ABSTRACT

BURNS, MELISSA BRYANT. The Balance of Professional and Personal Lives of Female Elementary School Principals. (Under the direction of Dr. Lance Fusarelli).

The purpose of this research was to understand what female elementary school principals perceive as a balance between their personal and professional lives. The role of the elementary school principal has changed significantly over the past several decades. The demands of time, effort, relationships, and high-stakes accountability have all increased tremendously. These factors have a significant impact on the work-home balance for female elementary school principals as they attempt to achieve balance in their professional and personal lives. This research describes how fifteen elementary school principals, who are mothers, attempt to maintain a balance between work and home. It is a phenomenological study of their lives and how they manage their responsibilities as a principal and mother. Data was collected through five one-on-one interviews including a follow-up interview with four of the five subjects and a focus group of ten principals.

Findings affirm how the role of the elementary school principal has changed during the years as leader of instruction versus school manager. The principals describe their role as demanding and overwhelming at times, while being rewarding and satisfying. However, they stated that time and family responsibilities were consistent challenges to creating a balance in their lives. Setting priorities, making schedules, coordinating calendars, and taking time for yourself and your family seemed to be the repeating themes during the interviews as the greatest strategies for seeking a balance. Planning ahead, modeling for staff members, and communicating values were other helpful strategies and tools pointed out by the participants. Future research is suggested in the development of district wellness plans to examine both

the sources and processes of helping principals to create balance in their lives which are necessary to sustain a positive, healthy principal.

There is a need for well and healthy instructional leaders for our schools to fulfill the rapid succession of many principals leaving the principalship. School districts would be wise to consider the modest investment necessary to implement a wellness program for all principals.

Balancing Act: The Professional and Personal Lives
of Female Elementary School Principals

by
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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my dear husband, Jay, and precious daughter, Delaney,

for without you I would have not had the motivation and persistence to complete this study.

BIOGRAPHY

Melissa Bryant Burns was born in Spartanburg, South Carolina to Ronald and Dianne Bryant. In 1993, she received her Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree from the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina. After receiving her BA, Melissa began her career in education as a teacher. While she was teaching, she returned to school and in 1997 completed her Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree from the University of South Carolina. She has served as an assistant principal and principal at the elementary and middle school levels. Prior to enrolling in the doctoral program at North Carolina State University, Melissa began working at her current job as a school principal at Olive Chapel Elementary in the Wake County Public School System.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Given the increasing pressure and demands placed on school leaders, keeping a

balance between professional and personal lives has become a growing concern. Such a

balance becomes especially critical in times of change (Senge, 1990). Senge believes there is

higher work production through the use of "system thinkers." Systems must initiate personal

mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning to sustain improvements

implemented and to maintain these over time. Individuals must periodically experience

recovery through consistent cycles of activity that take place over longer periods of time.

Educators need not aggravate problems by adding on to what they do already, but they need

to take time to review and consolidate gains, celebrate accomplishments, investigate more

resources, and foster leadership at all levels.

The organization and operation of schools have been the responsibility of

superintendents and principals since the roles were formally established in the latter part of

the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). The position of a

principal developed from the role of a master teacher. However, it was not until the 1920s

when the principal position surfaced as a formal role.

During the past several decades, the role of the principalship has changed from a

managerial, authoritarian role to that of a leader of instructors (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

During the 1940s, democratic was the adjective used to describe the leadership style of

principals. Principals were thought to be the "leader on the home front" (Beck & Murphy,

1993, p. 32) during war time. They were expected to keep peace, to develop the curriculum,

to coordinate and lead groups of students and teachers, and to serve as the public relations representative within the community.

According to Beck and Murphy (1993), the 1950s brought great change to the role of the principalship. Principals were expected to combine their teaching and managing skills, defend the work of educators, effectively and efficiently use time by prioritizing the increased amount of workload and tasks by delegating responsibilities and management of the school especially with daily operations. Cuban (1984) used a metaphor to describe the decade of the 1960s as one of constancy and change. The principalship was viewed differently as a job that could be learned. Administration was viewed as a highly impersonal activity where feelings and beliefs were not discussed and concrete ways to improve the quality and level of production were the focus of effort (Beck & Murphy, 1993). During the 1970s, there was increased federal involvement in local schools. The principal was expected to relate well to all people and skillfully juggle a variety of roles (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

The principal emerged as the instructional leader during the 1980s, which increased the volume of research about the principalship. The principal was expected to be a problem solver and resource provider and was frequently asked to be visionary and to serve as a change agent. The 1990s brought about the movement of raising standards through wave after wave of educational reform. Principals were making a shift to focus on the future in the twenty-first century. The principal in the 1990s had to serve as the leader from the center instead of from the apex of the school organization. They faced new challenges and were expected to project outcomes as implementers, to maintain harmony as conflict managers, and to empower others rather than control them.

The principalship has never really been a 9-to-5 job and the extensive hours can be attributed to the expanded role that principals play—at school and in the community. In addition to being instructional leaders and building managers, today's principals must be proficient in business, finance, public relations, and marketing. In his article entitled, "A Balancing Act," Padgett (2008) examined the expanded roles that contribute to being 24-hour principals and how principals can balance these roles—from sharing leadership with teachers to a new way of thinking about the school day—while being effective leaders and maintaining healthy perspectives.

The role of the elementary school principal has increased significantly in the past several years. The increasing demands on principals require most of them to work twelve months a year. There are more pressures and greater expectations from the community, state, and the federal level. Parents want the absolute best for their children including safety and security and the best teachers ensuring their children learn the curriculum in order to perform well on assessments. State and federal legislation such as the *No Child Left Behind Act,* which was signed into law in 2001, bring different pressures to ensure all students' educational needs are met.

Grogan and Andrews (2002) described most of the university-based programs for training aspiring principals as the traditional model of top-down management. They reported that graduates are mainly concerned with mandates, rules, regulations, and supervision. In order to meet the needs of the twenty-first century, principals' roles have changed and they have a big impact on students' learning (Bloom, 1998; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Marzano, 1992). This was the introduction to the principal as the instructional leader. Smith and

Andrews (1989) described a strong instructional leader as one who gives curriculum and instruction the highest priority, rallies and mobilizes resources to enable the students to improve achievement, and creates a climate of high expectations and respect for all students. The role has changed significantly to shift more towards quality instruction for all students and not just accomplishing managerial tasks. Colleges and universities have had to change their teaching approach when preparing administrators to enter into the principalship.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1997), public school principals tend to be older and have more advanced credentials than public school teachers. In 2003–04, 15 percent of the public school principals were under age 40 and 98 percent of the public school principals had a master's or higher degree. Principals were less likely than teachers to be women. In 2006, about 48 percent of public school principals were women compared to 75 percent of teachers. This could explain why there are fewer principals who are mothers. However, times are changing. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1997), the percentage of women principals rose from 24.6 to 34.5 between 1987-88 and 1993-94. The percentage of new principals who are women rose from 41.2 in 1987-88 to 48.1 in 1993-94.

Additional data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2007) regarding the characteristics of principals indicates that between 1993–94 and 2003–04, the percentage of public school principals who were women increased from 41 to 56 percent in elementary schools. During these same years, the number of public elementary principals in the United States increased from 53,700 to 61,500 compared to the total number of public school principals which increased from 67,000 to 78,200.

According to Ziegler (2007), the demands of the principalship today are keeping good people away. They do not want to deal with the demands on their time, the drive for greater test scores, hovering or neglectful parents, teachers' needs, and the political hot spot that some schools have become in their communities. They do not see current principals finding balance and enjoying their job. Ziegler provides suggestions on how principals can cope with the demands of the principalship. He suggests they should embrace the meaning of imbalance, seek meaning, not balance, and enjoy the ride.

Such simplistic and trite solutions are of little value to principals, particularly women principals. According to Loder (2005), concerns about work-family conflicts are becoming an increasing problem for women administrators. They have multiple and competing roles of school administrator, wife, mother, and caretaker. Women principals have a different balance in their lives from their male counterparts. The balance of a professional life as an elementary principal and a personal life as a wife and mother is quite challenging. The number of women elementary school principals is higher than that of males in many school districts. To demonstrate this point I researched the numbers of elementary school principals in a large county in a southeastern state by gender. Currently, there are ninety-nine elementary schools. Seventy-one, or 71.7%, are led by women elementary school principals compared to twenty-eight, or 28.3%, who are men. Given the higher number of women elementary school principals, the objective of this study is to address the following research question and subquestions:

- To what degree is there a balance in the lives of the women elementary school principals who are mothers?

- How is that balance defined?

  o What are the strategies used by women elementary school principals who are mothers to sustain a balance of professional and personal responsibilities in their lives?

From my own experiences as a woman principal of an elementary school, recognizing a balance between professional and personal responsibilities was necessary and helped me adjust to the role. I have been inspired by many other principals around me who have taught me strategies to use when seeking the balance to sustain my energy. What are the strategies I use to sustain my energy? What would I have done if I had not made adjustments in my life? How might I have fared if there had been a mentor, coach, or wellness program that provided me structured time and tools for support? As a doctoral student and current elementary school principal I have been working with a cohort of colleagues that provides a structured time and support to balance my life. In addition, my family is a big priority in my life which keeps my life in perspective as to what my responsibilities are as a family member. However, maintaining balance between my personal life and professional life is a daily struggle given the increasing demands of the job.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing demands placed on principals, the increased need for principals in high growth districts, the still unequal societal demands and expectations placed on women, and concerns about sustaining and retaining highly qualified women school leaders in the profession present significant leadership challenges. Therefore, it is essential that more research and attention be devoted to the study of how women principals manage the internal and external stressors in their lives. This is particularly important for school leaders who are

mothers, since motherhood places additional demands, both physically and emotionally, on women to possibly a different degree than on women leaders who do not have children or on male leaders who are fathers. The responsibilities and time requirements in their personal lives are often different and possibly unique.

Purpose of the Study

There are numerous studies examining the lives of principals. However, research on women elementary principals is limited. Principals are typically known as high achievers who are addicted to work. This leads to a profound loss of ability to control the level of balance in their lives. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand if women elementary principals who are mothers have a balance in their lives, and if so, to what extent. Principals tend to get overwhelmed and over stressed if a balance is not maintained. I am curious to know if principals, who are mothers, seek, create, and maintain a balance in their lives. Principals make sacrifices such as personal relationships, time away from their families and social activities, physical and spiritual activities which are coping strategies and help with stress management when used appropriately and regularly, and even opportunities to further develop professionally due to the constraints of energy, time, and sometimes conflicting professional and family responsibilities. If they do have balance, what strategies are utilized? As a result, the findings from this study may provide strategies for principals to use when planning how to create or maintain a balance in their lives. Hopefully, this will lead to healthier and happier principals with less stress, burnout, and lower turnover which will have a positive impact on their schools and school systems. I will explore through interviews and a focus group how fifteen women elementary school principals balance their professional

and personal lives; specifically, what techniques and strategies do they use and what tradeoffs or sacrifices, if any, do they make or feel are necessary to be successful?

While examining the lives of fifteen women elementary school principals, I intend to explore whether they strive to have a balance between their professional and personal lives. If so, how is this balance created and maintained? It is evident by the amount of current research regarding stressors of principals including the increasing demands on time, drive for better test scores for all students, hovering and neglectful parents, staff members' needs, especially teachers, and the demands put on schools by the media in many communities that being a principal is an increasingly stressful occupation.

Quality school leadership is an important issue that must be addressed (Keithwood & Pristine, 2002; Kochan, Riehl, & Bredeson, 2002; Lugg, Bulkey, Firestone, & Garner, 2002; Pounder, Reitzug, & Young, 2002; Queen & Queen, 2005; Spillane & Louis, 2002). Another issue is whether time and stress management problems for principals are driving prospective, qualified individuals away from the profession. Queen and Queen (2005) reported an increasing concern for balance in a principal's life to be an effective, strong leader. Friedman, Christensen, and DeGroot (1998) concurred by stating,

> Balancing work and personal life that benefits organizations and individual employees, managers are guided by three principles: (1) clarify what is important; (2) support employees as whole people; and (3) experiment with how work is done to enhance the organization's performance while creating time and energy for employees' personal pursuits. (cited in Queen & Queen, 2005, p. 16)

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In the twenty-first century, there has been a gradual shift in the leadership of schools. While there is a great deal of research focusing on the role of the principal, there has been less research on women elementary principals and little on those who are also mothers. There are more women elementary school principals than ever before in the school district where this study takes place. There are 71 women principals out of a total of 99 elementary schools in this district. Even though elementary school classrooms continue to be dominated by women teachers, more women are leaving the classroom as teachers to take on the role of principal in schools. Studies have shown there is a new generation of women moving into administration and this shift demonstrates evidence of changed attitudes toward women as leaders and increased aspirations of women. Organizations are changing to include internships, mentoring, and concentrated efforts to recruit, retain, and promote women in educational administration (Adkinson, 1981; Gross & Trask, 1976; Hennig & Jardim, 1977).

Significance of the Study

The history of education teaches us that the early systems of public education were established by men, mostly for boys (Marshall, 2008; Spring, 2006; Tyack, 1974; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). As the western countries developed, the history of the family shows us women and mothers supported the work of educational institutions in the home (Biklen, 1995; Cutler, 2000; Griffith & Smith, 2004; Marshall, 2008). One of the reasons women, particularly mothers who work, are not studied is because men tend to separate the home and work spheres (i.e., the private and the public). Historically, researchers were men, so it may not occur to them to study working mothers. Through Marshall's (2008) research we learn

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that feminism challenges the power of patriarchy and feminist and critical scholars challenge the politics and policies that patriarchy supports. Therefore, further research must be conducted regarding women leaders in education.

Due to the shift in educational leadership for women and the growing pressures discussed earlier, it is imperative that more focus be given to the wellness and health of principals. The primary contribution of this study is to provide answers regarding if and how women who are mothers and principals create a balance in their lives to maintain health, wellness, and sustainability in their personal and professional lives. The findings of this particular study will be beneficial to women working in various career paths, especially school leaders at all levels from elementary to higher education. Moreover, the study offers a methodological template for investigating similar phenomena in populations of principals beyond this school system. The findings will be particularly beneficial to women elementary school principals who are mothers and to women teachers considering careers as principals.

Superintendents may benefit from principals who are able to commit their energies and time to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as principals. This is what the superintendent entrusted them to do when they were hired as the leaders of their schools. It would benefit superintendents to retain principals as leaders and to ensure they are maintaining a balance in their lives.

Overview of Approach

Creswell (1998) indicates that when a researcher selects a method for studying a particular problem or situation, he or she should select the approach best suited to the nature of the study. For this study, a qualitative research approach was selected for several reasons.

First, a main task of qualitative research "is to explicate the ways people in particular setting come to understand account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7). Second, with a qualitative study the "researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside,' through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending, or 'bracketing' preconceptions about the topics under discussion" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6). Furthermore, qualitative research allows the researcher to talk with and to observe subjects in their natural environment. Certain kinds of behavior can only best be observed as they occur naturally. As Gay and Airasian (2003) report, the intent of qualitative research is to record and study behavior as it normally occurs; the qualitative researcher's approach to naturalistic observation tends not to have a predetermined focus. This will be the intention for this particular research study.

This study of principals' perceptions is intended to provide a beginning insight into planning and implementation strategies for obtaining and maintaining a balance and to provide information on the experiences and conditions principals perceive are necessary to successfully balance life's responsibilities. Using the qualitative approach will allow the researcher to collect, examine, and report principals' suggestions on ways to create a sense of balance and to identify the experiences and conditions that principals perceive are needed in order to help them be more successful in their personal and professional lives.

The qualitative approach of phenomenology was chosen as the appropriate methodology to conduct this study because I was seeking an understanding of the meaning of the participants' experiences (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Creswell (2007) defines a

phenomenological study as one that "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or the phenomenon" (p. 57). Polkinghorne (1983) identifies this focus as trying to understand or comprehend the meaning of human experience as it is lived and notes that it differs from other approaches due to its emphasis on the participants' experienced meaning rather than just on a description of their observed behaviors or actions. In a phenomenological study, the researcher searches for the essences of the experiences of the participants being studied. All possible meanings are investigated and emergent themes are identified (Creswell, 2007). The phenomenological research method is used to discover the underlying essences and meanings of experiences to arrive at a deeper, intersubjective understanding of the phenomenon under study (Gibson & Hanes, 2003). For these reasons, a phenomenological study was the best choice for this research and lends a much needed perspective on women principals' lives.

As a current elementary school principal and one with an interest in determining how to create a balance in my life between personal and professional responsibilities, I believe it is important to investigate if other elementary women principals have balance in their lives or not. If they have balance, I am curious to know how it is created. What strategies are utilized to maintain a balance in their lives, especially those who are mothers? Although I could focus on stress management and burnout in my research, I believe that adjustment to the role as principal and being effective in this role is more about skills. I believe there are techniques, strategies, and skills employed by these women to create and maintain professional and personal well-being in their lives.

For this study, I want to understand and describe the extent to which balance exists in the professional and home lives of women elementary principals and how this is created and maintained. My goal is to focus on what balance means to the principals. I believe this is defined differently by different people, but their strategies for sustainability can be captured in words. According to Loehr and Schwartz (2003), "Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance and personal renewal. Most of us are trying to do the best that we can. When demand exceeds our capacity, we begin to make expedient choices that get us through our days and nights, but take a toll over time" (p. 3). These authors believe that "the ultimate measure of our lives is not how much time we spend on the planet, but rather how much energy we invest in the time we have" (p. 4). They contend that "to be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest. Full engagement implies a fundamental shift in the way we live our lives" (p. 5). Loehr and Schwartz (2003) state there are four key energy management principals that drive this process:

Principle 1: Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

Principal 2: Because energy capacity diminishes both with overuse and with under use, we must balance energy expenditure with intermittent energy renewal.

Principle 3: To build capacity, we must push beyond our normal limits, training in the same systematic way that elite athletes do.

Principle 4: Positive energy rituals – highly specific routines for managing energy –

are the key to full engagement and sustained high performance.

Cooper (2001) believes in order for leaders to shine in today's complex and changing

world, leaders also need new insights and skills that upend conventional thinking about how

to increase energy and attentiveness in the face of ever-rising pressure. Educational leaders

need to develop new techniques and strategies to handle the increased pressures they are

facing each day. Cooper's research supports that recent scientific discoveries are

demonstrating that when people keep their energy high they not only make the most of their

current capabilities, but they also reach deeply into their untapped potential. Drucker (2001),

an authority in the business world, places personal energy at the very forefront of leadership

qualities. He believes a leader's first and foremost job is to raise your own energy level and

then to help raise and orchestrate the energies of those around you. Performance, health, and

happiness are grounded in the skillful management of energy. Through a phenomenological

study of fifteen women elementary principals in a particular school district, the goal of this

study is to determine if there is a balance of energy for women elementary principals and to

capture and describe how this balance is maintained. Using the perspective of first person is

important to this study due to the personal nature of the study when seeking to capture

emotions, deep feelings, personal stories, struggles, trade-offs, and strategies. This study

lends itself to this more personal style of writing and is why the use of first person will be

used in this study.

Overview of the Study

Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer (2006) concur that historically leadership career systems were constructed for traditional married males who have full-time domestic support freeing them from family responsibilities. The uninterrupted face-time demands of placed on principals often force them, especially women, to choose between family and career (Mahitivanichcha & Rorrer, 2006; Marshall, 2008). In the next chapter, I will explore the extant research about the changing nature of elementary school principals, women principals, life balance, and management of energy between personal and professional obligations and responsibilities. Chapter three includes information about the qualitative research methodology which is a phenomenological approach and process used to gather and analyze data. Reliability and validity, safeguards against the researcher's biases, ethical concerns, and limitations associated with the study design will be addressed. In chapter four the findings of the study are presented beginning with a description of the phenomenon followed by an account of each participant's experience. The final chapter compares the study's findings to the existing research and offers recommendations for future research, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

General Introduction

There is a dearth of research that focuses specifically on the leadership of women in education. There is a particular lack of research that focuses on women as school principals. Much of the research on administrative leaders is general information about leadership that applies to anyone, a man or woman, who may be a school leader. While useful, the picture is incomplete. There is insight to be gained by examining the role of women principals and how they maintain equilibrium between their professional and personal roles and responsibilities. In this section I will review research about the history of women as principals, the changing nature of the principalship, the role of an elementary school principal, women as principals, research on working women drawn from the business and corporate world, and role differentiation among principals. Lastly, the review will explain how this study will add to the body of knowledge regarding women principals.

During each decade, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) conducts a study of elementary and middle school principals, which compares responsibilities, salaries, biggest concerns, and characteristics of the position during the past 40 years. Several important facts about principals from the most recent study in 2008 include:

Nationwide, in 1993-94, 43 percent of elementary school principals were over 50 years of age; in 1999-2000, 54 percent were 50+ years old (nearing retirement age).

The number of younger principals (under 40 years of age) only increased from seven

to 10 percent. The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that

there will be a 13 percent increase in job openings for education administrators

between 2000 and 2010, and that "a large proportion of education administrators are

expected to retire over the next 10 years.

(http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos007.htm#outlook, retrieved September 6, 2008)

These shortages occur among all types of schools (rural, urban, and suburban) and

among all levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Evidence also suggests that filling

high school principalship vacancies is a serious problem (Bowles, King, & Crow, 2000;

Whitaker & Turner, 2000). The National Association of Secondary School Principals

(NASSP) reported a 50 percent turnover in U.S. principalships during the

1990s, and predicts that another 40 percent will turn over by 2010 (Kurtz, 2000; Whitaker,

2001). The deficiency in the candidates to fill these administrative jobs is causing

administrators with less experience and fewer years in the business to take positions as

principals.

Younger principals in schools are no longer an uncommon sight. NAESP estimated

that 40 percent of the nation's total of the 93,000 principal positions in K-12 schools were

vacant and needed to be replaced, mostly due to principals eligible to retire from the

profession.

When principals were asked on the NAESP survey why there were not enough

candidates for the vacancies in the principalship, many reasons were given. When asked to

respond to a list of barriers they considered for prospective principals entering into the

principalship, Indiana principals identified the job as too stressful (58%), too much time

required (53%), and compensation insufficient compared to responsibilities (37%) (Goeller,

1992). There is no doubt about it that principals work longer days than ever before, work at

night, work on weekends, and are employed year-round. According to the Bureau of Labor

Statistics (2008), "Many education administrators work more than 40 hours a week,

including some nights and weekends during which they oversee school activities" (p. 12).

Additional research which echoes the time principals put into working is from the NAESP

10-year study (1998) stating that typically principals put in nine-hour days and 54-hour

weeks a year.

However, despite the time restraints required of a school administrator, the data

indicate that women continue to make up a higher percentage of the teaching workforce and

a much smaller percentage of the administrative workforce (NAESP, 1998). Perhaps teaching

in the classroom versus school administration allows more time for women to balance in the

professional and personal responsibilities? This could support research by Young and

McLeod (2001) which states, across the nation, state legislators and administrator

organizations have determined that a leadership crisis exists in educational administration.

Studies on gender and administration also have documented career differences between male

and women administrators (Young & McLeod, 2001).

For example, women administrators tend to have an average of 10 more years of

teaching experience than men and thus are older than most men when they enter

administrative positions (Lunenberg & Orenstein, 1991; Riehl & Byrd, 1997; Shakeshaft,

1987). Additionally, women are more likely to have leadership positions in elementary schools, whereas promotions to the upper levels of administration tend to be made from the secondary level (Prolman, 1982; Riehl & Byrd, 1997). Women also tend to hold staff positions in the central office rather than line positions at the school or central office level (Blackmore & Kenway, 1997; Grogan, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1987, 1999), and they more frequently obtain leadership positions in districts for which they have already worked as teachers (Spencer & Kochan, 2000). Manuel (2001) concurs with this data by including that the most common career pathway of women superintendents was teacher, elementary principal, and central office.

Even though there has been an increase in the number of women entering the principalship, a number of explanations have been offered to account for the lower numbers of women compared to men in educational administration. Northouse (2004) states that women's career advancement in leadership roles has been hampered by organizational, interpersonal, and personal barriers. One commonly accepted explanation is that women are not motivated to enter administration. However, other research does not support this claim.

In 1905, almost 98 percent of all elementary school teachers and 61.7 percent of elementary school principals were women (Shakeshaft, 1987). Traditionally, women have been the majority in education; however, Banks (2000) concluded that women are underrepresented in educational leadership. They believe this is due to the historical development of school administration and not by lack of motivation as previously indicated (Northouse, 2004). In addition, Banks (2000) sheds light on the ways in which women elementary school principals can take an active role in their professional futures by working

to allocate energy, time, and organization and devoting themselves to their personal lives as well. Existing research pertains to the following major areas: the changing nature of the principalship, the role of an elementary principal, leadership styles, and women principals. The research on women principals tends to focus on gender comparisons to men in leadership positions, women's roles in society, and characteristics of women. The roles of women in society and educational administration are noticeably changing. This is evident in career choices women are making and leadership positions women are holding.

Studies about women in educational leadership have been accomplished by many researchers to answer why they began and continue their careers in administrative roles such as the principalship. In their book, *The Administrative Career*, Marshall and Kasten (1994) present case studies for potential and existing school administrators to investigate, discuss, and ponder. They explore what inspired and supported people to enter school leadership. They describe entering into school leadership as being recognized as having potential as an administrator, obtaining an entry-level position, making the break with teacher colleagues, and proving oneself in an administrative position (Marshall & Kasten, 1994). Edson's (1995) 10-year longitudinal study of women successful in administration primarily focused on positions in education women aspired to achieve. She concluded "that despite all the obstacles for women trying to advance in a largely male arena, these women educators continue to be committed, resilient, and for the most part, successful" (Edson, 1995, p. 46). She went on to reflect how little is needed to encourage women in administration with the recommendation for further study on the process of encouraging and supporting women professionals (Tripses, 2004). Research conducted by Young and McLeod (2001) attempted

to understand women's decisions to enter the field of educational administration. Their study reports that women enter into educational administration because of career aspirations, their experiences with administrative role models, their exposure to transformative leadership styles, and their opportunities to gain support for beginning this career path.

Christman and McClellan (2008) argue that women administrators are caught in the social constructions of gender and leadership. In their study they explored how some women administrators in educational leadership programs have sustained their administrative roles and evaluated whether their resiliency rested on a feminine type of leadership. They conducted a study of seven diverse women administrators in educational leadership. Their conclusions indicated that gender identity and leadership are complex. They contend that faculty and students should not expect the socially constructed norms in women leaders. Society has established certain beliefs about women, who are leaders, as compared to their male counterparts. Women find themselves bound by societal expectations and difficult to break from the stereotypical leadership styles created by men. Women have to slide and maneuver cautiously around these expectations and responsibilities in their lives to achieve a sense of balance between work and home since they are expected to manage both aspects of their lives equally well.

Women have been challenged to overcome what society has deemed appropriate for women in comparison to men. Researchers such as Lorber (1994, 2005) and West and Zimmerman (1987) consider gender to be a social phenomenon which places women and men in different categories. Social expectations make us categorize women and men. This creates social balance (Lorber, 2005). Christman and McClellan (2008) describe how they

expect women administrators to behave like women but attempt to be manly to mimic those historically in power. When evaluating women in leadership positions, they project that they will lead in ways that are typically described as being female "consensual, collaborative and caring" (Hall et al., 1999, p. 101). Many times women will resist the social expectations and model what society expects of men to demonstrate competency and resiliency.

When reading the research and data about the need for more school administrators in the future due to the increase in numbers of students, it is important to learn about the changes taking place to address the need for drawing more highly qualified candidates into the principalship. One organization taking on the challenge is the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) based in Washington, DC. The organization is a nonprofit, nonpartisan group whose purpose is to help individuals and institutions work together across boundaries to achieve better outcomes for children and youth. IEL's work is focused on five program areas including developing and supporting leaders.

The Institute for Educational Leadership's School Leadership for the 21st Century Initiative is raising public awareness about the critical problems facing education leadership. The initiative is engaging partners from education, government, business, civic groups, and other organizations tackling leadership issues in various realms of the public education system and seeking to spark action among the increasingly diverse participants in an effort to strengthen the nation's schools. Much of the work is being done by four task forces focusing on leadership at the state, district, principal, and teacher levels (Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). In order to increase the number of principals in schools, they recommend improving recruitment efforts, revamping preparation programs for administrators, providing

additional support to fulfill the job requirements, increasing pay and benefits to draw more professionals to the profession, and alleviating stressors which impede a principal's main purpose which is as a leader of students' learning. This study explores some of those stressors and tensions in a particularly underrepresented group of school leaders – women principals who have children.

<div align="center">**Balance of Life between Work and Home**</div>

Balance of work and home life can be a significant source of stress depending on the personal and professional responsibilities a person may have. Balance in life is defined in various ways by different people. For the purpose of this study the following definition of balance between work and home lives will be used. Loher and Schwartz (2003) define work-life balance as being fully engaged. Principals must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest. Full engagement begins with a feeling of eagerness to get to work in the morning, equally happy to return home in the evening, and capable of setting clear boundaries between the two. The overall idea is to throw yourself into the task at hand whether tackling a challenge at work, facilitating a group project, spending time with family or having fun. Full engagement implies a fundamental shift in the way we live our lives in order to strive for balance between work and home (Loher & Schwartz, 2003).

To suggest many women do not have the opportunity to pursue a principalship due to the challenge of striving for a balance between work and home would be inaccurate. While most extreme feminists would contend that society and the organizations society supports do not facilitate the advancement of women; others would disagree. Women today have more

opportunities in all aspects of life than women of earlier generations dared to imagine (Rimm, 1999). However, the expansion of choices creates complex situations as women work to balance work and home. There is a wide array of diversity and difference of opinion about the relationships between home, family, work, and leisure pursuits (Faulconer, 2003).

Hakim (2000) explains that in the United States women have different opportunities than their predecessors. These expanded opportunities have created new and complex choices for women. Women now have opportunities to choose between a home-centered or work-centered lifestyle or to choose a combination of home and work. Hakim (2000) contends that contemporary women are not at all united on the complex issues of work and home. She proposes that new and expanded opportunities have created three groups of women: home-centered women—women whose main priority is family life or children (about 20% of women); work centered women—women whose main priority in life is employment or equivalent activities like politics (about 20% of women); and adaptive women—women who want to combine work and family (about 60% of women). A survey of 575 spouses of Nebraska school administrators portrayed mounting pressure from increasing work demands. Causes of these problems included after-hours activities being exhausting and disruptive to family life, dual home/office personalities, job stress, unshared childrearing responsibilities, and loneliness (Queen & Queen, 2005).

History of Women as Principals

With a few notable expectations, until the 1990s, there had been little research about women in leadership positions in education. However, during the 1980s Shakeshaft (1987) and Marshall (1984, 1985) led the way in researching women in school administration.

During this time, they discovered same-gender roles were important to women. However, they contend the same-gender role models, which actively validate the connections between teaching and leading, may be inversely related to the tendency to divide the behavior of educational professionals into teachers and leaders (Young & McLeod, 2001). This division could be an obstacle when pursuing a career in administration. There are times when teachers have been discouraged from pursuing administrative roles because they are "such a good teacher" (Young & McLeod, 2001, p. 484). Grogan (1999) supported this belief by noting that the existing resistance to women's ways of enacting leadership (e.g., ethic of care, collaboration) may be associated with deeply held ideas about leadership and femininity.

Although women were seen as appropriate candidates for teaching positions, administrative positions during the early history of education in the United States were given to men. Few women held administrative positions between 1820-1900 where they managed public schools, founded their own schools, and served as the chief administrator of schools (Giddings, 1984; Shakeshaft, 1999; Solomon, 1985). There was resistance to women moving into administrative positions. However, the 1900-1930s were known as the golden age for women in school administration (Hansot & Tyack, 1981; Shakeshaft, 1999). Most men left their education careers to seek other occupations in booming businesses such as in the steel companies and expansion of the railroads. Education became more for women as men began seeking other jobs. The numbers of women increased during these years in the educational and business fields. New clerical job opportunities began to open up for women with the invention of the typewriter. Clerical jobs were thought of as prestigious, the hours were relatively short, and the pay was good (Rury, 1991). According to research by Shakeshaft

(1999), "During this time, women primarily occupied elementary principalships and county and state superintendencies. By 1928, women held 55% of the elementary principalships, 25% of the county superintendencies, nearly 8% of the secondary school principalships, and 1.6% of the district superintendencies" (Shakeshaft, 1999, p. 104). The role of women in school leadership began to decline during the Great Depression. Men dominated leadership positions during these times when the numbers of jobs available were limited. Negative attitudes towards women were another barrier. Yet another was when women got married. Actually, in 1903, a new bylaw was passed by the New York Board of Education prohibiting married women from teaching, much less becoming a school administrator (Shakeshaft, 1999).

Historically, women were encouraged to pursue teaching as an occupation in order to prepare them for marriage and motherhood. Education was seen and promoted as a good vocation for married women. By the 1950s and 1960s discrimination against women in administration rose again which impeded the advancement of women as school leaders. With the exception of a handful of researchers, almost all of whom are women, there continues to be very little research on women in administration and their career paths in administrative positions in the field of education.

According to Brunner and Grogan (2007), the need for research on contemporary women in leadership, broadly speaking, was noted as early as the 1970s, and literature about women in various educational administration roles began to appear in the 1980s. It was not until the 1990s, however, when more researchers investigated the experiences of female leaders. Their positions in administration have evolved over the years. Daresh (2002)

explains, at first, these administrative duties were assumed by teachers on a part-time basis. Serving as principal teachers was truly the rule rather than the exception. As managerial responsibilities increased, the teaching functions of principals began to disappear in all but the smallest of schools. Society had norms women were expected to live by as teachers, but times changed as they began to progress into the role as head teacher or principal. Women can learn from one another what strategies they use to break away from the norms established for women by society. They are vulnerable to social constructions and understanding of what it takes to survive and thrive in the work force (Brunner, 2005).

At certain points in American history women had greater roles in leadership. Historically, some of these times were during the early twentieth century when women were seeking school leadership roles and were supported by the suffrage activities and the women's movement (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). Although there were more women in administrative positions during the "golden age" between the years of 1900-1930, in reality, women were found primarily in the less desirable elementary school principalships and in county and state superintendencies. These jobs held less stature, rarely served as stepping stones to preferred positions, and paid considerably less than the more desirable secondary principalships and district superintendencies (Shakeshaft, 1989). As Blount (1998) explained,

> The women's suffrage movement had sparked the emergence of women as school administrators for at least two reasons. First, the quest for women's rights had triggered the larger movement of organized women's groups, many of which actively supported the candidacy of women for school offices. Second, suffrage

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had given women power at the ballot box, which allowed them to affect the political process directly, to become, as some hoped, a political constituency. (p. 81)

Women hold over half of the jobs in education as teachers, but there are not nearly as many in the role as principal. In an issue brief for the National Center for Education Statistics (1994) it was reported that in 1983-84 women accounted for 68 percent of the teaching workforce, but only about 21 percent of public school principalships. Between 1984 and 1990 women in the principalship increased to 30 percent which is a 43 percent increase over a six year span. This data show evidence there has been an increase in the number of women moving into the role of administrator in schools. However, a marked imbalance remains.

In *The K-8 Principal in 1998*, the magnitude of major changes in the role of the elementary school principal was revealed (Ferrandino, 2001). The study confirmed the job is much more demanding than in the past due to the increased number of hours required to do the job, additional staff members to supervise, and higher accountability. Ferrandino (2001) noted, "the most dramatic change has been the remarkable increase in the proportion of elementary school principals who are women: 42% in 1998, up from just 20% a decade earlier" (p. 440). The gender shift was even more significant among younger principals with five years of experience or less. Sixty-five percent of the principals with less experience were women.

Changing Nature of the Principalship

Schooling has changed dramatically over the last fifty years. Given that education is not mentioned in the Constitution of the United States, people long believed the federal government had no control over schools and public education was under local control. As Schlechty (2005) states, the result has been that public school leaders have become increasingly silent on matters of social values, and when they speak, they speak of the universal as opposed to the parochial.

The job of the principal has changed due to the greater expectations by constituents, the fast pace of the changing technological world, and increased accountability tied to assessments. However, as late as the 1950s, the purpose of schools and the role of the principal were much different than today. For example, some rural communities in Ohio, where many practicing Catholics lived, hired a priest as the principal of the local public school. Common practices included a morning prayer, reading the Bible, and saluting the American flag (Schlechty, 2005).

Much has changed. Harris et. al. (2003) outlined the responsibilities of principals in schools as:

- Defining the mission of the school and setting goals including emphasizing student achievement and sharing this within and outside the school
- Managing the routine functions within the school organization that supported teaching and learning through managing resources, time, the curriculum, and staff

- Promoting a professional learning climate by establishing high expectations and standards of student behavior

- Developing a strong culture at the school that included a safe and orderly work environment, staff collaboration, and cohesion. (p. 12)

She contends that current school leaders primarily have the role of coping with change and coping with complexity. Her description of the current responsibilities includes:

- Managing the schools more independently alongside increasing dependence on curriculum, monitoring, assessment, and inspection frameworks imposed by government

- Potentially creating divisiveness due to performance and results

- Increasing accountability in various forms intended to increase effectiveness, but which simultaneously increase workload and bureaucracy

- Reducing teachers' ability to recognize and differentiate students' needs due to new imposed curriculum certainties

- Working with increased attention to cognitive challenges which reduces attention to emotional needs. (p. 13)

The roles and responsibilities as a school administrator have changed significantly over the years. The role of the principal has transformed from a managerial role to one who is engaged with multiple constituencies and one who focuses more on instruction. The focus

has become more focused on learning and teaching and less on building materials and management, even though these continue to be important. Niece (1993) describes principals in the 1980s as assuming the role of instructional leaders in a study he conducted to discover characteristics of instructional leaders, the sources principals seek for information about instruction, and major influences in their leadership of instruction. However, today the principal is seen as the primary change agent within their organizations. Fullan (1998) believes "if the principal does not lead changes in the culture of the school, or if he or she leaves it to others, it normally will not get done" (p. 16).

The Role of an Elementary School Principal

Contemporary school administrators play a daunting array of roles, ranging from educational visionaries and change agents to instructional leaders, curriculum and assessment experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, and community builders (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2006) has observed a significant change in the characteristics of elementary school principals. New information on the characteristics of elementary school principals is included in the most recent Schools and Staffing Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (2006). The results show that the number of public elementary school principals grew from 54,000 in 1993-1994 to 61,000 in 2003-2004. This roughly corresponds to an increase of about 6,000 public elementary schools during this period, although some principals manage more than one school. About 31,000 of these public elementary school principals worked in schools in suburban areas, 17,000 in urban areas, and 14,000 in rural areas.

In 1994, the majority of elementary principals were men, but by 2000 the majority were women. The majority of men were principals of high schools which are higher paying jobs and usually a step to a higher position at the central office level. Between 1993-1994 and 1999-2000, the proportion of elementary school principals who were women rose from 41 percent to 52 percent, and this percentage increased to 56 percent in 2003-2004 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). Given the change in characteristics over time, the study I propose to conduct illustrates the perspective of some women regarding the role of the principal.

Stress and Turnover

Multiple sources of research describe the role of a school principal as stressful. Brubaker and Simon (1996) developed guidelines through their studies about graduate students' and principals' lives which can help enable educators in leadership positions deal with the occupational hazard of too much stress. They suggest that the biggest challenge is "to have enough stress to keep them on their toes but not so much (dis)stress that they are overwhelmed. Educators who achieve this balance win private victories that enhance their self-esteem. They take out insurance that wards off burnout" (p. 64).

However, "Principals today are pulled in different directions and some are breaking under the stress" (Ripley, 1997, p. 55). Ripley compares the stress of a school principal to an instrument which requires just the right degree of tension, not too slack and not too tight, in order to be able to create just the right tone in our schools. The tensions described in his article include the leadership style of the principal, the personal and work-related needs of members of the school community including students, teachers, support staff, administrators,

parents, and central office, and social and cultural pressures including vision, different constituents to be served, inevitable changes, and relationships with others. Ripley suggests using these tensions to set the right tone because they will continue to exist. It is necessary to achieve a balance, but this is dependent on each principal as each one is unique and their stressors are different for each individual.

In studies conducted by Fassel (1997) about good stress and bad stress, it is pointed out that balancing three factors at work is essential for health. The three factors are job demands, job supports, and job constraints. When people work a demanding job, but they lack support in the form of resources, skills, and emotional understanding, and when they lack the ability to control or put constraints on the job, then burnout is inevitable. On the other hand, a demanding job results in monotony when there is too much support, too many constraints, and a lack of challenges. Therefore, equal distribution among these areas of work must occur during the day and week (Fassel, 1997).

Czerniakowski (1995) completed a doctoral study about stress, burnout, and coping strategies among elementary school principals in Pennsylvania. His research included surveys demonstrating 91 out of 150 elementary principals analyzed showed the increase in stress and burnout was due to increased workloads, excessive meetings, time constraints, and unrealistic policy demands. The most frequently used coping strategy was consulting with colleagues and school staff about concerns related to their work.

Another study conducted by Lewis (1992) examined the rate and reasons for turnover among Virginia elementary school principals over the course of five years. The reasons contributing to principals leaving the job included pressure and stress, financial factors, work

demands, and other factors not specified beyond the principals' control. Lewis suggests other principals remained in their role because they felt they could continue to wield positive influence.

In a related study, White (1995) sought to determine sources of stress for school administrators by asking how administrators dealt with stressful conditions. After administering the Administrative Stress Index and Ways of Coping Checklist instruments to 153 public school administrators, she found factors such as gender, age, experience, school site, and school levels had no significant statistical relationship to job-related stress. The research questions included:

1.) What occupational factors are perceived by administrators as most stressful in managing the public school?

2.) How are the personal characteristics (age, gender, experience) related to these perceived administrative stress inducing factors?

3.) How are the situational characteristics (school site and school level) related to these perceived stress inducing factors?

4.) What are the three coping strategies that are utilized most often by principals in this study?

The results of the study showed stress was a factor for school administrators. Gender, age, experience, school site, and school level all had no significant statistical impact. Significant findings were reported regarding how administrators cope with stress. In addition, suburban administrators blamed themselves more for stress than did the urban school administrators.

Elementary and middle school principals engaged in more mental coping strategies such as wishful thinking compared to high school principals.

Clark and Clark (2002) contend principals need to be more resourceful and effective in the ways they lead and organize their schools by reevaluating the ways they lead, use time, and allocate resources in order to reduce stress. Another example regarding how to reduce the tension experienced by principals was in a study conducted through of a survey of school principals in Indiana. The results concluded principals must focus on what they can control (Whitaker & Turner, 2000). There are many factors out of a school administrator's control, so they must be prepared at all times, prioritize which situations to address, and strategize how to handle circumstances and challenges they have been faced with during the day.

The previous research cited demonstrates that the profession of school administration is stressful and challenging; however, studies about women principals have shown women experience stress differently from their male counterparts. Their experiences, responsibilities, and roles are viewed somewhat differently, and therefore, the research centers on these differences.

Women as Principals

Gender difference between school administrators was completely ignored in early research on school leadership (Lougheed, 2002). The study, conduced by Lougheed in 1999, demonstrated the shift in leadership to include women as leaders and demonstrated their success and change in the awareness levels for women in administrative roles.

However, other studies conducted in various states support statistics regarding women who enter the principalship as a career. For example, a study conducted by Goeller

(1992) determined the sources of occupational stress on Indiana women principals and what coping resources they utilized. A special focus was given to the variables of age, years of administrative experience, and level of school: elementary, middle, or high school. There was a 79% return rate out of 365 women principals surveyed using the Administrative Stress Index as the research instrument. The data indicated task-based and conflict-mediating stress had the two highest values. Given ten job-related gender barriers tested, the top two were having family and home responsibilities and encountering attitudes that women are less effective than men. Other significant relationships discovered were the perceptions of women principals regarding stressful-job related factors and stressful job-related gender barriers. Another important relationship was found between the perceptions of stress among women principals and age. The perceptions of task-based stress were significantly different between the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Goeller (1992) reports that a multiple regression analysis showed age as the only variable which contributed significantly to the explanation of recreational activities, self-care behaviors, and cognitive skills as coping resources. The coping resource categories of social support systems and cognitive skills ranked first and second. Recreational activities were reported as the least helpful coping resource to reduce stress.

Obtaining and maintaining an administrative role requires long hours, hard work, handling pressure, the ability to manage time, deadlines, and manage multiple tasks. Successful candidates find ways to use their energy effectively and ask for help when needed (Tack & Flanagan, 2001). Common approaches to reduce stress such as exercise are prudent; however, modern technological features such as cellular telephones, electronic organizers,

computers, and other devices have greatly increased efficiency and may save time for administrators. On the other hand, they might also expand work by making principals available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, especially after hours.

Fassel (1997) explains that everywhere she turns people are calling for more balance in their lives. Most prescriptions leave her cold because they seem mechanistic and superficial, as if achieving balance, like getting the right exercise routine, will solve their problems. When they think of balance in their lives, they envision equilibrium among factors which influence their lives. In her book *Divided Lives,* Walsh (1995) describes a study of women and balance. She found that women were happiest when they devoted time and attention to work, love, family, friends, time for self, sense of place, and sense of self. Fassel found in her study that women were sad and disappointed when they ignored one or several areas or failed to understand the importance of one of the areas in making an important decision about their life.

Finding a balance between a personal life and work demands continues to be an issue. Pavan (1999) noted characteristics of twelve women superintendents including a strong sense of efficacy, extremely high intelligence, "workaholism," and often being in possession of more skills than their male peers, with the capacity to improvise as needed. Based on the experiences of these twelve women during this study, she offered several strong tips to women as they entered into the role of superintendent. One regarding balance was to protect your personal or family time. She suggested living outside of the district and not being available on the weekends as valuable suggestions. She indicated the need for a spouse or

partner to have strong personal interests due to the time constraints on a new superintendent's time. I concur and believe these suggestions could transfer over to the role of a principal also.

Working women, especially those who seek careers in administration, have been successful due to their personal and professional support systems (Young & McLeod, 2001). Several researchers have noted the importance of personal supports such as family and friends and professional supports such as women's groups and networks (Blount, 1998; Grogan, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1987). In turn, the women who are supported have felt an obligation to mentor and endorse other women. Furthermore, most of the participants in the study conducted by Young and McLeod (2001) cited one of the greatest sources of support and inspiration was their mother. They cited other researchers, who found similar results when studying women administrators' families, particularly their mothers, in supporting their efforts in becoming educational leaders (Gross & Trask, 1976; Paddock, 1978).

Conversely, Grogan (1999) found that administration is not always an option for women due to a husband's job when it is necessary to move and relocate or move often for another job. In addition, women with families cannot always depend on their spouses to share household and child care responsibilities. She contends, although "rhetoric about administrators being family-oriented is plentiful, there is still a tension for those who try to meet the demands of family and administration equally well" (p. 526). Therefore, personal and professional supports are necessary for women to feel as though they can pursue their careers in administration. Shakeshaft (1987) argues that women educators, like other women who work outside of the home, actually have two careers; not one: one at work and one at home.

Working Women in the Business World

Most American mothers juggle work and family. According to Marsh (2008), over 70 percent of mothers with children under the age of 18 work outside of the home. In an on-line article, several working mothers who are news anchors on Cable News Network (CNN) shared their challenges and victories when balancing work and family life. As a busy woman working in television, Kiren Chetry, host of "American Morning" and mother of two children, stated, "As a journalist, I am engrossed and engaged in the issues and stories that matter the most to us as Americans and citizens of the world. As a mom, I am just trying to pack all of the love and attention to two babies God blessed me with" (Cable News Network, 2008). Rosemary Church is the anchor of "Your World Today" on CNN and a mother of three children. She questions, "How do we explain to our little ones why we juggle and struggle? We love what we do – but striking that balance, well sometimes we get it right and sometimes we just don't." Soledad O'Brien, anchor and correspondent for the Special Investigators Unit and mother of four, is asked frequently to talk about balance. She says, "It's laughable, there is none. It's the plight of the modern-day working mom: 'You cannot do it all, especially if you have four kids'" (Cable News Network, 2008).

In the *Law Office Management and Administration Report* (2008), women working as lawyers was examined. Carol Evans, CEO of Working Mother, stated "Women should not be denied the right to become partners, but the 'billable hour' system is not allowing them to advance in their careers *and* raise a family. The 100-hour workweek model is just not effective." Law offices need to move in a new direction and make changes by following best practices such as those among the current programs in place at the top-rated firms for

women: 98 percent of winning firms host networking groups for female lawyers, 68 percent offer mentoring for senior female associates, and 62 percent offer management training for women.

Sometimes mothers have to begin other avenues of work due to the time requirements of their current job, the extraordinary cost of child care, and balancing responsibilities at home. Flexibility is almost always a must for balance. As Mom Corps founder O'Kelley stated, "Mom Corps specializes in finding temporary or contract work for highly skilled and educated parents, those who in their professional lives were lawyers, accountants, vice presidents of marketing and the like" (Baldwin, 2006).

Marsh (2008) provided advice to the typical working mothers in America stating, "Feminism is not just about having the opportunity to do it all. It's also about having the support to do as much as you can. This is why, in the end, feminism needs to be tied to not just an identity, but to an ideology that encourages that support."

Role Differentiation among Principals

Data were collected about elementary school principals over time during the course of forty years from 1958-1998, by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, which was formerly a department of the National Education Association. Every ten years this study is conducted to collect information about principals. A brief highlight in the data illustrates how the role of principal has changed. In 1958, 17 percent of the respondents reported that they were "teaching principals" who had to split their time between administrative duties and the classroom. By 1988, only 1 percent of the respondents described their titles this way (Protheroe, 2008).

There are differences in the roles and responsibilities of principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. For instance, Jody Dunlap, assistant superintendent of personnel in the Conejo Unified School District in Thousand Oaks, California, explains the different positions at the three levels:

A high school management team has been a principal, assistant principals, and deans. A junior high/middle school team has been a principal, assistant principals, and counselors. An elementary administrative team has been me, myself, and I. The elementary principal, alone, has been responsible for supervision and evaluation of all certificated and classified staff, 504 and IEP meetings, plant management, site council, PTA, and everything. (Adams, 1999, p. 10)

This seems to be a contradiction to why there are more women in elementary schools than in middle schools and high schools. However, this suggests that the job of the principals – their duties and responsibilities – is not similar at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Different jobs may produce different levels of stress. Some of the school districts in California have explored new ways to configure the principals' role to create a doable job and to provide them with more support even with restricted budgets (EdSource, 2001). Several strategies include using grants to compensate lead teachers for taking leadership roles, hiring co-principals to share responsibilities, and compensating principals more for the work they are expected to accomplish on a daily basis.

In 1999-2000 the Conejo School Board approved additional new administrative positions to assist principals (EdSource, 2001). In the Ojai Unified School District in California the principals of schools that have 550 or more students receive an additional $10,000 annually as "principal support money". Those principals with fewer students receive $5,000. These discretionary funds may be used in any way that will support the principal such as releasing or compensating teachers for facilitating school-based projects, initiating and implementing programs, and developing curriculum and shepherding the work of task forces. This helps support principals and enhances teachers' professional development skills.

Professional learning opportunities for all principals related to supervision, human relations, time management, and healthy decisions seem to be areas of need to help with a balance to prevent stress and burnout. Following her research studies, Diaz (1993) suggests in her dissertation it is necessary for school systems to implement orientation programs for new principals, continuously evaluate and revise their training programs for principals, and reduce the mounting responsibilities and paperwork for the principal. These suggestions would reduce the principals' levels of frustration and improve retention of these school leaders.

Research states very little about educational administrators' daily interactions and routines, especially for women elementary principals (Andrews, Lee, & James, 2002). However, Andrews, Lee, and James (2002) conducted an ethnographic study to compare Wolcott's *The Man in the Principal's Office* (1973) to what a woman elementary principal experienced in the 1990s through a feminist lens as the new title indicates, *The Man in the Principal's Office (Re)visited by a Woman*. Feminist researchers contribute valuable

viewpoints about the way women in education lead, teach, care for students, and collaborate

with others. Wolcott's original study was about a married, Caucasian family man at the age

of 45 with a few years of classroom teaching experience. He had a stay-at-home wife and

three children. The comparison ethnographic study included a married, Caucasian female

principal, who was 45 years old, with three adolescent boys. The primary differences in the

study were the woman were still the one primarily responsible for the obligations at home

including raising the children and being there for their school events, helping with

homework, cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry. As a mother, she did everything the

male principal did thirty years before and more. The male principal role included functions of

management including planning, organization, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting,

and budgeting which was done to or over people (Gulick & Urwick, 1937). On the contrary,

the feminist perspective describes the principal as a leader who works with people in contrast

to them working for or under her authority to accomplish all of these management tasks.

"(Re)visiting the principal's office urges women principals to have a moral imperative to

care, reflect lived realities and truths through our practice, and remember personal courage,

transformative action, and social justice are possible" (Andrews, Lee, & James, 2002, p.

279). In another study conducted by Hutchinson (2002) she states, "The women were pleased

with their choice of career. Although it was a stressful and time-consuming profession, they

found it to be a rewarding career. They stressed the importance of knowing one's self and

being strong. Their advice to other women aspiring to positions in school administration was

to go for their goals, establish support systems, network with others, find mentors, as well as

find a balance between family and work" (p. 370).

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Chapter Summary

"There is no real balance of work and family in America," says Marie Wilson of the White House Project, which supports women political candidates. "You integrate work and family and do the best you can" (Kantrowitz & Juarez, 2005, p. 47). This continues to be the problem, particularly for school leadership. This study of women principals in the elementary school setting intends to provide insight into planning, organization, and implementation strategies and to provide information on the experiences and conditions principals perceive are necessary to successfully fulfill their personal and professional responsibilities. Is creating a balance possible for women in educational leadership positions in schools or in any leadership role? The next chapter will explain the methods I will use to investigate how elementary women principals attempt to have a balance between their professional and personal lives. If there is no balance, what trade-offs must be made and how do these professional women feel about the choices they have made?

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Greater expectations of their educational institutions by the public, the faster pace of technological change, and higher stakes tied to accountability have impacted the job of principals today (Metzger, 2006). With the many conflicting demands on their time it is very challenging for school principals to make time to spend with their family, have reflections on conversations held and events that have occurred, make clear decisions completely thought out and well reasoned, and maintain balance in one's life to maintain wellness. This can be especially challenging for women, who are principals and mothers.

Women principals differ in the balance they have to maintain due to personal and professional responsibilities. According to Loder (2005), concerns about work-family conflicts are becoming an increasing problem for women administrators. They have multiple and competing roles of school administrator, wife, mother, and caretaker. Women principals may have a different balance in their lives than their male counterparts. The balance of a professional life as an elementary principal and a personal life as a mother is quite challenging.

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to understand what women principals who are mothers perceived as essential for striving towards, achieving, or maintaining a balance between their personal and professional lives. The findings from this study provided women principals who are challenged by balancing their personal and professional responsibilities ways to plan and implement strategies and provided information on the experiences and conditions women principals need in order to help them successfully

fulfill their roles. Moreover, the study offered a methodological template for investigating similar phenomena in populations beyond elementary schools in North Carolina.

Creswell (2007) views qualitative research metaphorically as an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material. This fabric is not explained easily or simply. Like the loom on which fabric is woven, general worldviews and perspectives hold qualitative research together. To describe the frameworks I used in this study about principals' lives, a phenomenological approach was used to develop an inquiry as a series of logically related steps and beliefs from the perspectives of fifteen women elementary school principals. As a result, I explored the changing nature of their jobs, the balances they attempted to maintain, and management of personal and professional obligations and responsibilities.

Selection of Qualitative Methodology

Attempting to determine if it was possible for there to be a balance in a principal's life and what that balance might be was not an easy task. A qualitative methodology was used to describe the lives of five selected elementary school principals through conducting face-to-face interviews and with another ten elementary school principals through conducting a focus group interview. A phenomenological approach was selected because the purpose of the study was to capture the experiences through the voices of the participants. I had access to fifteen women principals in the school system who have family responsibilities including being a mother in addition to their chosen profession. Using a phenomenological study as the chosen method, I attempted to describe the lives of the participants. Merriam (1998) described a central characteristic of qualitative research as individuals creating a reality

within communication in their worlds. The research and descriptions in this educational

study provided an in-depth understanding of the professional and personal lives of these

women.

The focus of phenomenology was used in this study to capture the essence of

experiences about a phenomenon. The disciplinary origins of phenomenology include

philosophy, sociology, and psychology. The phenomenon in this study was viewed through

the perceptions of mothers, who are elementary school principals, regarding how they have

strived towards, achieved, or maintained a balance between their personal and professional

responsibilities. Strategies and organizational techniques including sacrifices were explored

and reported. When conducting research, "Data were collected from the individuals who

have experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). Data collection for a

phenomenological study consists of long interviews with up to ten participants (Creswell,

2007). Data analysis was comprised from statements provided by the participants through

transcripts, meanings interpreted, common themes sorted, and a general description of

experiences. In narrative form phenomenology is a description of the "essence" of the

experience (Creswell, 1998). When conducting this type of study, Creswell (1998)

summarized the following procedural issues necessary: (a) The researcher needed to

understand the philosophical perspectives behind the phenomenological approach, especially

the concept of studying how people experience a phenomenon; (b) the investigator wrote

research questions that explored the meaning of that experience for individuals and asked

individuals to describe their everyday lived experiences; (c) the investigator then collected

data from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation; and (d) the

phenomenological data analysis steps are generally similar for all psychological

phenomenologists who discussed the methods. This included listing the specific statements

(horizonalization), transforming the statements into clusters of meanings, and then grouping

the clusters into a general description of the experience. Through this study the elementary

principals had the opportunity to interact with others and they were able "change and grow as

they learned more about themselves through this interactive process" (Bogdan & Biklen,

1992, p. 37). I anticipated conducting a focus group in addition to the individual interviews

would more effectively capture the essence of the phenomenon.

Focusing on the professional and personal lives of participants, this study examined

the lives and the balance of personal and professional responsibilities using interviews and a

focus group. The researcher inquired into principals' lives and the impact of responsibilities

on the balance they attempted to maintain between work and home. The following research

question was investigated: What were the strategies women elementary school principals,

who are mothers, used to sustain a balance of professional and personal responsibilities in

their lives?

Participants

An important step in the research process is to find people to study and to gain access

to and establish rapport with participants so that they will provide good data (Creswell,

2007). The most appropriate sampling strategy when conducting qualitative research is

nonprobabilistic – the most common form of which is called purposeful (Patton, 1990).

Merriam (1998) explains that purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the

investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. Patton (1990) argues:

> The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169)

Gay and Airasian (2003) note that qualitative research is characterized by in-depth inquiry, immersion in a setting, emphasis on context, concern with participants' perspectives, and description of a single setting, not generalization to many settings. These characteristics call for small sampling strategies that produce samples that are predominantly small and nonrandom. The results of this criterion-based as well as purposive sampling was to discover, understand, and gain insight from the subjects where most can be learned about this inquiry about balance in women principals' lives.

Criterion-based selection required me to first establish a set of criteria or list of attributes that the participants for the study must possess. In choosing this purposeful sample, the following criteria was used: (a) principals selected had to be a current principal at an elementary school in the large school system located in a southeastern state; (b) mothers, who had children between the ages of birth and eighteen years of age because these are the years at which children rely on their parents the most. In a phenomenological study, it was most important to have "individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored

and can articulate their conscious experiences" (Creswell, 1998, p. 111). Therefore, (c) the principals had to be willing to make a commitment to participate in the study.

In order to determine which principals could participate in the study, I contacted the secretary to the local organization of principals in the school system. The secretary updates the directory of principals following each board meeting when new principals are approved. This directory is distributed to each principal in the school system, so they have current contact information for one another. Since only the women elementary school principals were considered for the study, their names were highlighted on the spreadsheet. Then, I selected the principals I knew who were mothers and contacted them via telephone. Next, I contacted the other principals I did not know well to determine if they were qualified to participate in the study. Each of these possible participants was contacted via telephone or in person at a principals' meeting to gain a commitment to participate in the study. Before the study, a written consent form was read, reviewed, and signed by each participant.

This consent form indicated that the principals' identity would remain confidential and that the information provided might be used in a professional report with the use of pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. The form asked principals to agree and sign to have the personal interviews tape-recorded and the focus group interview video recorded. Principals were advised that the interview would last approximately sixty to ninety minutes in length and would be scheduled at the principals' convenience. Because participation in the study was voluntary, principals had the option to terminate the interview or decline to participate at any time. All tape and video recordings will be erased at the conclusion of the study.

Interviews

The questions posed in this qualitative case study of women elementary principals helped to "discover what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences" (Honigmann, 1982, p. 84). A written interview protocol including semi-structured interview questions was developed to record the data (See Appendix C). These questions used were ideas which emerged from the literature, modified from a dissertation written by Malnar (2003) regarding balance in the lives of superintendents, and additional questions created by the dissertation committee and myself.

Individual interviews were conducted with five women elementary school principals. Five participants were selected for interviews, which is approximately one-third of the possible participants in the school system who are elementary school principals and who have children between the ages of birth through eighteen years of age. In a phenomenological study, Dukes (1984) suggests studying 3-10 individuals. Creswell (2007) explains the role of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it. Face-to-face interviews took place with the five participants. The location was determined based on the interviewee's preference. I spent approximately sixty to ninety minutes with the principals learning about their schedules, responsibilities, stressors, management techniques, organizational strategies, and stress coping mechanisms. Beginning the study, basic demographic data was collected. Permission from the individual participants and a human subjects review board at the university and school system was requested. (See Appendix A, Consent Forms, Appendix B, Basic Demographic Data Information, and Appendix C, Interview Questions.) In addition to each

individual interview, a focus group interview took place including ten other women elementary school principals who are mothers. The participants in the focus group were different principals who were not part of the one-on-one interviews (See Appendix D, Focus Group Questions.) The additional focus group interview provided more data and varied points of view. Following the focus group interview, four of the five original participants who had been individually interviewed were interviewed again to add to the data collected. Four of the participants had additional information to add about how they have experienced changes in their lives or regarding their balance, or lack thereof, in their lives; one participant expressed she had shared everything she had to share during the first meeting, so a follow-up meeting was not necessary. This interim of time provided them the opportunity to reflect upon the initial interview and respond differently or add more information during the second interview.

After each interview, I made reflective field notes that recorded my personal reactions, concerns, and what I experienced or thought during the course of the interview (Carolan, 2008). Research field notes can benefit the study and supplement each interview as stated by Bogdan and Biklen (2003), so the meaning and content of an interview can be captured more completely. These field notes provided a personal journal to keep track of the study, to envision how the data collected was utilized, and to document how I may be influenced by the data. All field notes were documented on my personal computer for future reference and data analysis.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information, when interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other, when time to collect information is limited, and when individuals interviewed one-on-one may be hesitant to provide information (Creswell, 2007; Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). A focus group was used for gathering additional data for this phenomenological study beyond the one-on-one interviews to net the most useful information when providing answers to the research question. A group of ten elementary principals, who are mothers, were chosen based on interest to participate. These women were different individuals from the five participants in the individual interviews. However, one of the challenges of using focus groups was to encourage all participants to contribute ideas and monitor individuals who may dominate the conversation. Adequate recording procedures needed to be used. The focus group interview was video taped using two cameras to accurately capture the responses from the interviewer and each of the interviewees. In addition, two tape recorders were used in the case of technical difficulties including audio clarity of what was said during the interview.

An interview protocol including several open-ended questions was used (See Appendix D). The questions lead to the main research question. The focus group interview was conducted at the professional development center since it is quiet and free from distractions (Creswell, 1998), was centrally located in the school system, and provided ample room for the participants.

Upon arriving to the interview site, each participant completed a sheet including basic demographic data information (see Appendix B) and informed consent was obtained from the interviewees prior to the focus group interview. The participants introduced themselves to one another. During the interviews, the responses were recorded using an audio device during the individual interviews and an audio and video recorder for the focus group. In addition, written notes were recorded on the interview protocol.

Data Collection

There are numerous studies examining the lives of principals. However, research on women elementary principals is limited. Principals are typically known as high achievers who are addicted to work. This leads to a profound loss of ability to control the level of balance in their lives. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore through interviews and a focus group how women elementary school principals balance their professional and personal lives; specifically, what techniques and strategies do they use and what tradeoffs or sacrifices, if any, do they make or feel are necessary to be successful.

The following two methods of qualitative data collection were used to explore the research question: (a) in-depth interviews conducted twice with the same five participants, before and again after the focus group interview from which written verbatim transcripts were produced and (b) focus group interview from which additional viewpoints were added to the data. Document analysis including analyzing notebooks, day planners, date books, and schedules of the interview subjects was considered but not employed given the volume of data collected through the interviews.

To examine principals' attitudes, interests, feelings, values, and concerns pertaining to striving towards, achieving, or maintaining a balance in their lives and to produce rich, thick data, I conducted interviews with the five participants before and again after the focus group interview. An interview guide (see Appendix C) including semi-structured questions was developed from what emerged from the literature, modified from a dissertation written by Malnar (2003) regarding balance in the lives of superintendents, and additional questions created by the dissertation committee and myself. In preparation for the semi-structured interviews, the questions and order of presentation were predetermined and some of the questions were open-ended (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This allowed for follow-up probing questions to explore in depth answers to questions posed to the participants (Carolan, 2008). One of the emphases in phenomenological research is to try to come as close as you can to understanding the experiences being lived by the participants as they do, so the participants tell their own story in their own terms (Daniels, 2008). Using interviews, I was able to probe the participants' responses and explore their experiences in order to come as close as I could to understand if and how women principals achieve balance in their lives.

In phenomenological study, it is important to have "individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their conscious experiences" (Creswell, 1998, p. 111). Therefore, the principals selected had to work in the school system at the elementary level, had to be women, and have children between the ages of birth and eighteen years of age, and they had to be willing to make a commitment to participate in the study.

Given that I am currently an elementary school principal and the one conducting the study, I was able to contact each principal personally via telephone or during a principals'

meeting and obtain the data necessary to complete the study. A visit to each school was planned for the individual interviews and lasted at least sixty to ninety minutes.

When conducting the study, I reiterated to the participants that the goal was to describe the balance of professional and personal responsibilities in their lives and what strategies they utilized to create or maintain balance, and that the role of the researcher was not to evaluate any participant. Notes were taken in addition to the interviews being audio-taped and the focus group being audio and video-taped to accurately capture what was being said by whom.

Data Management

Creswell (2003) expresses surprise at how little attention is given to storing and managing qualitative data. The data needs to be collected and "the researcher needs to develop a filing system for the 'wad of hand-written notes or a tape" (Plummer, 1983, p. 98). I used a filing system in a notebook with tabs to organize the documents including consent forms and interview protocol sheets. A computer was used to organize and store all electronic files. The electronic files were backed up in two other locations including a flash drive and saved in a personal electronic mailbox.

Gay and Airasian (1992) argue there are two main purposes of data managing: (1) Organizing and checking the data for completeness and (2) starting the process of analyzing and interpreting the data. To help facilitate analysis of the data, I made sure I dated, organized, and sequenced field notes, interview transcripts, memos, consent forms, interview protocol sheets, and reflections. The electronic data including transcripts was organized in computer files. A separate folder for each of the participants was created. Each

folder contained the principal's transcribed interview data, the demographic data document, my field notes and reflections, and any other information pertaining to the individual participant relevant to the study.

At least two copies were made of the interview transcripts, the field notes, and the demographic data document, so I could mark, highlight, or underline important sections while still retaining a clean, unmarked copy of the original data. One unmarked copy was placed in a safe and secure location (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Gay & Airasian, 2003), making sure that all the data were included and organized. Backup copies of any computer files containing data were copied in the event that some data might be lost or deleted. At all times, the data remained secure to ensure confidentiality of the participants.

Miles and Huberman (1994) advise researchers to not put off coding to the end of data gathering. They argue that qualitative research depends heavily on ongoing analysis, and coding is a good device for supporting that analysis. Therefore, after the data were ordered, I read each transcript in its entirety several times (Creswell, 2007) and began to develop a preliminary list of possible coding categories. The data was coded manually. All of the codes were listed on a single sheet for easy reference, and I made sure that all of the codes were distinct from others in meaningful, study-important ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Subjectivity Statement

For this study, I began with a full description of my own experience of the phenomenon. Clarifying my experiences of the phenomenon from the onset of the study was "important so that the reader understands the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that impact the inquiry" (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). This increased the

trustworthiness and authenticity of the study and also helped me understand the experience of each subject and not impose a prior hypothesis on the experience.

As an elementary school principal and mother, this study interested me. I am employed as an elementary school principal in the school system where I conducted my study. I interviewed fifteen other women elementary school principals as part of my research. Through the collection of individual interviews and by conducting a focus group, I inquired about the topic to add to the body of knowledge related to the lives of women principals.

There may have been an assumption that I would only report information that was favorable and showed all of these principals as "super women" by doing it all with ease. Objectively accumulating, analyzing, and reporting information was viewed as a limitation since I am a woman elementary school principal, mother, and work in the same school system. In accordance with strict ethical measures, I reported the data in a factual manner.

All of the principals I interviewed have between one and thirty years experience. All of them are mothers. I interviewed these particular principals because they agreed to discuss their lives from a professional and personal perspective. We discussed many possibilities; however, it was interesting to learn what strategies they employed to attempt to achieve a balance in their lives in improving the quality of their lives both professional and personally.

Phenomenological Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing of codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion (Creswell, 2007). A criterion-based, as well as purposive sampling, of elementary women school principals who

have at least one child between the ages of birth and eighteen years old participated in this phenomenological study. The races, ages, levels of education, and years of experience as a principal varied depending on the selected participants and was collected on the demographic data information sheet. In the phenomenological research design, the researcher transcends or suspends past knowledge and experience to understand a phenomenon at a deeper level (Anderson & Spencer, 2002; Creswell, 2007; Merleau-Ponty, 1956). Unlike Husserl, who believed phenomenology was primarily reasoning and categorical thought and then turned to perceptual consciousness as the foundation of this research, Merleau-Ponty (1964) believed perception poses the problem of phenomenology of rationality. The plan to study this phenomenological data in order to reach this deeper level of understanding and rationality included utilizing the interview transcriptions and documents by reading and analyzing them several times before organizing them into common themes. I wrote memos in the margins of the field notes and transcripts during the initial process. Following each interview, I reflected upon what was said to make reflective field notes that recorded my personal reactions, concerns, and what I experienced or thought during the course of the interview sessions. These notes added to the data analysis.

To obtain this deeper level of understanding of the phenomenon I listened carefully to the participants' responses, audio-tape recorded their individual responses and audio and video-taped the focus group, transcribed the responses verbatim, and analyzed the data for common themes from their shared experiences. A transcription service was utilized to transcribe the individual interviews for the analysis of the data. I transcribed the focus group interview verbatim using the audio and video tapes to submerge myself into the data in

comparison to what I had experienced during the interview. This process enabled me to think about codes I used when analyzing the data. Specifically, Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method was used when analyzing each participant's transcript. This method was employed when analyzing the transcripts by reading them several times to obtain an overall feeling and understanding for the data obtained in all of the interviews.

Bracketing was used at the start of the study, so I could set aside my views of the phenomenon and focus on the views of the participants. Husserl developed bracketing to bracket out the outer world as well as individual biases. Bracketing is defined as suspending or setting aside our biases, everyday understandings, theories, beliefs, habitual modes of thought, and judgments (Daniels, 2008). "References to others, their perceptions, and judgments must be put aside to achieve epoche, and only the researcher's perceptions are retained as indicators of knowledge, meaning, and truth" (Carolan, 2008, p. 74).

The next step was to describe, classify, and interpret the data in order to develop codes or categories. Throughout the process, I used a constant comparative method for identifying similarities and differences by comparing new evidence to prior evidence. Significant phrases or sentences that pertained directly to the lived experiences of the principals were identified. During the data analysis, I employed the process of horizonalization (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). This process was used when I went through the transcripts and highlighted significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon.

Meanings were formulated from significant statements and phrases. The formulated meanings were clustered into themes allowing for the culmination of common themes from

all of the participants' transcripts. I tried to keep the categories generated from the

preliminary data analysis to between to ten to fifteen in the beginning, so the data did not

become overwhelming. Then, I narrowed down the data to five or six themes before writing

the narrative and creating tables. The final step in the data analysis process was to present an

illustration of the phenomenon experienced by the principals participating in the study. The

final results were integrated into an in-depth, exhaustive description of the phenomenon.

<center>**Research Validity and Reliability**</center>

Methodological rigor was attained through the application of verification, validation,

and validity (Meadow & Morse, 2001). Anderson and Spencer (2002) explained that

verification was the first step in achieving validity of a research project. Validity was

achieved through the literature searches, adhering to the phenomenological method,

bracketing past experiences, keeping field notes, using an adequate sample size, and

obtaining a saturation of data (Anderson & Spencer, 2002; Creswell, 2007; Frankel, 1999;

Meadows & Morse, 2001). Validation of the data was achieved through the use of multiple

methods of data collection including individual interviews and a focus group interview, data

analysis and coding. Thick description of the participants and thoroughly detailed field notes

and transcriptions of the interviews and focus group were reviewed carefully and reported

out in the data analysis. Reliability was addressed by obtaining detailed field notes through

the utilization of two quality recording devices for the transcriptions. Two audio and video

recorders were operated as a means of ensuring the preservation of the dialogue during the

interview if one of the recorders developed mechanical difficulties during the actual

interview session. Using the data, the researcher focused on coding the information to

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determine what codes were most appropriate, using consistencies when coding and determining themes. Another way to ensure research reliability in addition to validity was to clarify the biases of the researcher from the outset of the study. This was an important step in the research, so the reader understood the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that may impact the analysis.

Therefore, through this study I ensured I followed the standards suggested by Creswell (2007) including:

- convey an understanding of the philosophical perceptions of phenomenology,

- communicate the phenomenon studied,

- use procedures of data analysis in phenomenology such as the procedures recommended by Moustakas (1994),

- convey the overall essence of the experience of the participants, including a description of the experience and the context in which it occurred, and

- be reflexive throughout the study.

Safeguards against Researcher Bias

In this study I had both personal and professional interests. As an elementary school principal I have adopted the goal of trying to balance the energy, stress, responsibilities, and obligations in my life in order to maintain and do my best in all areas of my life. During my sixteen years as an educator, I have observed my colleagues experience poor health, divorce, and burnout in their lives because of "burning the candle at both ends" by overexerting

themselves in their jobs. I became personally concerned about this issue when I was faced

with the challenges of fulfilling my responsibilities as a principal while spending quality time

with my family. I have been interested in this study particularly since I began working on my

doctoral degree. I first read the book *The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy Not

Time* (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Balance is what I continue to seek in my life.

Given the purpose of my study, I continue seeking information about how different

women elementary school principals live their lives with or without achieving balance. A

phenomenological research study focuses on acquiring information that should add to the

body of knowledge in such a manner as to benefit principals. I believe it is of paramount

importance to make a concerted effort to attempt to achieve balance in our lives as this

research supported.

As Ladkin (2005) mentions about action research, a key tenet of the

phenomenological movement was to position the basis for truth within the life-world, the

everyday reality of lived experience. For action researchers the claim to the life-world as the

area for discovering truth is particularly relevant. Therefore, my inquiry was initiated with

the aim of improving the everyday situations, relationships, and practices of women

elementary school principals especially those who are mothers.

In order to safeguard against researcher bias I utilized bracketing as a strategy, had an

expert reviewer, and was reflexive about the study. With qualitative research the "researcher

attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside,' through a

process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding, and of suspending or

'bracketing' preconceptions about the topics under discussion" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.

6). I believe I was successful in setting aside, or bracketing, my perspective and views of the phenomenon and focusd on the responses of the participants. Similar to Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (1998), Laverty (2003) believes when a decision is made to engage in research of a particular experience from a phenomenological perspective, the researcher must begin a process of self-reflection. The purpose of this reflection is to become aware of one's biases and assumptions in order to bracket them, or set them aside, in order to engage the experience without preconceived notions about what will be found in the investigation. This awareness is seen as a protection from imposing the assumptions or biases of the researcher on the study (Carolan, 2008; Creswell, 1998; Laverty, 2003). Through a subjectivity statement, I expressed my views up front. I suspended my views when conducting the research.

Another way I protected against bias was to have an expert review my work. My study was monitored by my dissertation chair, Dr. Lance Fusarelli. He continued to read, edit, and discuss my study with me since I am a novice researcher. His expertise and additional advice from the proposal committee served as a method against partiality in the final results of this study. In addition, an editor assisted me with the revisions of the content and conventions of this dissertation.

Another safeguard against researcher bias was reflexivity. Qualitative research today acknowledges the impact of the writing on the researcher, on the participants, and on the reader (Creswell, 2007). As Moustakas (1994) suggested, I wrote a subjectivity statement to clarify my inspiration in terms of the value of the knowledge and future directions to my

personal and professional life. Through using reflexivity as a safeguard, I was conscious of

the biases, values, and experiences I brought to the study.

Ethical Issues

Informed consent was obtained from each participant in this phenomenological study.

North Carolina State University and the public school system requires researchers to obtain

consent from all participants to protect them. All guidelines were followed according to the

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. Because

participation in the study was voluntary, principals were able to terminate the interview or

decline to participate at any time. All tape and video recordings will be erased at the

conclusion of the study.

In addition, I did not discuss anything that was told to me in private by one

participant with another. I used pseudonyms for the participants' names and described the

area of the school system instead of providing a name in order that a reader may not know

where and from whom I collected data. Data collected was stored in a secure location and

kept strictly confidential.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to any research study that must be identified and discussed as a

background for the analysis of findings and their meanings. Therefore, the limitations need to

be explored. One significant limitation to the study was that only principals were interviewed

for the research. The perceptions of other school administrators, teachers, students, spouses,

and community members were not explored. Therefore, the data may be biased toward the

views of the participating principals. It was difficult to determine how accurate or valid the information was that the principals provided.

Limiting the geographic scope to just women elementary school principals in one school system was a constraint as well. I chose the research site because of the high number of women elementary school principals. Seventy-one possible participants provided an adequate potential subject base and ease of accessibility to these principals through professional and personal networks.

Women principals in public schools were the only subjects studied. No male principals at the elementary level or in nonpublic schools were invited to participate in the study. These characteristics and gender differences were not be considered and compared during the research.

For this study, I made an extra effort to remain unbiased to ensure my role as an interviewer remained valid. I did not discuss this topic with any of the participants prior to the interviews. The interviews were conducted in familiar surroundings to the principals to provide honest responses and to offer a natural, unobtrusive, and non-threatening setting for the participants. Recording devices were used to minimize bias when collecting interview data. Bracketing was used to set aside any biases in order to pay close attention to my role as an interviewer.

Chapter Summary

Chapter three included information about the qualitative research methodology which was a phenomenological approach and the process used to gather and analyze data. In-depth interviews and a focus group were the methods of data collection used to explore the research

question. This chapter provided details on the procedures used to conduct the study, data collection, data management, subjectivity statement, and data analysis. In addition, reliability and validity, safeguards against the researcher's biases, ethical concerns, and limitations associated with the study design were addressed. In chapter four the findings of the study are presented beginning with a description of the phenomenon followed by an account of each participant's experience. The last chapter compares the study's findings to the existing research and offers recommendations for future research, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction to the Analysis of Data

The background information about this study begins chapter four. The background

section is followed by the researcher's perceptions of the phenomenon since the qualitative

tradition of phenomenology was used to conduct this study. Next, a description of the

demographics of the participants' experiences follows. The chapter concludes with an overall

description of the meaning and essence of how fifteen female elementary school principals

try to maintain balance in life between work and home.

Background

The major purpose of this study was to determine if there is a balance in the lives of

women elementary school principals who are mothers. If so, how it is maintained and what

strategies are used to maintain a balance of professional and personal responsibilities in their

lives? The interviews of fifteen women (five individual interviews plus one focus group of

ten) provided the data for this study. Interviews were scheduled and conducted by the

researcher with the female principals who indicated they would participate in the interview

process. Then the interviews were transcribed and a thematic analysis was conducted. In

keeping with the standard procedures for reporting data collected in qualitative research,

selected quotes from the five individual interviews and one focus group interview were used

to illustrate participants' perceptions and feelings. The principals interviewed individually

did not participate in the focus group interview. Several distinct themes emerged from the

interviews. There were commonalities among the participants based on their experiences and

the information they shared during the interviews. To present the findings of these interviews, the following themes emerged and will be described in detail: (a) impact of children on career progression; (b) feelings about balance in life; (c) maintaining a balance; (d) strategies for balance; (e) tradeoffs or regrets; and (f) being balanced and unbalanced.

Researcher's Perceptions

From my own experiences as a woman principal of an elementary school, who is also a mother, recognizing a balance between professional and personal responsibilities was necessary and helped me adjust to the role. The participants in the interviews inspired me and influenced me to realize how I share some of the same concerns and challenges as an elementary school principal attempting to maintain balance between my professional life and responsibilities at home as a wife and mother. I continue to seek out strategies to use when attempting to maintain balance and to sustain my energy. Maintaining balance between my personal and professional life is a daily struggle given the increasing demands of the job and my responsibilities as a new mother.

Demographics of Participants

The demographics of these women showed numerous commonalities. All participants in this study were females who work as elementary school principals and have children. As a group, the participants varied in race, age, years of experience in education, ages of their children, and when they had their children. All of them had been teachers and all but one had been an assistant principal prior to becoming principals, and are currently elementary school principals in schools of varying sizes. However, it is the context in which these women have lived that shaped their individual choices and circumstances. To honor their individualism,

various experiences, and different perspectives, the findings are saturated with quotations from the participants.

Individual Interview Participants

The women selected to be interviewed, as outlined in chapter three, were chosen based on the role as an elementary school principal and a mother of children at the age of eighteen or younger. The following information describes their individual demographic characteristics including total years of experience working in education, years working as an elementary school principal, their prior administrative experience before becoming a principal, number of children, ages of children, and when they had children in their career. The fifteen female principals selected were representatives from large and small schools in the same school system. All of the participants hold a master of education degree in educational administration, two were African American, one was Native American, and the other thirteen were Caucasian. All of them with the exception of one participant had served as assistant principals during their careers in education. All of the women were currently married except for two. They were divorced and had not remarried.

Table 4.1

Demographics of Individual and Focus Group Principals Interviewed

Prin	Total Yrs of Ed Experience	Years as Elementary Principal	Prior Exp before Principal (Prin)	Number of Children	Ages of Children	Year in Career Having Children
1	13	3	Assistant Principal (AP)	2	4, 10 months	3rd - AP & 1st - Prin
2	18	5	AP and Team Leader	3	11, 13, 16	5th - tchg, 1st - AP, 2nd - AP
3	15	9	AP	1	5	6th - Prin
4	21	5	AP	1	10	3rd – AP
5	17	11	AP	2	15, 21	1st & 3rd - tchg
6	26	8	None	2	18, 22	5th & 8th - tchg
7	18	10	AP	1	7	2nd - AP
8	17	7	AP	2	11, 15	2nd & 5th - tchg
9	22	5	AP	2	15, 18	4th & 7th - tchg
10	20	1	AP	2	11, 13	1st & 3rd - AP
11	24	4	AP	1	10	1st - AP

Table 4.1 (continued).

Part icipa nt	Total Yrs of Ed Experience	Years as Elementary Principal	Prior Exp before Principal (Prin)	Number of Children	Ages of Children	Year in Career Having Children
12	21	3	AP	2	16, 18	4th tchg, 1 - not in education
13	23	9	AP	4	15, 18, 20, 22	5th, 7th, & 9th - tchg
14	9	1	AP, HR Admin	2	2, 5	3rd - AP, 1st - HR
15	11	1	AP	2	10, 13	4th & 6th - tchg

In terms of years of experience working in education, the principals ranged from having nine to twenty-six years experience. There were three principals who were in their first year in the role, while the one with the most experience had been a principal for eleven years. As shown in Table 4.1, the first five principals participated in the individual interviews and principals six through fifteen participated in the focus group interview.

Children Impacting Career Progression

All of the principals agreed children did not have an impact on their career progression. One principal in the focus group stated, "I really don't think that I've seen any affect on it. Well, I don't feel like it has stopped the progression. It has given me a lot less time to put into my work because of the demands of having a family at home. But I really can't say that I've seen any decrease in the progression with the things that I've tried to

accomplish" (Principal 1). Principal 2 indicated her progression and goals would have been the same by saying:

> I think setting goals before I had children really helped me to stay focused on the path that I wanted to go. My first child was born was when I was completing my administration degree and even though your focuses have to be divided I think because I had some goals beforehand that I really stayed on track with where I wanted to go. And as you have more responsibility with your family, it makes you want to be kind of be a model for your kids and to move forward and to show them that you can still have your goals, you can still have your family and hope that everything still kind of stays in line and you really can be that model for them. And I think especially having a girl you want them to, you want the girl to see that she can have a career, have a family, and really stay focused on what her goals are.

Principal 3 did not think her career progression was impacted in any negative way by having children. She stated, "I felt like my principal position and kind of a good spot to have children. At this point I don't desire to move any higher like in a superintendent position or anything like that so I don't think it's hindered my career progression at all." Principal 5 concurred, "It has not impacted my career progression in a negative way that I've been able to tell." Principal 1 elaborated during the conclusion of the interview that she thinks:

Usually in the past, any woman that was a principal was probably old enough where their kids were in college or grown. They didn't have to worry about that and now, I guess it's really a new age with a lot of younger people. And I mean, the door is opening more for women to do that maybe but I think that, you know, the counties need to look at ways that they can support that because I don't want them to lose a lot of great people because they are afraid of dealing with maternity leave. But I think with the county they have a little bit more flexibility because they have the ability to pull someone in there and I think that, you know, in addition to that they really need to look at for teachers too, trying to give us some support with giving us quality people we could put in, not just a six week sub when the teacher is out. I think that that shows that they value women, you know, creating a family and it's going in the future supply students for our schools.

The timing of when she had children was a way the career progression of Principal 4 was impacted. She explained:

His birth occurred. He was born in my fifth year as an assistant principal and I think being born at that time had allowed me to go and finish graduate school and move into administration and I don't feel like it interrupted my career progression but it certainly warranted some refocusing of what I was going to do from that point on and how I looked at it.

During the focus group interview, Principal 12 pointed out the age of her children made a difference. She stated, "My children were in high school when I became an elementary school administrator. They were pretty much self sufficient. It doesn't matter if I was home or not." Principal 8 agreed by saying, "I cannot say my children affected my progression of me being an administrator. Um, I feel like I whether I had children or not, I would have stayed on the same timeframe as far as that is concerned." Principal 15 agreed with the others regarding career progression, but from a different perspective; she explained, "I have to agree. My children did not hinder my movement to become a principal. However, when I began my Masters of School Administration program, I was pregnant with my second child. And once my second child was born, I had to pull back from taking my graduate courses. I waited a couple of more years before I could take them and finish my degree. For schooling, they (having children) complicated things a little." During the follow up interview with Principal 3 she thought for her personally, "Having a child grounded me more in that I have a more realistic picture of what I can do with the job. But I'm also not as good as a principal as I was before I had a child and I'm okay with that."

Feelings about Balance between Work and Home

Each participant expressed different feelings about whether they had a balance in their lives, while at the same time detailing that the position of principal precludes balance between one's personal and professional lives. As stated in the literature review there is an abundance of documentation regarding the demands of the current day principal, how overwhelming the job is, and the considerable personal toll it takes on a person.

Principal 4 added more thoughts about an analogy comparing balance in her life to a tank of gas. She explained that she feels like:

The fuel that keeps me going in this job is the health, my health and well being and the health and well being of my family. And then also the opportunities that we have to relax and enjoy each other and enjoy our friends, participate in church, sporting events, community events, those type of things. So, I have to balance the intake of fuel that I get from my family and friends and from my personal life with the output of fuel that this job takes. And most days I leave feeling like I've met the balance, that I've not had to output more than I've taken in. Some days, though, the emotional drain of this job puts a strain of the challenging times that we're in. It seems like it may take more than others so those are days when I feel like I need to get a little extra in my tank and I'll joke about that and say, oh, I'm going to have to make up some time, some mommy time, or some me time, or some time at home because I always feel like that allows me to recharge, refuel.

Some of the women reported that they did or did not feel they had achieved a balance depending on the time in their career and what other responsibilities competed with their time. However, they all agreed they entered and remained in the position despite the unreasonable time demands which accompany the position. Principal 5 provided an example regarding the demands of an administrative position and the demands on being a mother by explaining, "As your children enter into school and they begin to do school work or

extracurricular activity, and you have as an administrator a PTA meeting to go to, a late night

meeting, or conference with a parent, sometimes you have to prioritize where you should be

at and often times the career wins the battle." After working at the elementary, middle, and

high school levels, Principal 4 shared her experience as an elementary school principal:

> is the most flexible and allows for more opportunities for me to participate in his
>
> education, whether it's running over to his school to attend a mid-day meeting or
>
> going to events. His sporting events are after school instead of night so that means
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> that sometimes I leave here in the afternoon a little earlier than I would normally in
>
> order to be able to attend his games and other events that he participates in or out of
>
> school.

Two of the principals described how their families would have breakfast or dinner

together every day to ensure quality time with their children and spouse. All of the

participants illustrated ways they set aside specific times with their children for eating meals

together, completing homework, playing games, attending events together, and usually these

occurred in the evenings, or on Saturday or Sunday. Principal 12 further explained:

> I will devote "x" amount of time to them about 1.5 hours at night. I wait until 9:00 at
>
> night to do stuff for school that I may need to have for the next day. And it has always
>
> been Friday night and all day Saturday is family time. School does not impact my life
>
> during those hours. Um, the couple of exceptions may be if we have Spring Carnival

or something like that, but then my kids want to come volunteer at that. But I would always carve out time that this was family time and nothing else would interfere.

Principal 13 piggybacked on this comment about family time by adding:

> I made sure that I found time, um, generally, Sunday was family time. I do admit to having to burn the candle at both ends and keep some late nights. I saw 2:00 AM roll around a lot especially when I was in graduate school, working on papers and whatnot, but I had to especially when I became a principal, I had to spend some time in the evenings, but I tried to wait until after they went to bed. You had to find time and find your balance whatever that was and whatever worked for your family.

Then, Principal 10 stated:

> I concur. I think that it is a matter of priorities. You have to establish those priorities. And for me, I had to establish those up front. I think that family comes first and then my job. I want to do a good job, so I get up early and make the extra effort while I am at work to make it full scale work. Then, when I am at home, I am at home. I try not to mix those two up, so it is just a matter of being very organized, and making sure you are able to accomplish what you need to accomplish in the time you have to do that.

Principal 11 shared how her situation was a little different as a single parent. She stated:

My child comes to school with me though, so I think it goes back to what you said you have to find that balance. The balance for me, since it is just the two of us, I can devote my entire time to him, and with him being at the same school. He rides to and from school with me and that is quality time for us. So my balance is a little bit different. So I think it is a constant juggling act that we do on a daily basis depending on our schedule.

Principal 6 explained how she uses her time effectively at work during the school day:

so that I have a minimum amount of work I have to take home. I come in early. I told my family I would separate work and home. So I find myself doing school work, if I have to do it at home, late after they have gone to bed. Or I will go into work really early on Saturday morning. They usually sleep so late on Saturdays, so I would go in and be back by the time they got up and did not feel guilty.

However, principal 7 talked about how she was still trying to find balance in her life. She has a very supportive spouse who helps with their one child which she says, "has been wonderful, but still, I do find myself sometimes feeling guilty because I am at work late or

longer hours, late buses or whatever, and my spouse drops him off and picks him up. And sometimes I do feel like I am missing out on some things."

Maintaining a Balance between Work and Home

The principals' schedules were a bit different depending on how many children, their ages, and if they had a spouse to help them. Principal 8 stated:

I am not a single parent, but I often feel like one because my husband travels ninety-nine percent of the time. So balancing that schedule, I have to say I probably would be living at school and having much longer hours if I didn't have children. It forces me not to. They have after school activities and play practice, dance, and so on, so they have these, and I have to leave to get them there and my husband is out of town all the time. The schedule is interesting. It is definitely a balancing act and it is definitely an organizational balancing act. You know, from the minute you wake up in the morning, and how they are getting to school and getting yourself to school, and after school. Sometimes we leave the house at 6:30 am and do not get back home until 9:30 pm or 10:00 pm often.

Most of the other principals described how their days began around 7-7:30 am at work and ended around 5 pm each day. Daycare and extracurricular events were the main reasons for needing to leave work around 5 pm. However, several principals described how they would check email, read report cards, or do other work after their children went to bed. Principal 3 stated, "On the weekends usually it's mostly about family time, but there are

times that I'll go off and check e-mail or do paper work. I've gotten much better about not coming to school so much on the weekend, so I might bring a few tasks home to work on, but usually wait until the children are in the bed." Other school events such as PTA meetings, students' performances, or curriculum nights occurred sporadically during the school year. The school start and ending times were helpful when scheduling to provide more time before school or after school without worrying about their own children.

Only three of the principals expressed how helpful their husbands were by taking the children to daycare or driving carpool to activities after school, cooking breakfast or dinner, cleaning the house, and attending their activities. However, one had a contradictory situation and explained:

It's definitely a challenge. I think that one of the things about being a woman and having my husband work from at home is that in his eyes, women are the providers. I mean, he is a wonderful husband who helps a lot at home with the kids, but he still kind of sees it as the primary role for women to be the care taker. He works for a large corporation, so he is able to work from home. And a lot of times when the kids are sick, and he does do it, but I have to hear a lot of grumbling. He's like, 'You're the one, you know, when the kids are sick, whenever they need something they're calling mommy, they're not calling daddy. They want you.' And so he kind of feels that I should be the one that is, you know, at home with them, making sure they're okay when they're sick. And I try to do what I can, but because he has the flexibility of working from home, he kind of get stuck with them a lot more.

Principal 11 said she did not want to speak for everyone, but she thought, "We try to maintain a balance. It is in the forefront in my mind, that this is something I need to do, but things that happen at work sometimes gets in the way."

When attempting to maintain a balance a couple of the principals described how scheduling time for responsibilities at home and work drives the balance for them. For example, Principal 2 works in a year-round school. She elucidated:

There are times when you are just really busy. You need to stop and then step away. That's really hard for me to do because it's hard for me to put it down on weekends and I really try to work less weekends. But sometimes the balance comes from working on weekends to be able to leave during the week so that's kind of another way that I balance. If I work all day on Sunday I can completely get caught up on e-mail. I can get caught up on writing the (classroom) observations which means that I'm going to be able to leave on the Wednesday that my child has something at their school. The other thing that we've done in school is that a lot of us have joined a gym, so we've been trying to motivate each other to get away and go to the gym which is something I haven't done in years and years and years. But it is definitely, you know, really setting aside what it is that I need to do for everything. For my kids' school, for exercise, for pleasure really has to be scheduled or otherwise it just is not going to happen. I could be here 24 hours a day.

Similar to Principal 2 advocating for the staff members to join a gym and improve their health, Principal 4 promotes to her teachers and staff:

Family comes first and if they need to attend to something for their children or their family that I fully expect that they will do that. And likewise, if I have the opportunity or if a situation comes up that I need to tend to something I do that as well because it's one thing to say it's important and another thing to really act that way. So, they do know. They know that I will leave and go to a football game or to a baseball game and they know that they can, too. Not that I advertise it, but I don't mind mentioning I wasn't able to attend that meeting because I was with my son at a game or an orthodontist appointment or something. I think it's important for them to know that it's that important to me.

After more years of experience in the position than the other participants, Principal 5 has finally learned the lesson of putting family first. She said, "After 11 years of being an administrator I will have to honestly say it's taken me this past year to realize it. Just as I tell teachers, family comes first. It's taken me 11 years to learn that lesson."

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Strategies for Seeking Balance

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All of the principals explained how they try to maintain a balance. However, it is a challenge. Principal 9 stated, "It is in the forefront in my mind, that this is something I need to do, but things that happen at work sometimes gets in the way." Principal 8 clarified:

It has to do with setting priorities. I think I have found in the principalship that there is like there is with anything, there are peaks and valleys. Sometimes I need to be at work twenty hours a day and then there is a week or two that are calmer. So, at least that is one benefit. Sometimes you can plan accordingly. When it is most frustrating is when that bus has that accident, and I guess I really shouldn't say it, but when that bus has that accident and it is easy to be out at 4:30 pm, but you have to be there for the accident. There are things that we cannot control as the principal that you need to be responsible for and that is the part that I particularly struggle with as a parent. When you make a commitment, or I make a commitment to my child, and I cannot follow through because of something that happens that is out of my control that I am responsible for.

Experience tends to be a helpful strategy to maintain a balance. Principal 5 emphasized having priorities. She said:

To maintain a balance between home life and career I think that comes with years of experience as an administrator. I think you have to realize what your true priorities are at some point in time in your life, where should they be. And so I think to that it would be what to define what my priorities are as a mother and what are my priorities as an administrator? I think you have to really realize that the first should always be the family, but that's a very hard lesson to learn and often times for people like me who are very career centered it takes years to learn that lesson.

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Strategies to maintain a balance by Principal 10 included:

> Just making sure you mark out time with your family, and make sure you vacation
> with your family and not just get overloaded and just can't get there. There is never a
> good time especially if you are working in a year round school, but you just have to
> make sure that you take it. It will all be there when you get back. Somebody else will
> take care of it. You have to model that for your staff as well.

Principal 2 relies on the help from others as a strategy for balance. She explained how the assistant principal at her school:

> has been really good in helping to organize and help to balance. Her background is
> counseling so she really as she calls it; you have to set boundaries. So, you've got to -
> - you cannot say, 'Yes' to everything. You can't be everything. You're not always
> able to help everybody that walks through the door and that's kind of my personality.
> I kind of drop everything regardless of what I need to, and so I think that setting those
> boundaries has really helped me. I would tend to stay and make sure that was done
> even though it wasn't totally a life or death situation. It's feeling like I had to meet
> everybody's needs right then and there. It couldn't wait for tomorrow. I think
> probably setting boundaries has been the most important thing for me in setting the
> priorities of what's really got to happen that day, what's really important, and really

thinking about in the long term of what's going to make an impact in your kid's life and in your school life and in your personal life. Really keeping all of those goals and thoughts in mind is really hard for me because I kind of see everything like right now.

It was important for Principal 2 to mention, "You have to model to your staff taking time for your family as well." Principal 3 uses the strategy of "just say, 'No' as her philosophy." She uses the help of staff as well as her extended family members who live in town. She thought the strategy of:

having the family there to be supportive (is helpful). Otherwise, just really trying to restrict myself and say I'm not going to spend a full weekend checking e-mail even though I know I could. Really just saying, "No" to things helps especially to things that I don't have to do, and actually on my personal end, too. If there's something that I'm invited to do personally for a social event, and I don't want to do it, I've gotten better at saying, "No." I just don't want to do it because again that's more time away from my daughter.

Principals 10 and 12 stressed the importance of taking care of yourself. Principal 10 said about taking care of yourself:

You have to be the kind of mom you want to be because you do not get those years back, and you just have to keep telling yourself that. So I have to say that if it is time

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when leaving early every once in awhile, making a special date with your kids, just

getting out of there, and it just feels so good when you do that to be there for them.

And it pumps you up for a few more weeks.

Principal 12 strongly stated, "Take care of yourself, take care of yourself, and you

have to take care of yourself."

Principal 15 went along with this thinking by adding:

You just constantly thinking about OK, you have spent all of these hours at work,

when you get home, you just, even though you could be checking email, you just sit

down and have dinner or if the kids want to play a game, you just make yourself. You

know that and you just have got to be there for them, but you know, it is so easy to

get sucked back into work mode, and you just have to constantly say to yourself, you

know, what is more important?

Principal 4 described how phases in our lives and our children's lives make a

differences in the strategies she has used. She explained:

I think you have to know what you can personally tolerate, how much, what kind of

schedule you can manage and that it changes. I think, as we get older, as our children

go through different phases of life, it changes. When my son was sleeping a lot more

it was a lot easier for me to spend more time writing out evaluations and going out to

night events because he was asleep and he didn't know I was leaving. But once he became older it was harder for me to leave, not only because of the maternal tug, but also because he wouldn't want me to leave or he would want to go with me. So, different phases of life have required different approaches for me and fortunately I've been in situations where I could, I can, manage my schedule and that's what I really feel like I do. I don't overbook myself. You know, when I was in graduate school I did not. I was not involved in church and other events because I knew I couldn't give 100 percent. I wish I didn't have to make those kinds of choices but I'm glad that I did because I've been able to do a better quality job of the things that I've been involved in instead of doing mediocre jobs at many things. And the quality is very important. I make those decisions, very conscious decisions, not to extend myself or to put some other things in place so that I'm not spending time doing things that somebody else could do more efficiently or that somebody is capable of doing. I guess an example of that would be having someone clean my house. I finally decided that is something that somebody else could do for a minimum amount of money and it gave me back, you know, 20 or 30 hours a month. So, it's well worth the investment and I'm spending that time either with family or reading or working on graduate studies and that has allowed me to not only feel better about what I'm doing but also just managing more efficiently which in turn makes me feel good about the way I'm spending my time. So, that's my best example.

Again, setting priorities, making schedules, coordinating calendars, and taking time for yourself and your family seemed to be the recurrent themes during the interviews as the greatest strategies for seeking a balance. Planning ahead, modeling for staff members, and communicating values were other helpful strategies and tools pointed out by the participants.

Organization is something Principal 1 said she was working on. She thinks it is very important. Before having children, she prided herself in being really organized. Actually, she found out she was pregnant six weeks after becoming a principal for the first time. She explained how the amount of paperwork, responding to people, and being pulled in 100 different directions requires her to be organized. She said:

I think that you've got to just stay organized. I think that's the most important thing is just having a system and I'm really working hard trying to pull that back together right now because, again, before I had kids people would say, 'Oh, you're so organized. Everything is in its place.' Now, it's not like that. I'm still struggling with that one.

Tradeoffs in Work or Home

There were about the same number of tradeoffs at work and home as described by the participants during the interviews. Principal 9 explained, "You make sacrifices. You sometimes get up at 4 am and get those year-end evaluations done, or you stay up later, or some of us do. You just plan ahead, prioritize, organize, and work really hard. Those are what sacrifices are." Principal 13 described this as "burning the candle at both ends."

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All of the principals except Principal 13 maintained they were comfortable with the choice of becoming a principal while juggling motherhood. She described how she sacrificed her marriage; however, she was very adamant the children had not been sacrificed through her choices. She explained,

I have 4 children, and they are all doing extremely well. When I said I was burning the candle at both ends, I was staying up until 2 am and working on papers and work which I really, really enjoyed. But, I traded my marriage. I think that in that my team partner and I lost sight of who we were and getting back into education mode and growing myself, we grew apart, but I guess I did not realize that for a very long time, but I guess ironically our children have done extremely well. I think as a female it is extremely important for me at this point and time for me to serve as a role model. I think that I continue to forge ahead and show that to especially my girls that women can do it and survive and especially how important their education is.

Although Principal 9 was not quite in the same situation, she could relate by saying, "I can see how that can happen. I spend so much time and energy being a good principal, and a good mom, that sometimes my husband gets left out. There just doesn't seem to be enough to go around. It is important, I guess, to keep that in mind as well." Principal 15 chimed in by saying:

I have to agree. I have given my husband a lot more responsibility. He has to find out where the children are in the afternoons, you know, lining up the carpool, and whatnot. If I am not there for dinner, he starts the cooking and whatnot. He has really been a big part of this, so when I took the role as principal, he had to step up and help out. He had no choice, and thankfully, he has been willing to put forth the effort. You have to have that.

Principal 14, whose husband is a principal of another school, described them as, "We are ships passing in the night. One of us will fall asleep with the older child on a regular basis while the other one is up checking email. I mean, we do not see a whole lot of each other." She admitted laughingly, "My children sometimes cause me stress. I have a 5 year old and a 2 year old. They are not terrible, but they are learning to be siblings. I feel like I need to be there to teach them how to be siblings and how to be a family. Not that my husband can't do it, but it takes both of us."

This downside was not talked about much, but some schedules were altered so the women could spend time with their spouses, with their children, as a family, or alone as a couple. Being considerate to meeting one another's needs was important and discussed among the participants of the focus group. However, it took a conscious effort for the women to consider and pay attention to their husbands with everything else going on in their lives.

Sadly enough, Principal 5 described how she had sacrificed times with her children by beginning:

I have had a gazillion sacrifices that I at this age will regret for the rest of my life. And just to name a few I can you give some examples of when my daughter first started kindergarten I was not present at her first day of kindergarten. When she graduated from kindergarten, I was not present at her kindergarten graduation. I was involved in school activities on both of those occasions. My daughter had an opportunity to go to Europe for the summer and I was not able to go with my family to Europe due to end-of-grade testing. And those are just a few of the big ones and I could name many, many, many, many over the last years. Actually, over the last I would say nine years, it's taken me about two years to realize family should always come first. Unfortunately my children have sacrificed.

Principal 8 explained that, "You miss some things in your kid's life. Whether it is just visiting your child's middle school, going to a soccer game, or whatever, you just miss different things because of the responsibilities that fall under administration."

A couple of the principals in the study commented that they had to consider if their career goals would be hindered by having children. These two principals were told if they declined a principalship when they were offered a position they may not be provided another opportunity in the future. Principal 10 explained this situation:

A few years ago, when they were really needy for principals, years back, I got a couple of calls about taking a new school, and was actually told, if I did not then, this stays in this room, right? It was told that it could affect future opportunities. That was

a sacrifice that I was willing to make at that time. My family talked about it and that was not a sacrifice I was willing to make at that time. I just couldn't feel good about taking a school that needed to spend time with my family at that time. So, knowing that, that I may never be a principal, which was, you know, wow, it was OK. It worked out fine and did not actually come to fruition. That was a big decision that we had to make at that time.

Principal 11 piggybacked on what Principal 10 described by stating:

I can remember years ago, when they first started to create the pool of APs (Assistant Principals) who were the candidates to fill the principal positions, it was years ago. I can remember being called there, and it was not a priority for me to be a principal at that time because of how young my son was. I sat at the table and said the same thing. 'I appreciated the interview, but it was not a priority for me at the time in my life.' And um, I wondered the same thing. You know, you have to figure out what is the most important to you at that particular time in your life.

Most Balanced or Unbalanced between Work and Home

A couple of principals described when their lives were most balanced as times when their children could help with chores at home including cleaning, cooking, and laundry. Being able to drive themselves or siblings helped with scheduling. These were tremendous ways the children could help as they got older and became more responsible. Principal 6 shared more about this topic by explaining:

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I truly believe it is quality of time and not quantity of time you spend with your

children. I think it is that talking and communicating. Let your children know things

you are doing, and hopefully, you are serving as a role model because, you know, I

can see so much of myself in my two girls now, and the way they interact with people

and their aspirations, and what they think they want in life for them. I think it is

something that has to be purposeful. You can't just think, you know, that it is just

going to happen.

Principal 13 concurred with Principal 6 saying, "I don't think my life has ever been

out of balance, again I have 4 children. They were my inspiration and are still to this day. I

love what I do, and so not only that I could be a good role model for them but for other

young parents, for older parents, for teachers who are parents, because I think that that I have

always had the philosophy where there is a will there is a way. There is always a way to

make it work." During the focus group interview, Principal 10 emphasized values:

It is important in how your kids perceive your values, and that they perceive that they

are first, regardless of whether you are working or staying at home. If they perceive

that they are first, it doesn't matter about the other stuff. It will bubble up and it won't

make a difference, but they have to understand and know that you love them. It is like

you (to Principal 11) were saying, 'You are the reason I do what I do.' I think they

need to see that and hear it, and all of the rest of it will work out.

Principal 9 stated:

> I concur with what everyone else has said. I will go back to what Covey said about
> your big and little rocks. You have to know what your big rocks are and let those be
> your priorities. You know, I think for different females and mothers that I have talked
> to, you know, we beat ourselves up with this guilt. But we can free ourselves from
> this guilt. Our children are not going hungry because we are eating out, but we do the
> same thing. It is OK to have that bowl of soup and a grilled cheese sandwich and eat
> on the living room floor, but you are having that time with family. That is what I have
> found that everything does not have to be perfect all the time. I have had to learn to
> let some of that go. It is not easy, but it is OK to let some of that go. Just try not to be
> as structured, and just, um, enjoy those small moments together.

The five participants in the face-to-face interviews had different views on being balanced or
unbalanced in their lives. Principal 1 described how she managed to:

> do very well with stress which a lot of people don't. I don't let stress bother me.
> Really, I kind of just don't ignore it until right at the last moment and then I feel really
> stressed like the day before, but I'm not one of those people that have sleepless nights
> for many, many days. It's just sometimes, you know like I said, like right now is a
> prime example of a time when I'm really kind of feeling overwhelmed. I've just got

so many things that are going on… my philosophy is tomorrow's going to come

regardless. There's nothing I can do to stop that so I'm just going to keep going with

it and just do what I can. I can only do so much. There's only so many hours and

minutes in a day. I can do what I can and then, you know, when the next day comes

I'll do a little bit more. If that's not enough, it's not enough, but I can say that I tried

to do all that I can and I gave it all.

Taking on new roles or responsibilities seemed to throw off the participants' balance.

Principal 2 compared becoming a new principal, when she was most unbalanced, to:

your first year when you have a baby everything seems like a blur. Like, I think back.

I don't know that I can remember very much of the first year of my first child's life or

my first year of being a principal. I think you make those same phone calls of

desperation to your friends and to your family at the same time. You know, it's very

similar in how I remember that first year. That was probably the most imbalanced

time because, you know, you really didn't - that first year as principal was just so

many things. I tell people who want to be principal you can't even imagine what that

first year is like. It's totally unbelievable.

A couple of unknowing principals had family members bring it to their attention just how out

of balance their lives were. Principal 3 was provided someone to come in to clean her house

every other week to help balance her responsibilities between work and home. This

additional time was a gift to spend with her family during the evenings and on the weekends in lieu of cleaning her house. Principal 5 had the rude awakening from her daughter when she mentioned to her mother that she had never been there for her. She describes this as:

a reality check that I needed to find balance and I truly believe that women can be just as effective as males in their career even with the responsibilities we carry as women. It's how we find that balance and what we do to make that balance happen, going back to the calendar making sure that if we have a calendar that's proactive and that we list the things that we know that's going to be happening in our family's life, then we build our night activities as much as we can around that.

Following all of the one-on-one interviews, I conducted four follow-up interviews with the individual participant interviews. One principal did not have any additional thoughts or comments regarding the interview topic. However, the other four principals were eager to follow-up and convey their thinking after they had time to reflect on the questions that were asked and how they responded. This was the purpose of the follow-up interviews. I wanted to determine if the principals had additional ideas to share after they had the time to consider if they attempted to maintain a balance in their lives and what strategies they employed, if any.

There were several additional insights I gained from conducting the follow-up interviews. The first principal I interviewed had much to share during our initial interview. However, when I contacted her to inquire about any additional information, comments, thoughts, or reflections based on our previous interview about balance in her life, she did not

have anything to add. Conversely, Principal 2 reflected on the interview and emphasized, "Keeping the balance between work and family is certainly one challenging aspect of being a principal. Of course, you want to be the best mom, wife, and principal and finding the 'just right' formula for that to happen is sometimes difficult." She believes her focus on specific goals, having a vision, and setting priorities has given her the drive to make it work. Principal 3 repeated herself by saying, "there cannot be a good balance because the job demands much more than any one person can give." As Principal 5 reflected on the initial interview, she had some conversations with other colleagues in another school system who are also principals and mothers. She stated:

As I reflected, I went through the years of experience going from a beginning administrator to a more tenured administrator to an extremely tenured administrator. Looking back things were very different at each of those stages. So, I think the outcome of the responses are very different and would be very different from respondent to respondent being based on those factors.

Principal 3 agreed with the other participants about the challenge of balance in our lives. She stressed there cannot be a good balance because the demands of the principalship are much more than one person can do. She felt that having a child grounded her more in that she was able to gain a more realistic picture of her limitations professionally and personally.

Summary of Themes from Data Analysis

Principal 7 reflected on the focus group interview session in a positive way by summarizing her experience stating:

I think this is actually a wonderful study, and I wondered from my colleagues how they are keeping everything in balance and keeping all of the balls in the air. And also knowing that it is a constant challenge for all of us; it is a labor of love and that we are very fortunate that uh, there are other female school principals who are having this challenge of trying to balance. Because years ago, we would not have been here in these rooms as mothers; this is a good problem to have.

Upon reflection and during the follow up interview with Principal 5, she considered differences for principals to be if they have children during the different stages of their career and their ages. She explained by adding:

Again, reflecting back as an administrator at each of the stages, I think for me, and again just speaking on a personal level because I did have young children my first appointment as an administrator. Again, I stand very firmly that to be as successful as I was I did not have a good balance with my family life and my profession. It did come at a cost for me and it was the personal part that paid the price of my profession, in my professional life. But again, as my children got older, and I became more tenured as an administrator and learned to start balancing family and career, I

am much better at balancing. I'm a much better mother at balancing between my career and my personal life.

Principal 1 shared encouraging advice to female principals who wanted to have children stating, "I think it's important for women who want to have kids to know that that is possible, that it's doable, that you can do it." A somewhat different view was shared by Principal 4. She thought:

It's a very interesting subject. It's not something that a lot of people talk about. We don't talk about the balance that is needed. A lot of times principals play the martyr role and portray themselves or portray the position as a super hero and public figures. When in fact, I think that does our profession more harm than good because it impacts people's perceptions of what we're able to do and gives them the impression that we can do everything. It's much like the super mom myth which I definitely believe is a myth and does not support women and motherhood and children because it makes people think that a mom can do her very best as a professional and as a mom at the same time and as a wife and like a citizen or member of a church or whatever other opportunity she's involved in. I think that's detrimental to women in particular because it sets us up for the expectations to be unrealistically high and does not adequately convey how demanding the role of a mother and working mother is. It also implies that unless you're a working mother you can't be super mom.

Principal 3 agreed by stating, "I think the expectations for a principal regardless of whether you're a mother, a female, at the elementary level, it's just too much. To do all the things that you're asked to do is too much, and so then you put in a family in the mix. It does create some issues." During the follow up interview, she added, "I think just to reiterate that there cannot be a good balance because the job demands much more than any one person can give. For me, personally, having a child grounded me more in that I have a more realistic picture of what I can do with the job." Principal 2 summed up the topic well in her follow up interview by stating:

> Keeping the balance between work and family is certainly one challenging aspect of being a principal. Of course, you want to be the best mom, wife, and principal and finding the 'just right' formula for that to happen is sometimes difficult. However, focusing on specific goals has helped to lead me to satisfying results. As noted in Covey's work, our vision shapes our future, and I really think having a vision of what I want to do with my life has given me the drive to make it work. There are many times that I have to prioritize and make decisions on what is most important to enable me to balance family and work. Ultimately, it comes down to what makes an individual happy - serving as a principal and being a mom is my love of life!

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study on the perspectives of balance between the personal and professional lives of female elementary school principals in one school district were presented and analyzed. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews and a focus

group interview to identify and analyze themes from the transcripts of what was said by the principals to further understand the issue of balance between work and home.

Clarification emerged as a result of the themes from the analysis of data. The themes that became apparent were as follows: (a) impact of children on career progression; (b) feelings about balance in life; (c) maintaining a balance; (d) strategies for balance; (e) tradeoffs or regrets; and (f) being balanced and unbalanced.

Through the information gathered and analyzed it was determined that each of the fifteen women experience different levels of balance and imbalance in their lives. They make an attempt to manage this balance by utilizing various strategies including setting priorities, maintaining clear communication with others, creating and monitoring a calendar, and most importantly, spending quality time with their families. The discussion of the findings, implications for research and practice, and lessons learned are presented in the final chapter of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study focused on female elementary school principals' current, self-described level of balance between their personal and professional lives. There was insight gained by examining the role of women principals and how they attempt to maintain equilibrium between their professional and personal roles and responsibilities. This is a complex issue complicated by multiple factors. In this chapter, discussion of the study's findings, implications for practice and research, lessons learned, and conclusions including recommendations are presented.

Balance between work and home is a complex issue complicated by multiple factors. There is only so much a person can control, so they have to take into account what they can and cannot do in a situation to strive for or maintain balance as they define it based on the circumstances at current time and situations which may occur. Various factors which complicate this issue are discussed in the findings.

The findings of the research conducted in this study are similar, yet different, from existing research. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008), "Many education administrators work more than 40 hours a week, including some nights and weekends during which they oversee school activities" (p. 12). The participants interviewed indicated how their work days began between 7-7:30 am and ended between 5-6:30 pm depending on school meetings and events. All of them would carry work home with them to complete in the evenings including checking email, reading report cards, and signing paperwork such as timesheets and leave forms. Additional research which echoes the time principals put into

working is from the NAESP 10-year study (1998) stating that typically principals put in nine-hour days and 54-hour weeks. This was reiterated in the time required by the principals interviewed.

Time was a factor considered in the 1998 study by NAESP. The data indicated that women continue to make up a higher percentage of the teaching workforce and a much smaller percentage of the administrative workforce due to the time requirements. This could support research by Young and McLeod (2001) which states, across the nation, state legislators and administrator organizations have determined that a leadership crisis exists in educational administration. Studies on gender and administration also have documented career differences between male and female administrators (Young & McLeod, 2001). However, the demographics of the principals interviewed demonstrated a transition in the number of women who were younger and having children as principals. Therefore, this study shows a need for additional consideration to manage responsibilities without burnout or resentment. Many professionals work too many hours and "burn the candle at both ends" when they would rather be spending time with family. There are many books, motivational workshops, and other organizational, priority setting, and time management techniques to help a person manage responsibilities.

One resourceful book written by Metzger (2006) is *Balancing Leadership & Personal Growth: The School Administrator's Guide*. This tool is a "how to" handbook for administrators whose self-identity is often only found in their jobs. Metzger, a former superintendent, began research about balance after a close friend lost her job as a superintendent during political turmoil. She expanded her research to study the coping skills

of superintendents, stress management, and spiritual renewal of urban superintendents and college of education deans.

From the principals' perspectives shared during the interviews, the findings affirm many of the findings of existing research. Participants in the interviews acknowledged findings or obtaining balance in their lives was a challenge. Some said they did a better job than others to evaluate when they were spending more time, effort, or energy on work instead of family. This imbalance caused tradeoffs or sacrifices they described had occurred during their lives. Northouse (2004) affirms that women's career advancement in leadership roles has been hampered by organizational, interpersonal, and personal barriers. Once they obtain this administrative role as school principal, the challenge becomes the balance of fulfilling the responsibilities required of both roles.

There was tension discussed and contradictory comments made by the participants in the interviews. All of the principals agreed children did not have an impact on their career progression. No one felt like their career progression had been impeded. However, having children had given them less time to put into their work because of the demands of having a family at home. Setting goals, having a vision, establishing priorities, and seeking help from others were strategies the principals mentioned to balance the workload of being a mother with their jobs.

One principal explained how in the past usually any woman that was a principal was probably old enough to have children in college or grown. They did not have the challenge of trying to balance responsibilities at home and work. Now that women are younger entering the principal role, a balance has to be considered. None of the principals admitted children

hindered their career progression, but two principals explained how their career path was altered during the time when they had children. Both of them had to put graduate school on hold, but they resumed classes as soon as their children were a little older.

Christman and McClellan (2008) argue that women administrators are caught in the social constructions of gender and leadership. In their study they explored how some women administrators in educational leadership programs have sustained their administrative roles and evaluated whether their resiliency rested on a feminine type of leadership. Their study of seven diverse women administrators in educational leadership concluded that gender identity and leadership are complex. They contend that faculty and students should not demand the socially constructed expectations set of women who are leaders. Society has established certain beliefs about women, who are leaders, as compared to their male counterparts. Women find themselves bound by societal expectations and it can be difficult to break from the stereotypical leadership styles created by men. Women have to slide and maneuver cautiously around these expectations and responsibilities in their lives to achieve a sense of balance between work and home since they are expected to manage both aspects of their lives equally well. Although many men share child care and household responsibilities, societal expectations and norms still place greater pressure on women to be "good mothers" relative to those placed on men to be "good fathers". This continued to be a sense of frustration to the participants in this study, but most had reached the conclusion that they would do what they could do with the continued focus on priorities and what they valued most which was family.

Another dimension not discussed much was the time women spent with their spouses, children, family, or alone as a couple. Sometimes schedules were altered so the women could spend quality time with family members. Taking one another's feelings into consideration and to meet those needs were important factors discussed among the participants of the focus group. However, it took a conscious effort for the women to consider and pay attention to their husbands with everything else going on in their lives. To be "good mothers" they needed to prioritize, yet balance or equally distribute their time, efforts, and energy between their spouse, children, and themselves. This was a continuous struggle since there is not a way to achieve this balance at all times given the responsibilities and restriction of time.

The findings in Loder's (2005) research about women administrators described how women have to negotiate between multiple and competing roles. The different women in the study utilized different strategies based on experience, generational expectations, and culture. The women of the older generation were obligated to prioritize family above professional interests; whereas, the women from the younger generation had the option to focus more on career before family. Culturally, black female administrators in this study relied on other women in their families for child care and for household support. However, white women in this study primarily sought the support from their spouse.

In studies conducted by Fassel (1997) and Czerniakowski (1995) about good stress and bad stress it is pointed out that balancing three factors at work and home is essential for health. The factors considered included job demands, supports, and constraints. When a person works a demanding job, they must form supports in the form of resources, skills, and emotional understanding, and when they lack the ability to control or put constraints on the

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job or at home, then burnout is inevitable. Therefore, equal distribution among these areas of work must occur during the day and week (Fassel, 1997). All of the principals interviewed explained ways they handled stress – both good and bad.

As Queen and Queen (2005) explain in their book, *The Frazzled Principal's Wellness Plan: Reclaiming Time, Managing Stress, and Creating a Healthy Lifestyle*, principals can do many things to manage and reduce stress. Coping strategies can be direct or palliative. Direct strategies are techniques to reduce or eliminate stress by getting a clear idea of the source and changing the source or situation to prevent stress from being produced in the future. Palliative mental strategies are used when principals reanalyze or reassess a stressful situation to reduce the stressfulness of it. This helps principals relax by decreasing tension and anxiety.

The overall feeling among the principals interviewed for this study was that it was necessary to handle good and bad stress. They are all employed in a highly stressful, demanding job which requires every aspect of their being including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. As Loher and Schwartz (2003) illustrate in their research, in order to be fully engaged in our lives, a balance must be achieved in these areas. The principals described how at various times they will overexert themselves only to require time to refuel and recover later. There are times during the school year that are busier than others and require more time and energy. On the other hand, there are times during our personal lives when circumstances require more of us physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. This could be a challenge for anyone in the role of a principal depending on what other circumstances they face in their personal and professional lives. As one principal explained

during the focus group interview, her four children became more proficient and independent since she could not be available to do many tasks for them including laundry. However, her marriage suffered and dissolved as a result of her not balancing between her work and family. This was her biggest regret in not maintaining a balance. This example contradicted the initial agreement among the principals that children had not impacted their careers. Following her divorce, she became "more efficient with her time and aware of how precious her family was" to her.

In summary of the research findings, balance is constructed differently in the lives of the women elementary school principals who are mothers interviewed in this study. They use a variety of ways to maintain balance including having an understanding of priorities in their lives, support from family, and by employing techniques to sustain balance.

According to existing research, the family and professional roles and responsibilities for men and women as principals are different. In a study by Spencer & Kochan (2000) in Alabama, the researchers sought to discover the degree to which females were represented in the administrative ranks and whether there were any discernible barriers hindering their entrance into these positions. Their research analyzed demographic characteristics, educational preparation, length of tenure, principalship, retirement, and the role of females in the principalship. The data from this study indicate females may have to deal with more stresses in acquiring and functioning in the role as a school principal. Various factors included tradition, hiring practices, females' unwillingness or reluctance to seek the role, or issues related to family needs.

Societal roles, norms, and expectations remain different for women who are mothers. However, despite these challenges, female elementary school principals can take away from this study that it may be possible for them to maintain a balance between work and home, or that it is possible to be both a mother and an elementary school principal. There may be times of imbalance, but implementing strategies suggested by the participants may help to alleviate stress and get one back on track. As there are more and more principals retiring due to recent demographic trends, more and more women in their child bearing years are entering the principalship. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize and utilize strategies to remain effective in both roles as a principal and as a mother.

Reflections and Interpretations

Upon reflection following the interviews, I believe balance is defined in various ways to the participants. I am not convinced they all experience balance in their lives regardless of how they define it. Several expressed to me they had balance between work and home lives; however, I was not convinced. I questioned if these women were deluding themselves. I think they are trying to convince others around them that they are able to handle it all at all times. I disagree and am sure there are times when they have to readjust their goals, realign their expectations, and take a good look at reality. Perhaps fooling themselves that they lead balanced lives is a coping strategy in order not to add additional stress to an already stressful life.

Some of the participants acknowledged their need to check electronic mail, read report cards, plan for meetings or events, and complete budgeting requirements during time away from family at nights and during the weekends. I think most of them are living a façade

created by the societal pressures and expectations placed on women in the workforce. This challenge is compounded by having children as additional responsibilities aside from working a full time job which requires more than the typical work week.

Since I share similar responsibilities in my life, the participants could be simply telling me what they think I want to hear. During the journey of writing this dissertation, my life transitioned from just being a wife with a dog and two cats including being an elementary school principal to becoming a mother in addition. The increase in responsibilities has changed my life immensely and I can empathize with the participants in a completely different way than when I first began this study. I began looking for a magic bullet or a solution to "how-to manage it all," but I have learned balance and management of personal and professional responsibilities differs for each person depending on their circumstances and situation at the current time.

In addition, no one wants to admit defeat. I would describe all of the interview participants as driven, successful women, none of whom would like to admit incompetence in their jobs or as a mother. I think they could be afraid of admitting the possibility of failure or guilt of not being able to do it all. I question if they are being truthful with themselves and with me. They say on the one hand that they work nights and weekends, burning the candle at both ends, yet some stated that their lives are balanced, as they define balance.

With respect to their careers, I think with trying to have it all, some principals may have lowered or changed their career aspirations. A couple of principals stated they would remain working at the elementary school level especially until their own children graduated to the middle school level. One person stated how her graduate school work had suffered

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with the other responsibilities she had, but that she would resume her studies in the future. One participant interviewed one-on-one worked at the high school level as an assistant principal; however, she changed to work at the elementary school level as a principal instead of at the high school level. She knew from experience the time required to attend the many various events at the high school level which would take away from her family after she and her husband adopted their son. In another situation of which I am aware a female elementary school principal changed her role from being an elementary school principal to a senior level position in the Curriculum and Instruction Department in the school district when she had her second child. This enabled her to have more flexible time during the day, night, and on weekends with fewer responsibilities, so she could focus more on her personal life with her children outside of work.

Implications for Practice

School leaders can learn from this study ways to balance their lives between work and home. The results of this study indicated that balance is maintained by using clear communication to others to express their need for support. Some of the strategies used to sustain a balance between the professional and personal responsibilities in their lives included the following:

- setting priorities – establishing the most important factors considering time constraints and completing what has to be accomplished at that time compared to what tasks or responsibilities could be delayed and finished at a later time;
- making schedules – creating and maintaining schedules at home for family members for practices, appointments, and tasks they may have to complete and creating and

maintaining schedules at work to ensure the principal will be available when they are most needed at the school for meetings, assemblies, or presentations;

- coordinating calendars – synchronizing calendars with family members and others at work is necessary to ensure you and they do not schedule an event where you will be needed which may conflict with something else on your calendar; and

- taking time for yourself and your family – rejuvenating your body and spirit in order to be healthy for your family and to fulfill your responsibilities at home and at work are important to be effective and to strive for a balance in your life.

These seemed to be the recurring themes during the interviews as the greatest strategies for seeking balance between work and familial responsibilities.

School systems may need to structure the principals' role differently. One way to change the role would be to allow job sharing positions between two principals. If there were two principals, they could share the responsibilities and time commitments. Another way school systems could restructure current roles is to provide child care on the same campus as employees. Many businesses provide this as a service, or perk, to recruit and retain high quality employees.

One principal interviewed shared her thoughts about the need to restructure in order to retain high quality employees by stating:

Usually in the past any woman that was a principal was probably old enough where their kids were in college or grown. They didn't have to worry about that and now, I guess it's really a new age with a lot of younger people. And I mean, the door is

opening more for women to do that maybe but I think that, you know, the counties

needs to look at ways that they can support that because I don't want them to lose a

lot of great people because they are afraid of dealing with maternity leave. And it's

sad to say because as principals you hate dealing with maternity leaves with teachers.

But I think with the county they have a little bit more flexibility because they have the

[ability] to pull someone in there and I think that, you know, in addition to that they

really need to look at for teachers too, trying to give us some support with giving us

quality people we could put in, not just a six week sub when the teacher is out. I think

that that shows that they value women, you know, creating a family and it's going in

the future supply [of] students for our schools.

These supports and recommendations are changes that can be made at the district level to

help retain high quality principals. These recommendations may help principals become

more effective in their jobs and more satisfied as they balance work and familial

responsibilities.

Implications for Future Research

It is imperative for research to continue a focus on female leaders. Since there are

more women entering leadership roles including school principals, the need to understand

how to improve as a leader and the unique challenges faced by women particularly those

balancing multiple roles and responsibilities such as motherhood must be a focus for further

research. Further studies need to consider years of experience, age of children, and spouses'

and children's views of balance. For example, in this study, balance was determined solely

using perceptual data provided by subjects. Further studies should include interviews with the spouses, significant others, and children of female elementary school principals to better determine the degree to which these women lead balanced lives.

This research should be expanded to other possible areas such as whether years of experience in the role as a principal or age of children would have an effect on creating and maintaining balance between work and home. During the follow-up interview with one principal, she stated,

> Just be sure to learn from my example and not do what I did. After taking a school from mediocre to an award-winning school, I was really proud. However, when I left the school, what did I take with me? Nothing. However, I had missed out on years with my own kids and could not get those back.

Whether the lack of balance has an impact on their effectiveness as a principal is another avenue for further research. Given the increasing job responsibilities of principals, work addiction is another factor to explore further to determine if this plays a part in creating an imbalance in the lives of working mothers.

Age of children may be another area of research to consider. Children are more or less dependant on their mothers at various ages. There could be a difference whether the child was a newborn compared to when they are teenagers. The children's needs from their mothers, activities outside of school, and dependency are different at various ages.

Maternity leave from work is another possible topic to contemplate and research. What happens in elementary schools when the principal exits the role for several weeks for personal business such as having a baby? It would depend on the demographics, support, and personnel at the school. I have observed instances where a retired principal or assistant principal stepped in to the position temporarily when the principal went on maternity leave.

Perceptions of balance from other views could be explored as well, including from district administrators, colleagues, teachers, and family members. Are the principals really conscious that their lives are out of balance or are balanced as most indicated? This could provide another dimension of understanding about balance and whether the perspectives of working mothers match that of others. As the challenges of the principal increase and multiply, it will be essential for them to maintain a balance for effectiveness and longevity.

The researcher questions whether it is possible to balance personal and professional lives and be a successful principal, male or female. Additional questions that need to be explored further include whether women in other leadership roles in other careers experience similar feelings and challenges regarding balance in their lives. Do professional women make an attempt to lessen the demands and burdens of their work or home life? What are changes that could be made to bring more awareness to this challenge of balance and what could be changed to make it more manageable? Are there ways the expectations and responsibilities of the job or of motherhood could be restructured? Are there organizational structures that could be addressed to improve a principal's performance? Future research is suggested in the development of district wellness plans, to examine both the sources and processes of helping

principals to create balance in their lives which are necessary to sustain positive, healthy principals.

Further research also needs to be conducted on the career paths and progression of female principals in middle school and high school as well as among district office and superintendents. Such research might help explain some reasons for the low percentage of female high school principals, district office personnel, and superintendents.

Lessons Learned

The researcher would highly recommend making significant changes in the organizational structure of the principalship. As the executive of the school, the principal sets the tenor and atmosphere of the environment. The findings indicated how other principals deal with the demands in their lives professionally and personally. The strategies discussed during the focus group interview appeared to be helpful to other principals and conjured up other thoughts they shared. Most of them agreed with each others' statements especially when responding to coping techniques they employed when attempting to strive for, achieve, or maintain a balance, but some contradictory statements increased the complexity of the issue, too.

The topic sparked interest in all of the principals when they were invited to participate in the study. A few of them expressed how relevant and important the topic was to their lives and how eager they were to read the results. It was comforting to the researcher to learn she was not alone when seeking a balance in her life. In addition, I was energized to learn I shared commonalities with other principals regarding the challenges, responsibilities, and

coping strategies employed. This study enabled me to add a sliver of research to the wealth of information about the lives of school principals, but there is still much to be learned.

When conducting the qualitative research for this study, the interviews with the participants were the most eye-opening in addition to the literature review. The information shared by the principals confirmed what the research found. The individual and focus group interviews enabled the participants to share their thoughts and feelings which were analyzed, put into themes, and summarized to bring about the essence shared by them all. During the focus group interview, the principals had an advantage where they were able to interact with one another to add to the discussion when one of them responded to a question asked.

The time spent to collect the data was difficult because of the principals' schedules and conflicts which arose when arranging mutually convenient times to meet to conduct the interviews. A couple of interviews had to be rescheduled due to emergencies, both personally and professionally, which had to be addressed in a timely manner. Despite the few challenges to schedule the interviews, the data collected were essential to this qualitative study. The literature provided the overall evidence to support the need for this study. The research conducted provided the overall essence of the experiences for the participants.

Conclusion

Personal experiences were integrated into this study to provide the reader with lived experiences of the challenges for female elementary school principals who are mothers. Balance of work and home life is a constant challenge depending on the personal and professional responsibilities a person may have and their own personal values and dispositions. Balance in life was defined in various ways by the different principals

interviewed in this study. The fact that "work-life balance" has been framed in this particular study suggests there is a difference - there is work and then there is personal life. It is as if work and life are not part of the same thing. There are things principals can do to foster greater well-being at work and at home. There are ways to balance life's competing demands. Ultimately, many principals will not be able to find an actual balance between life at work and at home. Being a principal demands long hours and concentrated responsibilities. It takes a great deal of time and energy. It is how we manage that energy as Loher and Schwartz (2003) described in their research which impacts how we can make our work and home life more enjoyable and engaging. Implementing the strategies recommended in this study may provide principals with greater peace of mind and a greater commitment in our lives.

Loher and Schwartz (2003) explained that having a work-life balance is to be fully engaged. They described how principals must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond their immediate self-interest. Full engagement begins with feeling eager to get to work in the morning, equally happy to return home in the evening, and capable of setting clear boundaries between the two. The overall idea is to throw yourself into the task at hand whether tackling a challenge at work, facilitating a group project, or spending time with family and having fun. Full engagement implies a fundamental shift in the way we live our lives in order to strive for balance between work and home (Loher & Schwartz, 2003). Since balance is defined and perceived differently by different people, it is a personal realization to determine what constitutes balance in your life and what strategies one implements to achieve that balance. Principals who make no attempt to create and maintain balance may overexert themselves to

the point of not being effective in their personal or professional lives. Just as a marathon runner does, principals must power through the challenging times with support and coping techniques; however, it is necessary for them to take time to rest and recover in order to be effective and successful as principals and as mothers.

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Appendices

North Carolina State University
Informed Consent Form for Research - Individually Interviewed Participants

Title of Study: Balance of Life for Elementary Women Principals

Principle Researcher: Melissa Burns - WCPSS/NCSU Doctoral Cohort Student

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Lance Fusarelli

What are some general things you should know about research studies? You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, or to stop participating at any time. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study? The purpose of my study is to examine principals' balance in professional and personal lives.

What will happen if you take part in the study? If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in two interviews on the subject of balance of principals' lives. The interviews will be audiotaped. All interviews will be transcribed. You should avoid using personally identifying information because the data is being transcribed by a transcription service. The transcription will be coded to obscure your actual identity. During transcription, the audiotape will be kept in a secure locked space. After the study is complete, the audiotape will be destroyed.

Risks: Some questions may seem personal or you may be uncomfortable with the questions professionally. You may refuse to answer any question that you are uncomfortable with answering. You may decline to participate in the study at any time and at no risk to your employment.

Confidentiality: The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in a locked location. Audio taped interviews will be kept under lock and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. You will NOT be asked to write your name on any study materials so that no one can match your identity to the answers that you provide.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

Contact: If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me, Melissa Burns at 1751 Olive Chapel Road Apex, NC 27502 or by telephone (919) 387-44443. If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514), or Joe Rabiega, IRB Coordinator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-7515).

Consent: "I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time."

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B
North Carolina State University
Informed Consent Form for Research - Focus Group Participants

Title of Study: Balance of Life for Elementary Women Principals

Principle Researcher: Melissa Burns - WCPSS/NCSU Doctoral Cohort Student

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Lance Fusarelli

What are some general things you should know about research studies? You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, or to stop participating at any time. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study? The purpose of my study is to examine principals' balance in professional and personal lives.

What will happen if you take part in the study? If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in one focus group interview on the subject of balance of principals' lives. The interview will be audio-taped and video-taped. The focus group interview will be transcribed. You should avoid using personally identifying information because the data is being transcribed by a transcription service. The transcription will be coded to obscure your actual identity. During transcription, the audiotape and videotape will be kept in a secure locked space. After the study is complete, the audiotape and videotape will be destroyed.

Risks: Some questions may seem personal or you may be uncomfortable with the questions professionally. You may refuse to answer any question that you are uncomfortable with answering. You may decline to participate in the study at any time and at no risk to your employment.

Confidentiality: The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in a locked location. Recorded tapes of the interview will be kept under lock and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. You will NOT be asked to write your name on any study materials so that no one can match your identity to the answers that you provide.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

Contact: If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me, Melissa Burns at 1751 Olive Chapel Road Apex, NC 27502 or by telephone (919) 387-44443. If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514), or Joe Rabiega, IRB Coordinator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-7515).

Consent: "I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time."

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C:

Basic Demographic Data of Participants Interviewed

1. How many years of teaching and administrative experience do you have?

2. How long have you been an elementary school principal?

3. What was your administrative experience prior to becoming an elementary school

   principal?

4. When in your career did you have children?

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

Women Elementary School Principals

1. How has having children impacted, in any way, your career progression?

2. How do you feel about balancing being a mother and an elementary school principal?

3. Describe your schedule as a principal and mother.

4. How would you define maintaining a balance between your personal and professional responsibilities? Do you attempt to maintain a balance?

5. What do you feel are helpful strategies when seeking balance in your personal and professional lives?

6. What tradeoffs, if any, have you made in either your professional and/or home life in an effort to try to be successful in both roles?

7. Why did you become an elementary school principal?

8. Do you regret your choices you have made in your career? Why or why not?

9. What did you do when your life was imbalanced or how did you adjust?

10. Describe a time when you were most balanced and most unbalanced in your professional/home life and explain why.

11. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about this topic?

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Focus Group Interview Questions:

Women Elementary School Principals

1. How has having children impacted, in any way, your career progression?

2. How do you feel balancing being a mother and an elementary school principal?

3. Describe your schedule as a principal and mother.

4. How would you define maintaining a balance between your personal and professional responsibilities? Do you attempt to maintain a balance?

5. What do you feel are helpful strategies when seeking balance in your personal and professional lives?

6. What tradeoffs, if any, have you made in either your professional and/or home life in an effort to try to be successful in both roles?

7. Why did you become an elementary school principal?

8. Do you regret your choices you have made? Why or why not?

9. How have you had to make sacrifices? What have you gained/lost as a result of being a women elementary school principal with children?

10. Tell me about a time when you were really stressed. What coping techniques did you employ to attempt to strive for, achieve, or maintain a balance?

11. How have you had to make trade-offs in your choices about how you spend your time between work and family? Have you experienced dilemmas or tensions trying to balance the time between them?

12. Describe any planning and/or organization strategies you utilize.

13. What did you do when your life was imbalanced or how did you adjust?

14. Describe a time when you were most balanced and most unbalanced in your

    professional/home life and why.

15. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about this topic?

Appendix F
Confidentiality Agreement
Transcription Services

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Melissa Burns related to her doctoral study on Balancing Act: The Professional and Personal Lives of Female Elementary Principals. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped and video-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;

2. To not make copies of any audiotapes, videotapes, or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Melissa Burns;

3. To store all study-related audiotapes, videotapes, and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;

4. To return all audiotapes, videotapes, and study-related documents to Melissa Burns in a complete and timely manner.

5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____