Women in educational administration within developing countries-a gender perspective

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ABSTRACT: This paper seeks to set the stage for the exploration of female leadership in educational systems within developing countries by reviewing the current research on women in educational administration within developing countries and suggesting future directions for further research on this subject in non-western countries. The paper is based partially on a systematic review of 13English-language papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals in educational administration, gender studies in education, and comparative education. The review points to particular barriers to women's career advancement in educational systems within developing countries (e.g. strong family obligations, low levels of girl education, majority of men in teaching positions), unique career experiences (e.g. the important role of the father),and to the adoption of ‒androgynous‖ leadership style by the few women administrators in these countries.

Future directions for further exploration of this area of study are suggested (e.g. adopting a different theoretical view, the policy influences). Originality/value – The paper is an initial attempt to accumulate knowledge about the life and work of women administrators and educators in developing countries, an issue that has received marginalized attention in the extended research on gender and educational administration. Likewise, the paper provides researchers with suggestions for new research directions of high importance to the understanding of women administrators' lives and work in different cultural settings.

Introduction

The knowledge base in educational administration has developed, mainly, in Anglo-American countries, and studies conducted in educational systems within developing countries have usually been marginalized in the discourse of the field (Dimmock and Walkter, 1998, 2005). A similar trend has characterized the research on women in educational administration. In this sense, we know very little about the lives and careers of women in educational administration within developing countries. Given the dissimilarities between developing and developed countries in terms of cultural and social contexts, the structure of educational systems and social perceptions of gender, the current paper sets the stage for the exploration of female leadership in educational systems within developing countries. Specifically, as cultural contexts impact principals' and teachers' sets of attitudes, values and norms for words Leadership, Women, Developing countries, Career development behavior (Dimmock and Walker, 1998; Heck, 1996), To this end, the paper commences by a brief outline of the research on women in educational administration within developing countries. Then, it reviews the very few papers written in the English language about women in educational administration within developing countries, most of them in developing countries that have been experiencing rapid modernization and ‒westernization‖ processes in recent years. The last part of the paper suggests future directions for research on female educational leadership in developing countries. This is not to say, however, that there is a coherent and clear definition of ‒developing countries.‖ In fact, even though these countries share some similarities, they have many differences in terms of culture, political system, economy and religion.

Before reviewing the current knowledge on female leadership both in developing and developed countries, there are two questions to post. First, are there enough women in educational administration or leadership positions within developing

countries to justify the setting of a new research agenda? Second, assuming that the answer to the first question is positive, why is it important to study women in educational administration within developing countries, and to whom is such research likely to be useful?

Few women in leadership positions today, but more in the future Looking at the parts of the world referred to as –developing countries,‖ the picture we get seems to be very complex, manifold and heterogeneous. Broadly speaking and for the purpose of analysis, one can categorize the countries into two groups: those that are more economically developed and those that are the least developed. Rapid modernization processes appear to have much influence upon employment opportunities for women and their professional development that might increase the

number of women in teaching and educational administration within many developing countries. In East Asia, for example, the industrial boom from the 1980s onwards opened up additional employment opportunities for women, even though most women are needed in the lowest paying occupations.

Modernization and industrialization historically have necessitated access of more women into education in many western countries, because of the high-technology society's needs for professional employees. Indeed, in more economically developed countries there are high rates of females in primary, secondary and higher education (Handelman, 2000; Jayaweera, 1997; Sidani, 2005).It was argued that the higher the women's levels of education, the relatively higher incidence exists at percentages of women in professional and technical occupations (Jayaweera, 1997). Even in the poorer developing countries (e. g. Cambodia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal,

Uganda, Zambia), where many of the school buildings are in dire need of repair, the class sizes are large, there are no textbooks, and teachers are ill-trained (Postlethwaite,1998), there are political and social processes that have some impact upon changing women's situations at work. Contemporary women's movements in India, Lebanon, Egypt and Kenya, for instance, have challenged the male-dominated structures in theircountries and gender-inequalities. They strived for the introduction of gender-sensitive policies and programs so as to improve the lives of women in their countries (Mikell,1997; Obanya, 1995; Patel, 1998; Sidani, 2005).

Concurrently, many countries like Nepal, Somalia, India, Yemen, Bangladesh, Morocco, the Gambia and Pakistan have developed large-scale programs for increasing the numbers of women teachers, with varying degrees of success (reported by Sales,1999). A major aim in Pakistani education by 2005 is gender equality and the empowerment of women (Kirk, 2004), and Kenyan women have made measurable strides towards women's equality in the political realm (Nzomo, 1997).Interestingly, despite the many cultural barriers in both groups of nations, women have managed to win seats in the Parliaments of some countries (for example, Uganda, Kenya, Philippines) (Brown and Ralph, 1996; Mikell, 1997). Women hold higher percentage of professional positions in Latin America (Handelman, 2000), and have access to management positions in many occupational sectors within developing countries in Africa and Asia (Jayaweera, 1997; Van der Boon, 2003).Similar feminization trends have been documented in some educational systems within developing countries. Women hold 14 percent of school administrator positions in Korea (Kim and Kim, 2005), 13 percent of the Chinese principalship positions (Suet al., 2000), half of the primary and secondary school principalship positions in Trinidad and Tobago (Morris, 1999), and the majority of senior school management roles in Singapore (Morriss et al., 1999). Even in Muslim countries like Turkey(Celikten, 2005) and Pakistan (Kirk, 2004), there are reports of women in educational leadership positions, although in Pakistan, the power is in the hands of the school boards that are held by men only (Kirk, 2004).To sum up, economic, social and political processes in many developing countries reject a potential trend towards greater numbers of women gaining administrative positions in school.

First, given the different social, cultural and national contexts in which women educational leaders in developed and developing countries live and work, there is a need for further research that explores the particular context, career experiences

and leadership of women in educational administration within developing countries. Morriss et al. (1999), The environment and the processes leading to educational leadership positions are very different for Singaporean women and it may be that this affects their style of management. In addition, it is likely that there are cultural differences that affect the ways that both men and women operate.

Understanding the state of women in educational administration within developing countries may re-explore and challenge the epistemology and methodology of existing theories and concepts in the study of female leadership, as well as provide policymakers with greater insight into female leadership particular to developing countries. Too often we have eviden ce of unsuccessful efforts to transfer fashionable Anglo-American theory, policy and practice through the work of international development agencies and consultancies that are not compatible with the contexts and needs of the developing countries (Crossley, 2000).Recruiting and retaining women teachers have become priority strategies for improving girls' education in many developing countries (Brown and Ralph, 1996;Fentiman et al., 1999; Kirk, 2004; Sales, 1999). This implies that understanding the particular barriers to women's advancement or access into educational leadership positions in developing countries might contribute to the development of career strategies for career promotion that are compatible with the organizational and social contexts of women in these countries. Exploring the lives and careers of women principals in developing countries that –allow‖ women to be involved in leadership positions in school could, in addition, tell us a lot about the experiences these women undergo on their way to leadership positions.

The literature about women in educational administration

The research on women in educational administration within developed countries has become a significant field of study since the 1980s. Over time, researchers have addressed issues of external and internal barriers for women's progress in school career structure (e.g. Acker, 1989; Blackmore, 1999; Evetts, 1994; Shakeshaft, 1989;Young, 2002), and the differentiation between the attitudes and behaviors of men and women in leadership (e.g. Dunlap, 1995; Fennell, 1999; Hall, 1996; Skrla and Young,2003). Another category of questions, emerging mainly during the 1990s onwards, referred to the lives and careers of women principals (Blackmore, 1999; Coleman, 2002;Evetts, 1994; Hall, 1996; Lad, 2000; Oplatka et al., 2001).

Barriers to women"s career growth

A variety of studies have suggested various explanations to account for the low representation of women in leadership positions in educational systems of developed countries. Among these are cultural scripts that identify feminine attributes as contributing to ineffective leadership (Al-Khalifa and Migniuolo, 1990; Blackmore,1999; Curry, 2000), latent discrimination (Coleman, 2002), and male dominance in educational administration, which, in turn, hinders the leadership opportunities of many women (Limerick and Lingard, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1989). For example, male dominance of key leadership positions is likely to lead to recruiting new principals who resemble their sponsors in attitude, philosophy, deed and appearance, hobbies, club membership, i.e. men (Hill and Ragland, 1995).

Women's under-representation in leadership positions may be attributed also to women's own decision not to apply for promotion in education for a variety of reasons, such as lack of necessary aspirations, lack of awareness of the promotion system and a lack of confidence that they will succeed, gender-based socialization, fear of failure, and lack of competitiveness (Acker, 1989; Coffey and Delamont, 2000; Limerick and Anderson, 1999). Mother support was found to help successful women principals overcome these kinds of barriers in England (Coleman, 2002).

Male and female leadership styles

As far as differences between men and women in leadership positions were concerned, two contradictory views appear in the literature. While some researchers found no substantial evidence for gender differences in educational leadership (Jirasinghe andLyons, 1996; Mertz and McNeely, 1998), others argue ardently that men and women differ in the ways they manage people, although the differences are not considered to be innate, but, rather, the outcome of different socialization patterns (e.g. Evetts, 1994;Hall, 1996; Marshall, 1995; Oplatka and Atias, n.d.; Regan and Brooks, 1995;Shakeshaft, 1989). Female principals commonly tend to adopt a democratic, participative style, to pay much attention to vision-building for the school, to spend much time in change initiation and implementation, and to be attuned to curriculum and teaching issues (Acker, 1989; Eagly et al., 1992; Fennell, 1999; Marshall, 1995;Oplatka, 2003; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Female administrators" career and lives

While the debate about gender differences in leadership styles has been hotly contested, it is less difficult to show gender dissimilarities in the experiences of principals, simply because men and women are influenced differently by their gender during childhood, with family issues and throughout their professional adult lives. Women principals in many developed countries were found to attain their positions either ‒by chance‖ or following clear career planning and aspiration into principalship. Mertz and McNeely (1998) revealed that women in the second pattern tended to be more assertive in their behavior than those in the first one, were far less accepting of defeat and had more confidence in themselves and their abilities. Similar characteristics were found among women principals in Israel (Oplatka et al., 2001).It is likely that one of the major factors affecting the differences between male and female's career experiences is family responsibilities (Coleman, 2002). Women educators career and leadership in developing countries. Four major themes have emerged following the review of the very few papers that focus on women in educational administration within developing countries: barriers to career advancement, strategies used by women to access leadership positions, female principals' leadership style, and career experiences of women in educational administration.

Barriers to women"s career advancement

Six major barriers to women's advancement to leadership positions in school are recurrently discussed by researchers in different developing countries. Some of the obstacles are well-known to researchers in developed countries (e.g. gender discrimination, women's low self-confidence, or job-family conflicts). Others, however, seem to be particular to women in developing countries (e.g. cultural background, low girls' participation in primary education, majority of men in teaching positions).

Gendered cultural and social values.

A major obstacle to women's access to leadership positions in school refers to the cultural and social structure that bifurcates the society into male and female arenas. Entrenched norms inscribed in the culture of many developing countries (such as, Turkey, China, Islamic countries) attribute certain tasks and spheres of responsibility to each gender, assuming that one must behave in accordance with the social expectations of one's gender (Celikten, 2005; Su et al., 2000;Sidani, 2005). Leadership positions, in this sense, ‒belong‖ to male members of the society and women should refrain from attempting to attain this kind of position. Otherwise they are susceptible to various social sanctions, such as reduced chances to marry (Cubillo and Brown, 2003).In the traditional Chinese culture, for illustration, women have always been in the submissive roles both at home and in society (Su et al., 2000). The cultural and social assumption that women are less strong than men and therefore cannot hold managerial positions is common in many developing countries (Calvert and Calvert, 1996). Schultz(1998) explains: In Nepalese

society, women are in many cases still chained to the house, which is seen as thes pace where they may obtain ritual and spiritual purity. If a woman obtains this purity, which many still believe to a significant degree can only be achieved in the home, through domestic activities, then, she can evolve to the next spiritual plane, that is, can be reborn as a man.

The barriers to career advancement experienced by women in developing countriesseem to be determined by specific cultural and religious beliefs and value that define femininity in terms of marriage, housekeeping and child-raising. Pakistani women principals' lack of power illustrates this situation; in most of the non-government schools in this country the principals are women, but the power of the governing boards is predominantly in the hands of men (Kirk, 2004).Low women's participation in secondary education. Very low girls' participation in primary and secondary education in many developing countries makes it less plausible or many women to be able to acquire the skills, training and competencies necessary for professional and managerial positions in education. Education is seen as having little relevance to the future roles envisaged for daughters in developing countries, including South Asia (Jayaweera, 1997), Nepal (Schultz, 1998), Uganda (Brown and Ralph, 1996), Pakistan (Sales, 1999), and other countries (Dickenson et al., 1996). One woman student teacher in Nepal wrote that it is often heard that ‒we should not educate our daughters. They will be spoiled by education. They have to work inside home. They have to go in another's house and do the same thing‖ (Schultz, 1998, p.166). In Uganda, parents' insufficient finances to pay for their children's education, poor physical environment (e.g. inadequate toilet facilities and dormitories), and few role-models provided by women staff contribute greatly to girls dropping out in the last year of the primary education (Brown and Ralph, 1996). In Kenya, Olser (1997) explicitly maintained that women's career advancement is impeded due to discrimination experienced in families against girls' education. Gender discrimination. Generally speaking, studies conducted in developing countries reveal a wide variety of discriminative behaviors towards women in educational administration. Male teachers are preferred by authorities to hold educational leadership positions in Pakistan (Sales, 1999), Uganda (Brown and Ralph,1996), Turkey (Celikten, 2005), China (Su et al., 2000), and many Asian countries. Women and men with the same educational qualifications reach different levels in occupational status; the men having easier access to formal sector employment, managerial and technical jobs or entrepreneurship (Jayaweera, 1997).One reason for this discrimination relates to many men's vested interest in holding onto power and authority rather than sharing it with women (Brown and Ralph, 1996),as well as men's tendency to hire people who look, think and act like them, i.e. male teachers. Similar experiences are reported about minority women administrators in the US (Enomoto et al., 200). Women teachers in Nepal, though, are fully aware of female dehumanization on the path to development (Schultz, 1998).

Low confidence and self-esteem.

Women's low confidence and self-esteem with respect to their management capabilities are likely to stunt women's career advancement in school. For instance, Ugandan women who have been socialized to adopt family roles were indicated to have low self-esteem and low confidence in their abilities outside the domestic role (Brown and Ralph, 1996).Similarly, research conducted in Turkey showed that women do not apply to be principals, even when they are as well qualified as the male applicants, at least in part, because they have negative self-perceptions and lack confidence in their qualifications and experience (Turan and Ebiclioglu, 2002). Jayaweera's (1997) work was insightful in illuminating this aspect in Asian countries. He showed that gender role stereotypes in educational materials, in the curriculum and in the school environment transmit gendered attitudes towards the roles of girls and boys and engender negative self-perceptions in girls that could impede their personal development.

Too many tasks at home.

For some writers, the major barrier to women's advancement refers to the family responsibilities that the majority of women in Women in developing countries hold (Brown and Ralph, 1996; Celikten, 2005; Olser, 1997). In traditional societies, women are expected to be responsible for their families, including remaining close to their children, the husband, and the

extended family. In this sense, Turkish women do not desire administrative positions that mean long working hours and difficult conditions, while their husbands' resistance obviated any career advancement (Celikten, 2005). Similarly, Kenyan women cannot take managerial posts because of the travel time involved. Likewise, heavy domestic responsibilities and husband's resistances are identified by both male and female teachers in Kenya as barriers to career advancement (Olser, 1997).

Female leaders" strategies for career advancement

The question raised in a few studies concerned the ways by which women in educational leadership positions managed to reach their position in spite of many obstacles they had to face. After all, despite the barriers women have to confront in school, some women in developing countries do secure administrative positions, as this article shows (e.g. Turkey, China, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago and so forth).Generally speaking, the common denominator for the very few women administrators in developing nations is their strong belief in themselves, particularly their own voice, and their strong motivation to be path finders in their countries. Thus, Nepalese women teachers suggested that in order to lessen girls' mental stress they should be taught to listen to them and not to be totally reliant on received archetypes (Schultz, 1998). Cubillo and Brown (2003) found that their women interviewees emerged as extremely self-reliant and self-motivated in spite of having faced unwelcoming, even hostile, male-dominated cultures in some of the developing countries they came from. For increasing women's belief and confidence in their abilities, women were found to need moral support and a sense of trust from their families (Olser, 1997), as well as extensive mass educational programs coupled with conscious efforts to change traditional values (Handelman, 2000). These findings are consistent with reports on African-American women administrators indicating that family, culture and spiritual experiences in their childhood positively influenced their advancement (Bloom andErlandson, 2003).

The career experiences of women in educational administration

Three major career experiences of women administrators are documented in there search on women in educational systems of developing countries. First, the family, and especially the father, has a key role in the career advancement and leadership of women in developing countries. Cubillo and Brown (2003) showed that parental support was paramount to all their respondents from nine different countries. All of the women in their study identified their fathers as a seminal influence in their early education and subsequent careers. Along the same lines, Kenyan teachers saw their own career success not exclusively as an individual achievement but as something achieved with the support of family and community on behalf of the wider community(Olser, 1997).

Second, female principals reported having difficulty facing their staff, sometimes even the female staff, as in Trinidad and Tobago (Morris, 1999) and in Turkey (Celikten, 2005). Some Turkish women principals believe that the male teachers found them threatening (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). Turkish female principals said that the most serious difficulty they faced in their jobs was the reluctance of women teachers to work for women principals (Celikten, 2005).Third, some career experiences of women principals refer to –normal‖ difficulties every manager is supposedly faced with. Research that examined the stress levels of female kindergarten principals in Macau, China, found that their work was moderately stressful. The areas of their work they found to be the most difficult to deal with were the recruiting of a sufficient number of students, and sustaining a balanced or surplus budget (Wongand Cheuk, 2005). These concerns were not related to their gender, but to the economic contexts of kindergarten teaching in that county.

To sum up, whereas women educators from both developed and developing countries share some common obstacles to advancement and similar leadership styles and career experiences, they differ a great deal in many respects. The cultural and social structure in which they live and work, coupled with many parents' propensity not to send their daughters to secondary education, makes it almost impossible for women to access professional or managerial positions. Add to this women's high level

of responsibilities for housekeeping in the patriarchal society, as well as their low representation in teaching positions, and one may gain insights into the particular barriers to career advancement confronting women educators from developing countries.

Under these conditions, it is likely that the leadership style of women principals in developing countries incorporates both ‒masculine‖ and ‒feminine‖ leadership orientation. Similar to their counterparts in developed countries, they attach great significance to their femininity and express an ethic of care, connectedness, and a sort of participative style. But, due to strong cultural scripts that glorify ‒masculine‖ ways of leading, they also adopt authoritative leadership styles and formal relations with staff and students. In addition, their career experiences (e.g. the important role of father's support, lack of support from staff), which are strongly related to the male-dominated values in their countries, seem to be particular to this group of women principals.

Discussion and implications for future research

This paper has documented the common themes and characteristics that emerged from the research on women in educational administration within both developed and developing countries. The research to date has been concerned with documenting barriers to women's career advancement, leadership styles and career experiences of women leaders in school. But, while there is extended research on women administrators in developed countries, the research on women administrators in developing countries is highly restricted to several areas. First, the scope and extent of research currently available, whose first purpose was to examine the lives, careers and leadership of women administrators in developed countries, is extremely limited in its quantity, methodology, location, aims and topics, even in developing countries where women do hold managerial positions in schools. Only a very few articles have been published (in English) about women's leadership styles in developing countries, and even fewer about their lives and careers. In addition, part of the knowledge about women in educational administration was collected in studies whose first aim was not to explore women in educational administration, but rather focused on male and female principals, women teachers, or teaching as a whole.

Second, the review reveals the limitations of current knowledge about the strategies for career advancement used by the few female administrators in developing countries and their application to other developing countries. Although we know a little about the contextual features that are positively related to women's career advancement in developing countries (e.g. family support, governmental intervention programs, self-motives), most of this knowledge has not been attained through systematic, large-scale studies. Our current data in this respect are unlikely to provide us with sufficient practical knowledge to develop programs for promoting careers for women in school that are based on empirical knowledge that has been collected in the particular context of developing countries.

Shortcomings of the current research on women in educational administration within developing countries, are ‒natural‖ characteristics of any field of study in its initial stages of development. In that sense, any attempt to move the field a stage forward needs to extend the topics, methodologies and theoretical lens with which an approach for future investigations of women educators in developing countries.

Five research agendas are suggested. One should bear in mind, though, that there are geographic differences among developing countries. Some future studies should focus, therefore, on countries with low economic development while others should focus on those developing countries that experience a rapid modernization process accompanied by growing rates of women in management in a wide variety of occupational sectors. Understanding the particular barriers/strategies to women's advancement While the current paper pointed to three unique barriers to women's advancement in schools of developing

countries, there are probably other barriers and obstacles that women in developing countries might face, with which we are not yet familiar.

The main research questions suggested are:.

- Why are there so few women school administrators?
- How were gender inequalities created and structured within school administration, and how have they been maintained and perpetuated?

The study of these factors needs to be conducted within educational systems in developing countries as a whole, and in their contexts, otherwise, as Grant (2000)maintained, we are in danger of misunderstanding how these systems work. Thus, subsequent research on barriers to women's career progress needs to focus both on barriers in the least economically developed countries and on developing countries that have been experiencing rapid modernization in recent years. It is likely that different barriers exist in each group of countries. Researchers may also want to consider the examination of the potential influences of climate, demographic patterns and economic circumstances on the shortage of women in principalship, as Addi-Raccah (2002) pointed to in her research on feminization processes in education. These kinds of features do not arise much in most of the systems of the developed world. In most developing countries, where there are insufficient means to guarantee even universal primary schooling, and where the growth in population can nullify every hard-won advance (Grant, 2000), such features seem to be of high relevance for the research on women in educational administration. In addition, among the possible research topics are the role of mentors in guidance, support, encouragement and facilitation of female leadership development, the influences of foreign professionals upon women's progress in developing countries, forms of direct and latent gender discrimination in school, and the internalization of gender stereotypes and aspiration to principalship. To explore these and related areas, research could utilize wide variety of methodologies and sources, such as national surveys, census data, and literature review of contemporary conditions based on a discrete body of literature in the local language. Historical studies that focus on broad historical processes related to women and education may also be of benefit to unearth changes in women's social position and career patterns in a wide variety of occupations.

For this reason, there is a need for research that focuses particularly on the lives, careers and leadership of female administrators and principals in developing countries. As evidence concerning women administrators in developing countries is extremely thin, suggestions for subsequent research on the way in which women administrators balance their femininity with the masculine world in which they work, the factors for their success or failure, and the profiles of women leaders seems warranted. Issues of women administrators' decision making processes, controlling mechanisms, external relations, communicating and relationships with male teachers or supervisors are of great significance for our understanding of their unique world in developing countries.

The following questions might lead the emergent research on female leaders in developing countries:

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- Do male and female principals differ in their behaviors and actions in school?
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- What are the qualities and skills associated with female administrators in schools?
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- How should women lead?
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- How do teachers in developing countries perceive male and female in leadership positions?
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- Do female leaders nurture teachers?
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- How do men react to being managed by a woman?

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- Do female principals have to lead like men in order to be considered a good principal?

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- Do female leaders initiate new educational programs or do they maintain the status quo?

Career issues, like career entry and career aspirations (i.e. why women decide to enter the field of educational administration and how they come to this position) or commitment, may provide insight into the unique induction stage of women principals and administrators in developing countries. Researchers may be curious to understand what we really know about female administrators in schools of developing countries, and what we can say about their lives and career development. They may want to raise questions such as:

- What is a woman principal's career story?

- What are the historical, demographic, psychological and familycharacteristics of women who are school administrators?

- How do female leaders balance family and work demands?

- Who is likely to offer help and support on the way?

In addition, future investigations need to highlight women's leadership abilities and contribution to education in the developing countries where women have some representation in leadership posts. Personal profiles of women-path finders in educational administration should become models for other women in developing countries. Another emergent issue in research into women principals' career lives concerns sexism in the workplace. For example, Coleman (2002) noted that almost halfof the women secondary heads in her study reported having experienced sexism in their role, mainly from peers. Some women principals in Evetts's (1994) career history study had kept a log of sexist comments, harassment and embarrassment that they had experienced. Researchers may want to explore the scope of these distressing phenomena in developing countries.

To explore the lived experiences and leadership of women administrators in cultures that are different from those of Anglo-American nations, it is recommended to underpin the study on a wide variety of perspectives (e.g. post-structuralism, post-feminism, post-modernism, or standpoint theory). For example, in a study that explored the careers of African-American female principals, the authors used standpoint theory that focuses on the production of knowledge that is emancipatory, anti-oppressive, non-hierarchical, negotiated and politically focused (Bloom and Erlandson, 2003). This view may shed light on many issues of women whose life experiences and careers are entirely different from those of many women in the western world. Similarly, the documentation of women teachers' fantasies in developing countries might help explore their dispositions concerning stability and change in education, as Tubin (2004) showed.

Analyzing governmental policy towards women in administration

One factor affecting the representation of women in leadership positions in any country is the governmental policy toward gender equality and equity in the public sector. Using content analysis methods to analyze particular artifacts, including textbooks, reports, newspaper materials and policy drafts may yield some substantial knowledge regarding the various forms by which governments establish the position of women in the labor force. Researchers may be interested in examining the manner by which governments provide career opportunities for women, increase their chances to access leadership position in education, or in contrast, diminish their motivation and aspiration for career advancement and growth. Possible questions for future research are:

- Do governments promote women's career advancement in education?

- How do they portray the ideal role of female teachers?

- Are they aware of sexist behavior?

Conclusion

Future research on women in educational administration within developing countries should be directed at generating an international database that would help policy-makers to identify the ‒best‖ way to promote women in educational institutions. Only when we have sufficient and profound knowledge about women leaders in developing countries we will be able to develop as universal a model of female leadership as possible and argue for theoretical background that is underpinned by multi-national investigations and insights.

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