

MARGARET B. WEBER,
JEAN R. FELDMAN,
AND EVE C. POLING

Women who seek careers in educational administration find that, in practice, equality of the sexes is an illusion. As Loomis and Wild (1978) succinctly summarize, the education system in the United States is generally structured like a traditional home: men run the schools and women nurture the learners.

Factors that inhibit women from aspiring to leadership positions in education must be identified and eliminated if the decade of the 80s is to offer more opportunity for women in administrative careers in education than did the decade of the 70s. In order to identify key targets for change, this discussion will focus on three areas which contribute to the maldistribution of males and females in educational administration: personal and social roles (Helson, 1972; Niedermayer and Kramer, 1974); personal and family constraints (Krchniak, 1978; Gross and Trask, 1976); and discriminatory patterns in training, hiring, and promotion (Blanchard, 1976).

Personal and Social Roles

To understand why women have occupied low-ranking positions in education, many researchers have looked at the traditional female role. In general, this research is summarized in Coursen's (1975) report that society has conditioned both men and women to believe that women are not as capable of holding leadership positions as men. This conditioning begins in early childhood (Osofsky, 1971) and pervades career patterns of men and women.

Typically, the adult male role is defined by such traits as dominance, achievement, autonomy, and aggression, whereas traits such as emotionalism, passivity, timidity, deference, and self-abasement define the adult female role. As Maccoby and

Margaret B. Weber is Director of Professional Services, Educational Testing Service, Atlanta; Jean R. Feldman is Lab Kindergarten Teacher, DeKalb Community College, Atlanta; and Eve C. Poling is Principal, The Children's School, Atlanta.

Why Women Are Underrepresented in Educational Administration

To reverse the decline in the number of female administrators, women must obtain the credentials, apply for the positions, and encourage other women to do the same.

Jacklin (1974) report, traits consistent with the adult male role are commonly accepted characteristics of people in leadership positions. The male sex-role stereotype has been shown to relate to the personal characteristics valued in leaders (Basil, 1972). In contrast, the traits associated with the adult female role tend not to be characteristic of people in leadership positions (Bach, 1976). Thus, for women to assume traditional male roles, they may have to project traits commonly associated with being male. Indeed, Pawlitschek (1976) suggests that women who have moved into administrative positions are deviant from the female norm.

By the same token, however, some of the sex-role stereotypes are perpetuated by women themselves. For example, women tend to perceive themselves as less competent than men (Schmuck, 1975; Taylor, 1973). Thus, women, socialized to internalize traits perceived to be incompatible with leadership roles, may provide the most critical barrier to other women who might aspire to positions in educational administration. After all, when women as well as men perceive women as being less competent, less independent, less objective, and less logical than men (Broverman and others, 1972), where can women find support in their struggle to gain access to administrative positions?

Personal and Family Constraints

Personal and family constraints also present barriers to women. Because women have been socialized to ex-

perience achievement and satisfaction vicariously by functioning in a supportive capacity (Tibbetts, 1979), they must resolve conflicts among family responsibilities, career aspirations, and the perceived characteristics of leadership before attaining their own career goals. For example, although the job of a teacher is socially compatible with the female role (Niedermayer and Kramer, 1974), it is traditionally considered to be a supplementary occupation. Leadership positions, such as jobs in educational administration, are incompatible with the female role (Niedermayer and Kramer, 1974). Thus, a woman educator must choose between an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" female job. However, even if she decides to teach, she is still subject to potential conflict because of the supplementary aspects of a teaching career for women.

In 1973, the National Education Association reported that while 83 percent of elementary teachers were women, only 20 percent of elementary principals were women. Underrepresentation was also cited at the secondary level, where 46 percent of teachers were women but 3 percent of junior high principals and 1 percent of senior high principals were women.

More recent studies, although varying in their estimates, indicate that underrepresentation of women in administrative positions persisted through the 1970s. For example, Byrne, Hines, and McCleary (1978) reported that only 7 percent of secondary principals were women. Pharis and Zachariya (1979) reported that in 1978 only 18 percent



of elementary principals were women. Data released by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission indicate that in 1978 13 percent of all principals were women. Thus, "despite their long involvement in education, their background of supervisory experience in the schools, and the fact that they continue to outnumber men in the field, women are greatly underrepresented in . . . administrative positions" (NIE, 1980).

As summarized in a recent NIE (1980) study, women who strive for independence and intellectual achievement may be thought of as acting in opposition to the conventions of sex-appropriate behavior. Competing demands between the professional role and mothering role cannot be conveniently manipulated where the female's career status is traditionally secondary to the male's. In this case, the woman is twice victim to conflict: conflict exists *within* her roles as professional and mother and *between* herself and mate in their respective parental and career roles.

Psychological stress from such conflict may account for the results of studies reported by Krchniak (1978), Gross and Trask (1976) and others. These studies report that most female administrators are single and, among those who are married, very few have young children. These data tend to be opposite for male administrators. The evidence suggests that the majority of women administrators resolve potential conflict between themselves and spouses by not marrying, by foregoing motherhood, or by waiting to assume administrative positions

after childbearing and childrearing years.

Resolution among personal and family constraints and the perceived characteristics associated with administrative roles is also manifested in levels of career aspirations among women. For example, men identify long-term career goals in education earlier in their employment than women. And most women, even those with administrative credentials, apply for administrative jobs less often than men (Schmuck, 1975; Krchniak, 1978).

Discrimination Patterns

Contributing to the dilemma faced by women seeking advanced training in educational administration and trying to balance role and job perception are employment practices which facilitate leadership mobility for men and discourage it for women. Not only do men dominate education in terms of administrative positions held and dollars earned (NEA, 1973; Taylor, 1973; and Lesser, 1978), but they also dominate the decision-making processes, which may discourage women from entering the administrative ranks.

Part of the reason men outnumber women in administrative positions is that more men have degrees or certification in educational administration than women. Men are simply more likely than women to seek advanced training and certification (Cohen, 1971; Howard, 1975). This disparity may be due to lack of female role models in training institutions or in the field, negative attitudes of counselors and professors toward women

in administration, and a lack of encouragement from women administrators within the profession.

Female role models in training institutions are indeed scarce. Approximately 98 percent of the faculty in departments of educational administration or its equivalent are males (Cirincione-Coles, 1975). Nor are female students in administration likely to find same sex students in their classes: approximately 92 percent of all students in educational administration or similar programs are males (Cirincione-Coles, 1975). Further, women are not encouraged to become educational administrators from within the public education system. Indeed, Bach (1976) suggests that women who do show interest in pursuing non-teaching careers in education are urged to become counselors, educational specialists, or supervisors and are rarely encouraged to become administrators. This observation was confirmed by Lesser (1978) when he reported that most of the increase in the number of women administrators was in personnel/support positions, rather than in positions of decision making and control.

Patterns of discrimination emerge clearly when rates of promotion and advancement are examined (Muhich, 1974; Blanchard, 1976). Taylor (1973) showed that male superintendents were unlikely to hire women as administrators, although there were no written policies precluding women. Indeed, data revealed that sex was the only factor that had any significant relationship to the hiring process. Other variables such as age, length of experience, size of school district, and type of position had no relationship to the hiring process. Krchniak (1978) confirmed these findings.

The fact that women principals are older and more experienced than men when assuming their first administrative position also reflects discrimination. Sixty-five percent of the men responding to a survey conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals were initially appointed to the principalship before age 35; 25 percent of the women were appointed before age 35 (Pharis and Zachariya, 1979). Gross and Trask (1976) reported that women principals tended to be older than men principals. They also found that women principals had more than

three times as much teaching experience as men principals. Women are apparently forced to undergo longer apprenticeships in order to establish their ability.

"Cronyism" or the buddy system, where men refer male associates to jobs, has handicapped many women (Taylor, 1973; Coursen, 1975; Howard, 1975), as has reliance on word-of-mouth or local bulletins for job information (Krczniak, 1978). Thus, employment discrimination against women has been found through age data, comparative years of teaching experience, and promotion schedules.

Targets for Change

Two facts emerge from the research on women administrators in education. First, men are the gatekeepers to the profession of educational administration. And second, women are not gaining ground in administration; indeed, quite the reverse holds. Representation of women in administration is on the decline at all levels of education. What remains, then, is to identify the critical "targets for change" in the 80s if women are to gain equal access, equal participation, and equal rewards.

Success will not come easily. The reasons for the decreasing number of women in educational leadership positions are complex. Psychological and sociological factors, compounded with institutionalized barriers to women in education and employment, have created an atmosphere in which few women aspire to or obtain administrative positions. The perpetuation of these barriers should be recognized and eliminated or the phenomenon of the vanishing female administrator will continue.

Women educators clearly face a challenge if they aspire to move from the classroom into administrative positions. The task, however, should not be focused on attitude change. Attitude change is slow and is more likely to result from behavior change than to cause behavior change. To increase the number of qualified aspiring administrators in their ranks, more women must:

- obtain credentials in educational administration
- apply for positions in educational administration
- encourage other women to aspire to positions in educational leadership.

These targets do not assume that sex-role stereotypes, family constraints, or discriminatory practices are easily changed. Indeed, these targets are, to a large degree, independent of other barriers to women's access to leadership positions. They do, however, place the responsibility for action in the group with the vested interest—women. The 80s may then see a reversal of the current underrepresentation of women in educational administration. ■

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