, Principal Smith identified potential barriers women face in leading secondary schools as an instructional leader. She believed that female middle school principals faced fewer barriers than high school female principals because high school administration was dominated by men.

I think at the high school level there are probably more barriers, and I think that's because they are much more of a business than middle schools are. They have to deal with boosters, they have to deal with community on a much more regular basis, football programs, and I think outside of the education world there are still a lot more barriers. Education is such a female driven profession that we do kind of have a little bit easier when it comes to that. So, I think that at the high school level there are probably more. I can see where, as a female principal being out in the community trying to seek out boosters and money for programs, they're maybe dealing with a little bit of 'the good old boys' and trying to feel like I have to prove myself a little bit more.

Although she acknowledged finding the balance between work and family can be a potential barrier for a female principal, she asserted that women are capable of achieving anything despite obstacles.
We live in a world where the barriers are only barriers if you allow them to be. Do I think it was that way ten years ago? No. I think that as a woman now, you can do anything you want to do. And you're going to have things that come up and parents who make comments and all you can do is prove them wrong. At the end of the day, it's about dedicating yourself to what you do and knowing that you're going to have to overcome those obstacles. Men have obstacles, too—I don't know what they are, but I'm sure they have them. If women are strong enough to wrap their head around them and power through, then they can still do it.

**Theoretical Relationship to Principal Smith’s Perception**

This section provides data related to the constructs of the framework. This effort will potentially show a relationship between the theoretical framework and the principal’s perception. Table 12 provides a description of the constructs of the theoretical framework.

Principal Smith concluded her interview with encouraging words to aspiring female leaders.

We live in a world where the barriers are only barriers if you allow them to be . . . I think that as a woman now, you can do anything you want to do . . . at the end of the day, it's about dedicating yourself to what you do and knowing that you're going to have to overcome those obstacles.
Table 12

Overview of the Constructs of the Theoretical Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Key Principles of Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Feminism</td>
<td>• Society allows individuals to use personal autonomy to complete themselves as individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeks to free women from the societal views of gender roles that deny them equal access as men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Tong, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalytical</td>
<td>• Women do not need sexual freedom, but freedom to grow and develop their own personal character and personality (Tong, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>• Seeks to free women through documenting women’s perception rather than women’s experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Standpoint Theory</td>
<td>• Suggests women experience roles differently than men (Harding, 1987).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All individuals are interdependent for achieving their interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethic of Care</td>
<td>• Those particularly vulnerable to our choices and their outcomes deserve extra consideration to be measured according to the level of their vulnerability to one's choices and the level of their affectedness by one's choices and no one else's</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 12 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Key Principles of Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Role Theory</td>
<td>• Male and female leaders tend to have individual expectations of leadership behaviors based on their social identity (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, &amp; Engen, 2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

She confirms a liberal feminist notion that women have the autonomy to shape their own destiny and achieve any task, despite potential barriers. Likewise, this awareness is suggestive of psychoanalytical feminist who suggest that women need the freedom to grow and develop their own personality and character.

Principal Smith frequently suggested that the role of a secondary principal is demanding and that without careful attention, household responsibilities may suffer. Affirming her understanding of the importance of family and that a women’s traditional role is that of homemaker, she contended women can lead schools effectively and find the time to be a mother and wife. She declared that women must work hard to find the balance between work and family. The idea of being a successful leader and a mother
and wife is indicative of liberal feminism idea of women seeking to free themselves from traditional gender roles that deny them equal access as men (Tong, 1989). Similarly, feminist standpoint theorist insist that women experience roles differently from men and as a result, women’s perception rather than their experiences should be documented. Principal Smith’s support of women being leaders and homemakers is evocative of the ideas of feminist standpoint theorists.

Through observation and throughout the interview, Principal Smith demonstrated the importance of building relationships. She stated that key factors that lead to how her staff, students, parents, and community members respond to her leadership are trust and delivery. The idea that until stakeholders see her as capable of leading Middle School A effectively and trust that she will make decisions in the best interest of the school, despite their blatant belief that the leader should be male, speaks to the idea of ethic of care. Proponents of ethic of care suggest that female morality is developed through the building relationships. This concept is affirmed in Principal Smith’s measured ability to build and sustain positive relationships with stakeholders.

Being single and without children, Principal Smith has faced scrutiny for others believing she chose to pursue her career instead of marriage and children.

A teacher said to me that the teachers are really intimidated by me because they see me as somebody who has chosen not to have a family, who has chosen to make her life about her career. The reality is I’ve just had bad luck with guys, but that’s how they perceived me.
Female gender roles imply that women are to be primarily wives and mothers. Because Principal Smith has labored to accomplish professional success, she is scrutinized for deviating from such norm. This is symbolic of social role theory that suggests women face scrutiny for diverging from traditional gender roles.

**Within-Case Analysis: Louise Jefferson, Kennedy Middle School**

Louise Jefferson became principal of Middle School B on July 1, 2010. She has been in education for 19 years. Prior to her appointment to Middle School B, she served as an elementary school principal for 9 years. The remaining 10 years were distributed among being an assistant principal and a classroom teacher. Principal Jefferson holds a Bachelor’s degree in Special Education, a Master’s and Specialist degree in Educational Leadership.

**Description of Social Norms and Gender Roles – Leadership of Secondary Schools**

Defining social norms as expectations that vary from socioeconomic groups, location, gender, and race and gender roles as the expected role of men and women, Principal Jefferson explained social norms of leadership in regards to power and authority.

I think that society sees the principal as the person with the most authority and that isn’t always true . . . but quite frequently society sees the principal as the one who can fix their problem or fix their issue. I think that they expect somebody who is fair, who is firm, who believes in children, likes children, who doesn't shy away from issues. I think a lot of times you'll hear parents say, ‘You’re just covering up for your teachers,’ they want somebody they know they can trust and
has a fair platform. But I think they also want somebody who demonstrates a
vested interest in the whole school, and by that it's going to the extracurricular
program. It's a face; you're the face of the school.

Ultimately, she classified social norms of leadership as unspoken assumptions for the role
of principal that are often used to judge effectiveness by society.

Principal Jefferson felt strongly about society’s views of men being better
equipped to lead secondary schools. She stated that there appear to be more men leading
high schools and the culture of secondary education seemed to support it.

Typically you see a lot of male high school principals, not that that's right or
wrong, but I think that's typically . . . I don't know if a lot of time they're coaches
who become high school principals. But in so far as, you tend to see more
females in the elementary schools during those nurturing years, a blend of males
to females in middle school, and then predominantly males in high school.

She explained why she believes this to be true.

I think that perhaps it's just the norm that more men are, so I don't know if they
expect it or I think they are more excepting of men. For example, I have seen a
lot of men in high school principal roles who are not qualified, but they were
accepted and sort of embraced without waves because of their stature and they're
men, as opposed to a woman going to a secondary or high school level would get
eaten alive because they would probably be seen as and not being able to handle
it. Where in fact, there are a lot of women who are more than qualified to be high
school principals, and I don't know if it's because of the age of the kids and you want a man there.

Unlike Principal Smith, Principal Jefferson distinguished characteristics of male and female leaders. Table 13 compares her ideas of male and female leader characteristics. While she categorized certain behaviors as male and female characteristics of leadership, she also admitted that she has witnessed male principals display behaviors she classified as behaviors of female leaders and vice versa.

You know, I don't know that necessarily plays to gender because I have seen the flip where I've seen some male leaders who are very strong in recruiting teachers and eliminating weak teachers, and I've seen some female leader that don't address the concerns. So, I'm not sure if that's more leadership style and strength or if it's gender, but I think if we're looking only at gender I would guess to say that those would be the two differences.

Table 13

Principal Jefferson's Comparison of Male and Female Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Male Leaders</th>
<th>Characteristics of Female Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Laid back</td>
<td>• More deliberate in expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tend to focus on the whole picture and not details</td>
<td>• Have hands in a lot of things and handle it well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Won't get &quot;hands dirty&quot; in monitoring instruction</td>
<td>• Document and monitor instruction more effectively; don't mind getting their &quot;hands dirty&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of Instructional Leadership Behaviors

Principal Jefferson trusts that her background and experience has prepared her for the role of an instructional leader. With over 10 years in leadership, she is sure that she has strengths and weakness, but has learned to surround herself with support. Principal Jefferson defines instructional leadership as multifaceted, encompassing behavior, order, expectations, classroom setting, instructional delivery, content, and competency. She acknowledged that an effective instructional leader must be a continuous learner and have strong understanding of curriculum and instruction. Finally, she declared that instructional leaders are strong in data analysis and application and have an awareness of using data to make decisions and changes.

Principal Jefferson placed high emphasis on the importance of instructional leadership and student achievement.

When you're here at work you have to be on and you're on button needs to be on teaching and learning. When you are here you should expect to see kids engaged in teaching and learning. All of the other duties, so to speak . . . This big bag that I just packed up goes home because those are things that I either . . . You got to do after the focus, when the kids aren't here. When the kids are here your focus needs to be on their teaching and learning. Now remember, teaching and learning are multifaceted. It involves expectations and order; it might mean that you're hands on with discipline. You're pretty much interfacing while you're here, whether it's with students, parents, or staff. Therefore, all of this paperwork, deadlines, and all of that stuff usually [comes to work done]. Sometimes it comes
right back and you try to squeeze in a little bit of time here and you stay a little bit a later when it's quiet.

Despite her personally ranking instructional leadership and student achievement has top priority, she admits that other responsibilities and duties keep her from being involved as much as she would desire.

**Observed Effectiveness as an Instructional Leader**

As a participant-observant, the researcher spent 15.50 hours in the field observing the instructional leadership behaviors of Principal Jefferson. Observations were conducted in the context of administrative meetings, leadership team meetings, and natural interaction with staff, students, parents, and community members. Instructional leadership behaviors in all three dimensions were observed and rated to measure the effectiveness of Principal Jefferson as a secondary school instructional leader.

**Defining the School Mission**

Transitioning into the principal at Middle School B, which previously struggled to improve student achievement, has been a challenge for Principal Jefferson. She admits that her initial focus was to ensure the building was safe and fit for instruction. She believes that as a result, the shaping of the school’s mission has lacked. Overall, Principal Jefferson ranked a 2.20 on a scale of 4.00 in the subareas outlined on the observation in regards to defining the school mission. Based on collected data, this rating suggests that Principal Jefferson needs to improve leadership behaviors that are related to defining the school mission.
Of the behaviors observed, Principal Jefferson was assessed higher on the scale in the subareas outlined on the observation rubric in monitoring and evaluating student achievement and revising the school improvement plan as a result, as well as, collecting and using all data to assess organizational effectiveness. On a particular occurrence, Principal Jefferson facilitated an administrative meeting that focused on adjusting the school improvement plan based on learning walks. She provided a tabulated spreadsheet of data collected from the administrative teams learning walk focusing on effective lessons in mathematics. Collectively, the team discussed strengths and weaknesses, planning strategies to address areas that needed improvement. Finally, Principal Jefferson facilitated the revision of the school improvement plan in the area of mathematics to reflect additional strategies discussed in the meeting and based on the collected data and collaboration.

Principal Jefferson showed strength in using data to assess the effectiveness of a school-wide pull-out program for students with disabilities. Students were pretested and post assessed in this program. Principal Jefferson was observed collaborating with the program coordinator to research and implement strategies to support the areas of concern. Likewise, she compiled a critical watch list, containing students failing 2 to 3 core content areas and scoring between 785–815 on the previous year’s CRCT in Math and English and Language Arts/Reading. Using this spreadsheet, Principal Jefferson cross-referenced the list to be sure students were in the student support process and if not, facilitated their referral. In the Principal’s Breakfast with parents, Principal Jefferson provided attendees with current data to support her reference to school improvement.
Through observation, it was evident that Principal Jefferson struggled to ensure the school vision shaped the educational programs, plans, and actions. For instance, Principal Jefferson sought assistance from various entities and individuals to provide support and professional development to her staff. According to the school improvement plan, an important area of concern is the math achievement of students with disabilities.

In preparing for a presentation, a local consultant discussed her vision for the professional development with Principal Jefferson. It was apparent that such vision contradicted the earlier work of the exceptional education department; nonetheless she allowed the consultant to provide proposed training. Obviously misaligned to departmental and school goals, Principal Jefferson stated that there could never be too much support or training for teachers.

Managing the Instructional Program

Principal Jefferson was observed in her natural setting to gain insight on her effectiveness in managing the instructional program. Over the course of time observed, she received a rating of 2.24 on a scale of 4.00 in the subareas outlined on the observation rubric in her ability to manage the instructional program. This rating indicates she needs to further develop those behaviors that ensure the effective management of the instructional program. Overall, Principal Jefferson measured higher on the scale in the subareas as outlined on the observation rubric on the following behaviors:

- Promoting the use of current and appropriate technology for teaching and learning,
- Using data to drive instructional decisions,
• Gathering data through benchmark assessments to monitor instruction and student progress,

• Meeting and planning with curriculum teams, individual teachers, or curriculum assistant principal to discuss the instructional program and provide feedback, and

• Maintaining a focus on improving instruction.

The effectiveness in these areas manifested in her interactions with school stakeholders, placement of teachers, and the facilitation of grade-level meetings to review a county benchmark.

After conducting observations in social studies classes, Principal Jefferson debriefed with the assistant principal that is primary evaluator for the teachers of this department. In her debrief, she vividly described areas of strength and weakness. Both administrators compared other observations to gain understanding of the departmental needs. On a different occasion, Principal Jefferson and the instructional coaches spoke about classroom instructional in mathematics and English language arts. In detail, she explained her concerns and provided coaches with ideas of how to support teachers in improving their instruction.

Faced with a Math teacher being on an extended leave, Principal Jefferson used data to decide how to best support the students in the classroom. She requested the data support specialist pull observational and student achievement data on the teacher currently teaching a math elective class. She assessed the data to determine if the teacher would be placed in the regular classroom, using the substitute to manage the elective
Likewise, in a conversation with the curriculum assistant principal regarding the master schedule, Principal Jefferson recommended the assistant principal use previous years' achievement data to suggest the effectiveness of teachers prior to placing them in a particular content area, grade level, or team.

In another instance, Principal Jefferson facilitated grade-level meetings for teachers to analyze the data from a countywide benchmark. She led a discussion of strengths and weaknesses per content and then facilitated the creation of an action plan to address areas that needed improvement. Finally, she encouraged teachers to remain focused on the instruction and attempt to minimize interruptions and distractions as much as possible.

**Promoting Positive School Climate**

During the course of time spent in the field, the researcher sought to observe occasions when Principal Jefferson’s behaviors promoted a positive school climate. School climate is complex and is influenced by extensive elements (Marshall, 2012). Some elements that influence a school climate include the amount and quality of the interactions between adults and students, student and teacher perception of the environment, student achievement, and the sense of trust and respect for students and staff (Marshall, 2012). Based on literature and the researcher’s observation, the climate of Middle School B can be perceived as very negative. Teachers were harsh and disrespectful to students. Students were harsh and disrespectful to teachers. Administrators were abrasive in tone to teachers and teachers were abrasive to parents and other community members. Most staff members traveled the hallways without
smiles and always appeared unconcerned and apathetic. All around, there appeared to be a tone of mistrust and disrespect. Consequently, Principal Jefferson rated at a 2.19 on a scale of 4.00 in the subareas as outlined in the observation rubric in promoting a positive school climate. Based on the criteria for competency, she needs improvement in behaviors that promote a positive school climate.

Although the overall assessment was low, Principal Jefferson did measure higher on scale in the subareas of utilizing an incentive program to recognize staff and students and advocating for children, families, and caregivers. She has developed a teacher incentive program that recognizes teachers for efforts beyond their typical responsibilities. “Fishbowl Frenzy” acknowledges teachers based on administrator, peer, and student recommendation. Once selected, teachers are treated to a cater lunch and the winner is announced during the morning broadcast. In an encounter in the counselors’ suite, Principal Jefferson interceded with a parent’s harsh treatment of a student. She immediately directed the parent to refrain from such behaviors and redirected the conversation to an office with the graduation coach and guidance counselor. These are examples of behaviors that promote a positive climate.

In contrast, Principal Jefferson was assessed lower on the scale in the subareas outlined on the observation rubric in behaviors such as building and sustaining positive relationships with parents, staff, students, and community, utilizing effective communication skills, and managing time to maximize the instructional program. On one occasion, Principal Jefferson was approached in the hallway by a teacher to discuss his inability to attend a called, spontaneous meeting after school because of prior obligation.
As the teacher spoke, Principal Jefferson turned to another staff in the hallway and began a conversation regarding another incident. After she concluded that conversation, she turned to the waiting teacher and asked him to see her in the morning because her time was short. Such interaction would suggest that Principal Jefferson had not built a relationship with this teacher nor was she interested in his personal concerns. Additionally, this is evidence of her inability to effectively communicate with her staff.

During the duration of the total observation time, the researcher observed several incidents to which the instructional program was disrupted. Daily, Principal Jefferson addresses the staff and students during the morning announcements that are broadcast in a 20 minute homeroom. Such announcements frequently extended beyond the time of homeroom and students were required to transition to their first academic class late. Likewise, school staff repeatedly called for students, staff, and administrators on the public announcement system throughout the day. Similarly, on a few occurrences, administrators and other staff members called repeatedly for large amounts of students to report to various locations throughout instructional time. These examples provide evidence of Principal Jefferson’s inability to manage time to maximize the instructional program. Table 14 presents Principal Jefferson’s ratings in each dimension and her overall rating as an instructional leader. Based on the observational data, Principal Jefferson needs to improve behaviors exhibited by an effective secondary school instructional leader.
Table 14

**Principal Jefferson – Ratings as Secondary School Instructional Leader**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Dimensions of Instructional Leadership</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining School Mission</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Instructional Program</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Positive School Climate</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rating</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of Perceived Influence of Norms on Instructional Leadership**

Being clear on her understanding of social norms, gender roles, and instructional leadership, Principal Jefferson decided that neither social norms nor gender roles influenced her as an instructional leader, yet recalled an incident when she was faced with a cultural expectation.

I don't think they influence me, but they're always here in the back of my head. And I say that to say, one social norm that we really didn't talk about is race. For the longest time I was one of two white principals in the south county. There was a lot of judgment placed on a white woman in a predominantly black school. So, I felt like always had to prove that it doesn't define me. I've never had a problem with the students about it, I rarely had a problem with the staff about it, but it's more so the parents, and my colleagues.

She declared that the expectation that black leaders should lead predominately black schools motivated her to work at being an effective leader.
I could be purple, green, orange, and I wouldn't change what I'm doing. It really took me back and made me more guarded because it showed me the way people were really thinking. That really pulled me back, but I also don't let it stop me. As a result, Principal Jefferson remembers this as the most significant example of social norms and gender roles affecting her as an instructional leader.

Principal Jefferson was asked to classify factors that influence the response of her staff, students, and parent to her leadership. She believed that there were not any variables that influenced how stakeholders responded to her leadership; but believed personal perceptions.

I think initially race only plays a role with people who are angry and that's the only time I see it. Parents have embraced me, teachers of all races have either embraced me or aren't with me. I don't know that it has to do with the gender or race, but what your issues are. It's not until parents get angry and they're not getting their way that it becomes a race or gender issue; or a lack of qualification. Because that's the only time I've ever had a problem with it. And that goes for staff, students, and parents.

Equally, Principal Jefferson suggested the staff, students, and parents of Kennedy must be able to trust her in order for her to make a change.

Principal Jefferson believed that the greatest barrier faced by female secondary school instructional leaders is the balance between work and family.

Well, I think one of the biggest challenges for me as a woman in a secondary school is that the secondary school has so many more demands. So many more
programs, a higher level of time commitment, and to find that balance with your children and home is much harder. If I didn't have children I know I would be at this school late at night every night. When I was at the elementary school it was much easier to be a mother than it is at the secondary level. I think personally the biggest barrier for me as a woman at a secondary school is finding a balance, finding the time, and making sure I don't lose sight of either one because they're both equally important.

**Theoretical Relationship to Principal Jefferson’s Perception**

Liberal feminist believe that women should seek to free themselves from society’s notion of traditional gender roles that deny them equal access as men (Tong, 1989). Validating liberal feminist beliefs, Principal Jefferson suggest that she is motivated to defy the idea that white female principals can’t effectively lead predominately black schools.

For the longest time I was one of two white principals in the south county. There was a lot of judgment placed on a white woman in a predominantly black school. So, I felt like always had to prove that it doesn't define me.

Similarly, feminist standpoint theorist seeks to free women through documenting their perception because women tend to experience roles differently than men (Harding, 1987). When discussing the importance for women to find a balance between work and family, Principal Jefferson stated that men could remain at work until all tasks were complete because of the different role he plays at home: “I think that whether it be I were a man and had a mom taking care of the kids, I definitely think that I would be at work here
doing all of this before I go home.” Principal Jefferson belief of women creatively determining how to complete the same work load men complete in the office affirms psychoanalytical feminist philosophy that emphasizes women having the autonomy to develop and grow personally and professionally.

Principal Jefferson perceptions of male and female leader characteristics are indicative of a principle of social role theory. Social role theorists contend that male and female leaders are inclined to have personal expectations of leadership behaviors based on their personal identity (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Engen, 2003). Subsequently, when asked to characterize male and female leaders, Principal Jefferson identified personal expectations she has for leadership as attributes of female leaders. This action reinforces the ideas of social role theorists.

Principal Jefferson stated that women have an innate ability to nurture children. This concept supports an underlying precept of the proponents of ethic of care who suggest that women naturally work to build and sustain meaningful relationships through showing care and compassion (Gilligan, 1982).

**Cross-Case Findings and Analysis**

**Description of Social Norms and Gender Roles – Leadership of Secondary Schools**

Resulting from data collection and in-case analysis, three factors emerged as significant to how these female principals perceive social norms and gender roles of secondary school leadership:

- Women are homemakers before professionals,
• Secondary leaders – especially high school principals – are expected to be men, and
• Society views female principals better equipped for elementary school leadership.

Both Smith and Jefferson suggested that society expects women to be primarily responsible for rearing children and taking care of the home. They both believed that because of the demands of secondary school leadership, women struggle to balance work and family responsibilities. In the same manner, Smith and Jefferson contended that leading secondary schools is more difficult for women because of their commitment to their husband and children.

Smith and Jefferson proposed that most high school leaders are men because there is an unspoken rule that suggest men are strong enough to handle the higher demands of high school. Both principals agreed that because of this expectation, women tend to have difficulty proving themselves worthy for the task of a high school administrator. Similarly, Smith and Jefferson believed that society accepts female elementary school principals more than female middle and high school principals because it believes woman’s natural ability to nurture children is more effective with younger children.

Description of Instructional Leadership Behavior

Six themes emerged in how these female principals define instructional leadership and perceive behaviors of an effective instructional leader:

• Instructional leadership encompasses student support, behavior, and safety,
• Instructional leaders are data driven,
- Instructional leadership is essential to impacting student achievement,
- Trust influences how staff, students, and parents respond to their leadership,
- Classroom observations are essential to monitoring instruction,
- Importance of implementing a teacher recognition program to positively influence school climate.

Smith and Jefferson described instructional leadership as complex and multifaceted. They suggested that being an instructional leader means one must ensure the building is safe and negative student behavior is addressed. Both asserted that instructional leadership should be a leader’s primary focus but that it often takes second to safety and discipline.

Both female principals stated that instructional leaders are data driven and use data to drive instructional decisions. Both administrators were observed using data to determine program and instructional effectiveness, as well as understanding how to better support teachers. Both principals used county benchmarks to engage teachers in a discussion about instruction and develop strategies to addressed student weaknesses. Smith and Jefferson suggested that effective instructional leadership has the greatest impact on student achievement. Accordingly, these female principals proposed classroom observations are essential to monitoring the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student achievement.

Conclusively, Smith and Jefferson both discussed the importance of a teacher recognition program to positively influence the school climate. Both principals feel it is essential to recognize teachers for exemplary practices as it may potentially lead to
increased performance of marginal teachers. While classifying this as a manner in which a principal’s behavior influencing the school climate, both principals believe the effects of a teacher incentive program is highly influential on student achievement.

**Description of Perceived Influence of Norms on Instructional Leadership**

One common idea shared by Smith and Jefferson regarding their perception of the influence of social norms and gender roles on their instructional leadership was that it fueled their ambitions to defy those stereotypes. Both Smith and Jefferson gave accounts of incidents when others’ perception caused their passion to work harder and more efficiently, so to challenge the norm. Both principals spoke of incidents when their schools’ community felt being a white female principal in diverse schools would be a challenge. Both agreed that such norms did not determine their ability to lead a diverse school, but their actual knowledge and leadership skills determined their ability to successfully lead a diverse school.

**Theoretical Relationship to Principals’ Perception**

Both principals used semantics that emphasized the constructs of the theoretical framework of this study. Table 15 provides summarized examples of how both principals affirmed the theoretical constructs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Smith</th>
<th>Jefferson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Feminism</td>
<td>Barriers are only barriers if allowed to be</td>
<td>Determination to defy norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalytical</td>
<td>Women can decided how to lead schools</td>
<td>Men being able to remain at school to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>successfully and still be a good wife and mother</td>
<td>work; women having work from home to tend to family responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Standpoint</td>
<td>Women having to work hard to find balance between work and family</td>
<td>Women must figure out how to lead a school and be a wife and mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Ethic of Care</td>
<td>Social Role Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building relationships; knowing the audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women's innate ability to care for children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethic of Care</td>
<td>Scrutinized for being single without children; yet having a successful career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Role Theory</td>
<td>Personal classification of male and female leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists seek to free women from traditional gender roles that deny them equal access as men (Tong, 1989). Smith and Jefferson discussed their fuel to be successful at leading secondary schools, where society perceives men more effective, is their internal ambition to overcome and be an effective leader. Though faced with potential barriers, both women asserted that they do not allow anything from deterring them from reaching their personal and professional goals. These attitudes and perceptions of both female principals support liberal feminists’ belief that women must free themselves from traditional gender roles and defy social norms that keep them inferior to men.

Psychoanalytical Feminism

Smith and Jefferson recognized that female secondary principals must deal with the same work load as male principals but must manage time differently. Psychoanalytical feminist believe that women are not bound by their sex, but must be allowed the freedom to develop and grow in their own way. This is true for female principals that must find an effective way to manage their workload and family responsibilities.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Smith and Jefferson contended that a potential barrier of female leaders is finding the balance between work and family. Smith believed that the role of an instructional leader can prove to be more demanding and without attention, family responsibilities can suffer. Jefferson believed that it is possible for women to be successful principals and be
great mothers and wives, but that careful consideration must be given to find an operative balance. Both principals’ beliefs support the key idea of feminist standpoint theory which suggests that documentation of women’s perceptions is more beneficial than mere documentation of women’s experiences.

**Ethic of Care**

Proponents of the ethic of care firmly believe that relationships are essential to achieving goals, that care should be extended to those needing extra consideration, and that is essential to deal with the details of a situation in order to preserve and promote interests of those involved (Gilligan, 1982). Principal Smith considered the value of relationships to be essential in demonstrating effective instructional leadership behaviors. She insisted that knowing your audience and addressing them with care and understanding will enable greater reception and therefore; influence more to actually involve themselves in the work of the school. Smith’s understanding of the importance of relationships corroborates an underlying principle of ethic of care.

Previously serving as an elementary school principal, Principal Jefferson discussed the innate ability of women to care and nurture children. She stated that she felt this contributes to how her students respond to her leadership. She was certain they know she is very concerned with their academic performance and citizenship. This idea of women being naturally caring and nurturing supports an underlying principle of ethic of care.
Social Role Theory

Scrutiny for developing her career before having a family and classifying male and female leader behaviors based on personal expectations supports the fundamental principles of social role theory. Seen as deviating from traditional gender roles, Smith expressed teachers' dissatisfaction with her professional success and believed it to be selfish to choose a career over having a family. Principal Jefferson naturally characterized female leadership traits by her expectation based on her identity. Because she described herself as paying careful attention to detail, she espoused that this is true of all female leaders. These examples support key principles of social role theory.

Summary

The purpose of chapter was to provide profiles of the two female principals and an overview of the themes that emerged from their in-case analysis. Thereafter, a cross-case analysis was presented organized by the overarching themes of the study: social norms and gender roles of leadership, instructional leadership behaviors, perceived influence of social norms and gender roles, and the theoretical relationship of the principals' perceptions. Ultimately, data collected from interviews, observations, and the document review was useful in discussing findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations. These are provided in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations that emerged from this study. This chapter opens with re-identifying the purpose of this study and is followed by the responses to the guiding research questions. Based on study findings, conclusions and implications regarding the constructs of the study will be outlined. This chapter concludes with recommendations.

Findings

This study focused on an in-depth examination of women serving as secondary instructional leaders and characterizes their perceptions of a woman’s experience as a secondary school principal. Through the investigation of individual principals’ points of view of how social norms impact their behaviors and effectiveness as school leaders, these case studies were assessed and investigated against the framework of instructional leadership and student academic achievement through the principal's personal and professional interactions with various stakeholders in their natural settings. This study sought to provide an account of the lived realities of women principals and their leadership responses.
Responses to Research Questions

This segment will link the findings and analysis to the questions that guided this study. The primary research question guiding this study is:

RQ1: How do female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as a secondary school instructional leader?

This question is operationalized through the following questions:

RQ2: How do these female secondary school principals describe their instructional leadership practices?

RQ3: How do these female secondary school principals describe social norms and gender roles?

RQ4: How do these female secondary school principals perceive social norms and gender roles influencing their effectiveness as an instructional leader?

RQ5: To what extent does feminist theory assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

RQ6: To what extent does ethic of care assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

RQ7: To what extent does social role theory assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms
and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

A detailed cross-case analysis was presented in the previous chapter; however, this section will provide a synopsis of the findings of each research question and contextualizes it contained by literature.

**Main Research Question**

**RQ1:** How do female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as a secondary school instructional leader?

Based on the responses of the female principals interviewed, social norms and gender roles greatly influence the effectiveness of women as secondary school instructional leaders. This study revealed that while both principals declared that neither social norms nor gender roles influenced their effectiveness as an instructional leader, both were convinced to work harder at being an effective leader despite potential barriers. Consequently, neither principal were aware of the influence of social norms nor gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader, but both principals were compelled to work at defying the norm and leading successful secondary schools.

Both leaders perceived themselves as effective instructional leaders in regards to defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting positive school climate. To ensure objectivity and accuracy in definition, both leaders were rated to measure their effectiveness as an instructional leader. An observation rubric designed by categorizing the behaviors of an effective instructional leader as defined by ISLLC,
was used over the course of about 16 hours in each setting. By observation, Principal Smith was revealed to be an effective instructional leader, often demonstrating behaviors to successfully define the school mission, manage the instructional program, and promote a positive school climate. Principal Jefferson was rated as needing improvement in behaviors of an effective instructional leader in a secondary school.

Accordingly, Principal Smith provided more examples of personal encounters with social norms and gender roles. Likewise, she was also strongly convinced that a barrier is only barrier if one allows it to be and expressed her determination to be successful in any undertaking. Such drive and ambition is an indirect result of how she perceived the influence of social norms and gender roles on her effectiveness as an instructional leader.

RQ2: How do these female secondary school principals describe their instructional leadership practices?

Both women described their instructional leadership practices is similar ways. Their descriptions of their instructional leadership practices included the notion that instructional leadership is multifaceted and in order to increase student achievement, principals must be attentive to student discipline and building safety. Both women concluded that instructional leaders make data driven decisions to improve the instructional program and monitor classroom instruction through frequent observations. Both principals identified the importance of their staff, students, parents, and community trusting them to lead the school successful in order to be an effective instructional leader.
Relating these findings to existing literature on instructional leadership unveils contextual similarities. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (1998) defined instructional leadership as all activities performed by principals to promote student learning. Additionally, literature compiled by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) identify ways in which principals directly and indirectly contribute to increasing student achievement through promoting a positive school climate. Included in their description are maintaining high visibility and creating a reward system to reinforce productive efforts. Both behaviors were observed and revealed through interaction with both female principals.

Definitely, instructional leadership is considered the most effective model of leadership that has a great impact on student achievement (Elmore, 2002; Hallinger & McCary, 1990). In a comprehensive review of studies examining the leadership of female principals, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) uncovered that in most studies women leaders tend to characterize instruction as central to the effectiveness of schools. Both women expressed the importance of instructional leadership in improving their student’s performance. They emphasized that monitoring instruction was the most important function of an instructional leader.

RQ3: How do these female secondary school principals describe social norms and gender roles?

Smith and Jefferson described social norms as what society views as normal behavior and defined gender roles as the roles society deems acceptable for men and women. With consideration of social norms and gender roles of leadership, both women
asserted that society believes women are homemakers before professionals, men are better equipped to lead high schools, and women are better equipped to lead elementary schools. Additionally, both women spoke to the idea that because they are not typically regarded as strong secondary leaders, that women have to work to overcome barriers and find balance more than their male counterparts.

Smith and Jefferson stated that there is an expectation that women are primarily responsible for raising their children. As a result, both women expressed the importance of women finding a balance between work and family responsibilities. With the combined experience of over 30 years in education, Smith and Jefferson offered the idea that society traditionally considered men better equipped to lead high schools because of the greater responsibilities and demands. Likewise, both women agreed that society is more accepting of female principals in elementary schools and value the nurturing quality of women for that age range of students.

These beliefs are affirmed by previous literature and reported data. In a comprehensive review, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) discuss the importance of women leaders finding balance between home and work responsibilities. Notably, Grogan and Shakeshaft identify such leadership as balanced leadership: “The notion that women are better able to perform their educational responsibilities if they had found ways to manage their home duties as well” (p. 18). Research suggests the lack of finding such balance can be detrimental to work and home. “Managing households and caring for family members, often seen as the work of women, have brought a dimension to women’s leadership that can enhance their performance” (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 18).
Seventy-five percent of all those working in education are women (Eckman, 2000). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that in the 2007-2008 school year, the percent of women serving as elementary principals increased to 58.9% and 28.5% of secondary school principals. Additionally, in a survey of elementary and secondary school principals, men and women administrators were asked to decide whether men or women were better suited for the role of elementary school principal. Of those asked, 78.3% responded that women were better suited to serve as an elementary school principal (Soberhart, 2009). This data supports the perception of Smith and Jefferson’s claim that society view men better equipped to lead secondary schools and women better equipped to lead elementary schools.

RQ4: How do these female secondary school principals perceive social norms and gender roles influencing their effectiveness as an instructional leader?

The common belief of Smith and Jefferson concerning the perceived influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader was that it fueled their ambition and drives to defy the norm and lead secondary schools in an exceptional way. Both women provided accounts of how they took action because of the societal expectations of normal behaviors of secondary school leaders. Previous literature documents this idea of women feeling the need to prove themselves as effective as male leaders.

Schmuck (1996) declares that women in male-dominated positions “must become ‘abnormal’ women; they must transcend the social expectations of femaleness in order to
aspire to the socially prescribed role of leader.” Research indicates that female leaders feel it necessary to justify their value, qualifications, and ability to lead schools as instructional leaders. Coleman (2003) states that most “women feel ‘noticeable’ in their position as a leader,” but “feel that they have to justify themselves as women and as leaders and that they have to prove their worth” (p. 45).

RQ5: To what extent does feminist theory assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders?

In several ways, feminist theory could be applied to the perceived influence of social norms and gender roles on the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders. Examples of each of the three constructs of feminism were identified in the data analysis. Both women expressed the idea of women freeing themselves from traditional gender roles that deny them equal access as men as espoused by liberal feminism in their efforts to overcome potential barriers. Smith and Jefferson both recognized the importance of female principals finding a balance between work and family responsibilities. The understanding that women are not bound by their sex, but must be allowed to develop their own personality and characteristics is evident in this idea.

Finally, feminist standpoint theory promotes the idea of documenting female perception rather than female experience as more beneficial because women experience various roles differently. Advocating for women to work hard to find the balance between work and family, both women affirm the beliefs of feminist standpoint theorists. The perceived
ideas of both women are supported in the constructs of feminism and align with key principles.

RQ6: To what extent does ethic of care assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?

Grounded in building relationships, supporters of ethic of care contend that relationships are essential to achieving goals. This value was evident in Principal Smith description of factors leading to how her staff, students, and parents respond to her leadership. She perceives that an important factor to how stakeholders respond to her leadership is through the building and sustaining relationships. An underlining principle of ethic of care is evident in Principal Smith’s perception and is supported through her valuing of relationships and its influence on her leadership.

Similarly, Principal Jefferson expressed the idea that women naturally know how to care for and nurture children. She accredits this to her success as an elementary school principal. Through observation and compiled through her interview, it is apparent that the students know and recognize her concern for their academic performance and social development. Her recognition of the innate ability of women to care and nurture supports an essential construct of ethic of care.

RQ7: To what extent does social role theory assist in understanding how these female secondary school principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness of as secondary instructional leaders?
Social role theorists declare that women are often scrutinized for deviating from traditional gender roles. With regards to leadership, social role theorists believe that women often classify expected behaviors of leadership based on their personal expectations of male and female leaders. Smith described an instance when she felt criticized for appearing to have chosen her career over starting a family. Jefferson’s description of her perception of male and female leadership traits reflected the behaviors she exhibits as an instructional leader. These examples affirm the precepts of social role theory and assist in understanding the female principals’ perception of the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders.

**Conclusions**

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that the female principals of this study do not recognized the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader in a secondary school. In both cases, both principals stated that neither social norms nor gender roles influence their effectiveness, but were certain that women had to work hard to overcome potential barriers and obstacles. As a result, the researcher concluded that while female principals do not perceive an influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as a secondary instructional leader, it is evident that female principal perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their decisions and actions as a leader of a secondary school.

Principal Smith admitted to being sensitive to the demands placed on teachers and how they could potentially interfere with home responsibilities after being criticized for
not understanding the importance of family because she had chosen to pursue her career. She stated that before she makes a decision regarding tasks of teachers, she is certain to evaluate its impact on teachers' home life without neglecting student and instructional needs. Such careful attention to a previously natural behavior is indicative to how social norms and gender roles influence one’s leadership.

Both leaders perceived themselves as instructional leaders; yet only one met the standards outlined on the observation rubric as an effective instructional leader. When asked to describe the behaviors of an effective instructional leader, both women shared various actions supported by literature. However, during the course of the observations, one principal rated higher in behaviors associated with effective instructional leaders. Based on such findings, the researcher concluded that though perception is one’s reality, during actual observations, perceived behaviors may not be apparent to others. Consequently, it may be difficult for female principals to perceive an influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader if they do not exhibit the behaviors of an effective instructional leader.

**Implications**

This study was used to examine the potential influence of social norms and gender roles on the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders. The findings indicated that female principals do not perceive the influence of social norms and gender norms on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders. As a result, three implications for theory and practice emerged from this study.
First, there is a long-standing notion that women cannot effectively lead secondary schools. While it may appear that the measurement of Principal Jefferson’s instructional leadership (according to the ratings of observation rubric) affirms such notion, the quality of leadership exerted by Principal Smith defies it. According to achievement rates of students in mathematics and English language arts, Principal Smith is an effective instructional leader. This is further evident in her ratings on the observation rubric used to measure her effectiveness as a secondary instructional leader. This implication results in the need for further exploration in how female principals effectively lead secondary schools.

Second, the findings from this study affirm the idea that because of the demands of secondary leadership and responsibilities at home, in order to be an effective leader, women must toil to balance out both responsibilities. The theme emerged throughout the collection data from the principal’s interviews. Both women held strong convictions concerning the importance of finding the balance between work demands and family commitment. This importance stems from the reality that one principal is a mother of two young children and the other is a single female, which also impacts role definition. This would imply that one of the female principals’ greatest struggles is finding work and family balance. Such implication generates the necessity to further explore manners in which female principals have found an effective way to manage work demands and family obligations.

Third, the findings from this study contributed to and confirmed the suitability of the constructs of the feminist theory used to frame the study. Based on the results,
feminism was confirmed to be useful in understanding how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as instructional leaders in secondary schools. This study strengthened the validity of the application of feminism to investigate how female principals understand influences of their effectiveness as an instructional leader using the lens of liberal feminism, psychoanalytical feminism, and feminist standpoint theory.

This was evident in both interviews of the two female principals. Both women used language that contextualized the underlining principles of the constructs of feminism used as the framework for this study. Both principals spoke of potential barriers only being barriers if one allowed them to be and also stated that such perceived barriers fueled their passion and drive to defy norms and be a successful leader. This supports the ideas of the liberal feminist. Additionally, both principals believe that women can be a mother and a principal, but must work to discover how both roles can be done effectively. Understanding that women need independence to grow and develop personally speaks to the idea of psychoanalytical feminists. Finally, feminist standpoint theorists suggest that women experience roles differently than men. Both principals support this idea in their expression of the importance of women finding a balance between work and family in order to be successful at both responsibilities.

**Limitations**

One limitation of this study lies in the size and type of sample. Women are underrepresented as secondary school leaders. As a result, this study sought to include two middle school and one high school female principals in one Metropolitan Atlanta,
Georgia county; however, based on participant time restraints, this study is limited to two middle school principals of one Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia county. This limits the scope of the study; therefore limiting the interpretation and the findings. Because of the nature of district bureaucracy, principals were hesitant to share their experiences for fear of jeopardizing their career. Principals who have such fear chose to not participate or refused to disclose information regarding their negative experiences. This limited the study to only those principals choosing to participate without inhibition.

Another limitation of this study is that the researcher is an employee of the school system to which the participants are employed. To limit researcher’s bias, an observation rubric (Appendix A) was created to objectively rate each participant during the observations. Likewise, interview transcripts were made available to both participants for their review and revision.

Recommendations

The findings and implications of this study provide insight into recommendations for practice, aspirants, and future research.

Recommendations for Practice

Leadership preparation programs can use the findings of this study to enhance their program to include how women experience and perceive their experience as a secondary instructional leader. Universities and colleges could use the results to enhance the preparation of aspiring secondary school female principals by highlighting cases of effective female principals in secondary schools and discussing factors that lead to their
success. Likewise, local school districts should develop a comprehensive principal mentoring program intended to provide support to secondary school principals.

**Recommendation for Aspirants**

The findings of this study can be used to inspire female educators to secondary school leadership. Generally, the outcomes of this study should serve as motivation for women desiring to effectively lead a secondary school despite societal expectations. To ensure success as a secondary instructional leader, aspiring female principals should acquire the skills and disposition proven to positively influence student achievement and school effectiveness. Such behaviors are outlined in this study.

In the same manner, aspiring female principals should foster personal characteristics, namely self-determination, hard work, and ambition to be an effective instructional leader in a secondary school. Potential barriers described in the findings of this study are not barriers for all female principals. This is clear in regards to the individual experiences of both study participants. Equally, all school leaders would greatly benefit from developing self-confidence. Increasing instructional knowledge and personal successes contribute to the increase in confidence one needs to handle the demands of secondary school leadership.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings and implications of this study uncovered several recommendations for future research. Among them are:
• An examination of how female principals lead schools effectively despite potential barriers of social norms and gender roles,
• An examination of how female principals manage work demands and family obligations,
• The difference between the experience of female principals in middle school and high school as it relates to how they perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader in secondary schools,
• An examination of how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their decision-making as a secondary school leader,
• The influence of how female principals communicate on their effectiveness as an instructional leader,
• The influence of building and sustaining relationships on the effectiveness of women as instructional leaders in secondary schools,
• Regional academic divides and its impact on the instructional leadership behaviors of secondary school leaders,
• The relationship between an established school climate and the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders,
• The perception of school stakeholders of the influence of social norms and gender roles on their expectancy of instructional leadership behaviors of female principals,
• The influence of succeeding a male principal and the effectiveness of women as a secondary instructional leader, and
• The influence of personal motivation and ambition on the effectiveness of women as a secondary instructional leader.

Despite the norm, the findings of this study indicate that female principals are successfully leading secondary schools. In the face of scrutiny and stereotypical classification, Principal Smith has proven to be an effective instructional leader in a secondary school. A comparative study examining how females lead secondary schools effectively may uncover further implications and recommendations for those who aspire to lead secondary schools. Probing into other cases of female principals leading successful secondary schools may reveal certain knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effectively being an instructional leader in secondary schools.

A common theme that emerged throughout this study was the need for women to find balance between work and family. The researcher recommends that an in-depth examination of how women have found such balance will prove beneficial to aspiring and practicing female principals.

The findings of this study are limited to female principals in middle schools; yet secondary schools are comprised of middle and high schools. Further examination of how high school female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader in secondary schools. The findings and implications of this study can then be compared to the findings of the study of high
school female principals to conclusively determine how female principals perceive the influence of norms on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders.

Both female principal participants admitted to adjusting their behaviors and decisions when faced with societal norms and expectations. Their perception of the influence of such on their behavior and decision-making process provides an opportunity to further explore a potential relationship between how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their actions and decisions as an instructional leader of secondary schools.

Principal Smith stated that women typically communicate differently than men. She suggested that in her experience, men are often more blunt and less caring in their delivery to school stakeholders. This belief is supported by the constructs of ethic of care and consequently implies an opportunity to further investigate the influence of how female principals communicate on their effectiveness as a secondary instructional leader.

Both principals agreed their staff, students, and parents’ trust is essential to how they respond to their leadership. Most often, trust is established by building and sustaining relationships. Certifying another precept of ethic of care, this implies a potential relationship between building and sustaining relationships and the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders.

There is regional academic divide in the general setting of this study. As a result, this may prove to have an influence on the how principals are able to exhibit the behaviors displayed by effective instructional leaders. This implication allows an
opportunity to explore a potential relationship between regional academic divides and the effectiveness of secondary instructional leaders.

Both principals inherited an established climate as new leaders in an established school. It may be concluded that one principal was challenged with establishing herself as an instructional leader while attempting to transform and repair the established climate of the school. Such implications deserve further investigation into the probable connection between an established school climate and the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders.

Social norms and gender roles are often prescribed by cultural and societal expectations. As a result, school stakeholders may expect different instructional leadership behaviors of female principals. For this reason, further investigation is needed to explore how school stakeholders perceive the influence of social norms and genders on the effectiveness of female instructional leaders in secondary schools.

Both, Smith's and Jefferson's successors were men; yet their experiences and perceptions were different at times. Potentially, both females may have varied experiences because of this. As a result, it is noteworthy to further explore a possible relationship between succeeding a male principal and its influence on the effectiveness of women as secondary women.

Finally, both principals discussed their personal motivation and ambition to defy norms and be effective secondary school leaders. This idea provides an opportunity to investigate a possible correlation between personal motivation and ambition and the effectiveness of women as secondary school leaders.
Summary

This study supports new literature to the advancing of women as secondary instructional leaders and contributes to the literature of women and school leadership. As a result, the findings of this study uncovered potential for future research, encouragement for aspiring leaders, and insight for program development in colleges and universities. Despite limitations of this study, the findings provided an awareness of how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader in secondary schools.

This study disclosed that female principals in this study do not perceive an influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as an instructional leader in secondary schools; however, such perceptions influenced their decisions and behaviors as a leader. Findings were revealed through both women’s description of social norms and gender roles of leadership, instructional leadership behaviors, and the perceived influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders.

Both female principals used language that confirmed the constructs of the feminism used to frame this study. Both were advocates for women overcoming any barrier through personal drive and ambition. Certain behaviors of Principal Smith confirmed the underlying principles of ethic of care and social role theory. Consequently, the theoretical framework of this study assisted in understanding how female principals perceive the influence of social norms and gender roles on their
effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders. This chapter concludes with recommendations for practice, aspirants, and future research.
APPENDIX A

Rubric for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Women as Secondary School Instructional Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Exceeds 4        | • Principal has a rich understanding of the best practices of this performance area and her performance can serve as a model for others.  
                  | • Leadership in this area has a strong, positive, and direct impact on student learning and student achievement.  
                  | • Principal has built leadership in others in this performance area and they perform in a highly proficient way.                                           |
| Meets 3          | • Principal has a firm understanding of the best practices of this performance area and she performs in a planned way.  
                  | • Leadership in this area has a strong impact on student learning and student achievement.  
                  | • Principal includes others in decision-making and problem-solving and has developed leadership in others in this performance area.                  |
| Needs Improvement 2 | • Principal has a limited understanding of the best practices of this performance area and she performs in this area with limited planning.  
                              | • Leadership in this area has a weak impact on student learning and student achievement.  
                              | • Principal rarely includes others in decision-making and problem-solving and seldom develops leadership in others in this performance area.          |
| Does Not Meet 1  | • Principal has little to no knowledge of the best practices of this performance area and performs without a plan.  
                              | • Leadership in this area has a negative impact on student learning and student achievement.  
                              | • Principal never includes others in decision-making and problem-solving and does not develop leadership in others in this performance area.          |
### Performance Areas (taken from the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standard</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defining the School Mission</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.</td>
<td>The vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders and developed with and among stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The school community is involved in school improvement efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL | |
| **Managing the Instructional Program** | Professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals |
| Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. | Barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed |
| | There is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance |
| | Technologies are used in teaching and learning |
| | Multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students |
### Performance Area
The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standard</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school is organized and aligned for success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standard</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful earning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective group-process and consensus building skills are used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication skills are used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Dimensions of Instructional Leadership (Hallinger &amp; Murphy, 1987)</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining School Mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Instructional Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Positive School Climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPETENCY RATING (Sum of each dimension divided by 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXCEEDS** 3.50 – 4.0 **MEETS** 3.49 – 2.5
**NEEDS IMPROVEMENT** 2.49 – 1.5 **DOES NOT MEET** 1.49 – 1.0
APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

A. Social Norms and Gender Roles
   1. How would you define social norms?
   2. How would you define gender roles?
   3. What do you believe to be social norms of leadership in secondary schools?
   4. Do you believe society view men to better equip for secondary school leadership?
      Probe: Why or why not?
   5. What do you believe to be characteristics of male leaders?
   6. What do you believe to be characteristics of female leaders?

B. Instructional Leadership
   1. How would you define instructional leadership?
   2. Are you an instructional leader?  Probe: Why or why not?
   3. How do you feel your staff views you and your ability to define the school’s mission? Manage the instructional program? Promote a positive climate?
   4. To what extent do you consider yourself active in student learning and student achievement?
   5. How do you address student achievement?
   6. How are resources allocated for the purpose of student achievement?
   7. What are some specific actions or behaviors of a principal that has a direct or indirect impact on student achievement?
   8. How does instructional leadership and student achievement rank in importance to other considerations, responsibilities, duties, and decisions as a principal?
C. Impact of Social Norms and Gender Roles on Instructional Leadership

1. Do you believe social norms and gender roles impact you as an instructional leader?

2. If so, in what ways do social norms and gender roles impact you as an instructional leader?

3. Could you provide a specific example of a time when social norms and/or gender roles affected your instructional leadership behaviors?

4. What factors do you believe contribute to how your staff responds to your leadership?

5. Describe barriers women face in leading secondary schools as an instructional leader.
APPENDIX C

Codes and Subcodes used in Data Analysis

Table C1

*List of Codes and Subcodes used in Data Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes and Subcodes</th>
<th>Descriptions of Codes</th>
<th>Corresponding Interview Protocol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SNGR</td>
<td><strong>Social Norms and Gender Roles Language</strong></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGR-SN</td>
<td>Social Norms</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGR-GR</td>
<td>Gender Roles</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGR-SNLRSHP</td>
<td>Social Norms of Leadership</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGR-SVMLRSHP</td>
<td>Society’s View of Men as Leaders in Secondary Schools</td>
<td>A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGR-MLC</td>
<td>Male Leader Characteristics</td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNGR-FLC</td>
<td>Female Leader Characteristics</td>
<td>A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Instructional Leadership Language</strong></td>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-DEF</td>
<td>Definition of Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-SELF</td>
<td>Self as an Instructional Leader</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-STVDMISS</td>
<td>Staff View Ability to Define School’s Mission</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-SVMIP</td>
<td>Staff View Ability to Manage Instructional Program</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-SVPSC</td>
<td>Staff View Ability to Promote Positive Climate</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-ACTVSTLRNG</td>
<td>Active in Student Learning</td>
<td>B4</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Corresponding Interview Protocol Codes and Subcodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes and Subcodes</th>
<th>Descriptions of Codes</th>
<th>Corresponding Interview Protocol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IL-ADDSTACH</td>
<td>Address Student Achievement</td>
<td>B5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-RES</td>
<td>Resources Allocated</td>
<td>B6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-BEHSA</td>
<td>Principal Behaviors that Impact Student Achievement</td>
<td>B7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL-RANK</td>
<td>Personal Rank of Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>B8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SNGRIL

**Impact of Social Norms and Gender Roles on Instructional Leadership Language**

- **SNGRIL-INFL**: Influence of Social Norms and Gender Roles
  - C1, C2, C3

- **SNGRIL-STRES**: Factors to How Staff Responds to Personal Leadership
  - C4

- **SNGRIL-STDRES**: Factors to How Students Respond to Personal Leadership
  - C5

- **SNGRIL-PCRES**: Factors to How Parents and Community Respond to Personal Leadership
  - C6

- **SNGRIL-BARR**: Potential Barriers as Secondary Instructional Leader
  - C7
Appendix C (continued)

Table C2

*List of Theoretical Framework and Corresponding Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Codes</th>
<th>Codes and Subcodes</th>
<th>Codes Related to Social Norms and Gender Roles Language</th>
<th>Codes Related to Instructional Leadership Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist theory</td>
<td>FEM</td>
<td>SNGR-FEM</td>
<td>IL-FEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal feminism</td>
<td>LIFEM</td>
<td>SNGR-LIFEM</td>
<td>IL-LIFEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoanalytical Feminism</td>
<td>PSYFEM</td>
<td>SNGR-PSYFEM</td>
<td>IL-PSYFEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Standpoint Theory</td>
<td>FEMSTP</td>
<td>SNGR-FEMSTP</td>
<td>IL-FEMSTP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethic of Care</td>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>SNGR-EOC</td>
<td>IL-EOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Role Theory</td>
<td>SRT</td>
<td>SNGR-SRTH</td>
<td>IL-SRT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent

A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: HOW FEMALE PRINCIPALS' PERCEIVED THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NORMS AND GENDER ROLES ON THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AS SECONDARY SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to be in a research study of how female principals' perception of the influence of social norms and gender roles on their effectiveness as secondary instructional leaders. This study focuses on an in-depth examination of three women serving as secondary instructional leaders and characterizes their perceptions of a woman's experience as a secondary school principal.

You were selected as a possible participant because you serve as a female principal in a secondary school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Calandra Brown, Doctoral Candidate; Educational Leadership Department, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University

Background Information:

This study focuses on an in-depth examination of three women serving as secondary principals by characterizing their perceptions of their experiences. This study seeks to provide an information-rich investigation on individual principal's views on how social norms and gender roles influence their behaviors, while investigating the framework of instructional leadership through personal and professional interactions. This study seeks to provide an account of lived realities of female principals and their leadership responses to the truths encountered.

Procedures:

Should you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-time face-to-face interview of one hour. A follow-up phone call may be needed for clarification. Your responses to the interview questions will be audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis and comparison. The transcript will be sent to you for your
revision or additional comments. Handwritten notes may also be recorded during the interview as another method to ensure accuracy. Likewise, at least 16 hours of observation will be conducted to include visiting leadership team meetings, administrative team meetings, local school council meetings, PTA meetings, and general observations of the participants’ behavior in your natural setting. An instrument will be used to provide objectivity in my rating and equity for all participants. A copy of the instrument will be available for your review at your request. Finally, this study requires the review of your school improvement plan to gain more insight into your instructional leadership behaviors.

Benefits:

The benefits to participation are:

- adding to the limited professional body of knowledge;
- potentially paving the way for other aspiring female principals;
- providing insight into potential influences of the effectiveness of women as secondary instructional leaders; and
- involvement in reflective practices that lead to increased effectiveness as a secondary instructional leader.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records. All audio recordings will be accessible to the researcher only and destroyed after transcription and verification. All data will be maintained for 5 years and then destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher or Clark Atlanta University. This study complies with the protection requirements for ethical research and is strictly voluntary. Upon consent, you may withdraw from this study at any time. Any data collected will be destroyed immediately upon your withdrawal.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is:

**Calandra Brown, Doctoral Candidate**
Department of Educational Leadership,
School of Education, Clark Atlanta University
Email: calandra.brown@students.cau.edu • Phone: 678.266.0579
Appendix D (continued)

Supervisors of this study are:
**Dr. Barbara Hill, Dissertation Committee Co-Chair • Department of Educational Leadership, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University**
Email: BHi11@cau.edu • Office Phone: 404.880.6126

**Dr. Darrell Groves, Dissertation Committee Co-Chair • Department of Educational Leadership, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University**
Email: DGroves@cau.edu • Office Phone: 404.880.6016

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact the researcher or the researcher’s advisors.

If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Georgianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404 880-6979) or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829 at Clark Atlanta University.

_You will be given a copy of this form 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: ___________________
REFERENCES


