

A STUDY OF SELECTED  
GROUP ATTITUDES TOWARD THE EMPLOYMENT  
OF WOMEN AS EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

by

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ABSTRACT

This British Columbia Study concerns itself with the attitudes of groups of people closely associated with education toward the employment of women as school administrators. The participants in the study included the school trustees, administrators and teachers from a large urban school district (#61 Greater Victoria), a middle-sized urban-rural school district (#63 Saanich), and a smaller rural school district (#84 Vancouver Island West). A Likert-type questionnaire was distributed to the respondents in May, 1973, with the request that they respond as candidly as possible to 22 statements. The responses were subjected to an analysis of variance and to a post hoc multiple comparison of means.

The data revealed that the attitudes of the female teachers and the school trustees toward the employment of women as school administrators were not dissimilar. It was found, however, that a significant difference favouring the female teachers occurred when the attitude of the female teachers was compared to those of both the male teachers and the administrators. It was also found that a more favourable attitude was held by the total

female group when compared to the total male group. The size of the school district in which the respondents performed their duties was not associated with significant differences in attitude.

When the responses of the total teacher group were analysed, it was further determined that the qualifications of the teachers as determined by their teaching certificate, their number of years experience in the classroom, whether they taught at the elementary or secondary level, and whether or not they had previously worked with a woman school administrator were not significant factors in determining attitudes.

Examiners:



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D. F. M.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There seems little doubt that the selection of public school principals is an important task. In today's changing society every child who attends school will be influenced either directly or indirectly by the person who has been selected to fulfil the role of the school principal. Whether the contact and interaction between staff and students in today's public schools of Canada results in a positive influence or a negative influence will be determined, to a considerable extent, by the influence exerted by the person chosen to lead the school. The importance of the position of the school principal is underlined by Gross and Herriott (1965, p. 1) when they state:

Of all the administrative officials in the complex bureaucracy that manages public school systems in the United States, few have at their command greater potentialities for influencing directly the type and quality of education young pupils are to receive than has the elementary school principal. He is the school executive in closest contact with the central functions of the school: teaching and learning. His position of formal leadership provides him with the opportunity to motivate his staff and to improve its standards and performance in teaching ... The elementary school principal, in short, enjoys substantial opportunities to provide a high order of staff leadership.

Although the authors are referring to the elementary school principal, virtually much the same can be said for the secondary school principal. As the function of the public school principal becomes more complex and difficult in the years ahead, the indications are that the selection of those to fill this administrative position will also

become increasingly more complex and difficult.

Assuming that there is a desire to provide the highest quality of education possible, it seems reasonable to consider questions related to the maximum utilization of the talent pool from which all school principals are drawn. Although there appears to be a reasonable basis for concluding that administrative functions are somewhat global in nature, it does not necessarily follow that school principals will, or ought to be, selected from outside as well as inside the ranks of education. If current practice is to prevail, and there is no reason to assume otherwise, then a major preliminary criterion used to select candidates for appointment as school principals will be previous experience within the ranks of education. The Public Schools Act of British Columbia (1972, p. 4001) does not make provision for appointment of school principals from outside the ranks of education, for, in fact, under Section 129 (a), the Act gives the Board of School Trustees authority to appoint only teachers as principals of public schools. If it can be assumed, then, that future school principals are going to be selected from within the ranks of education, it is incumbent upon those making the selection to appoint only the most highly qualified, most competent, and most capable teachers to this position.

There may exist a largely untapped potential resource of quality administrators who are presently teaching in the public schools. There are women teachers who, although they constitute a steadily declining percentage of the active population in the profession, still make up the greater number of teachers in the public schools of Canada. Table I

gives some indication of the number and percentage of women teachers who were engaged in the teaching profession on the national and provincial scene for selected years.

TABLE I  
WOMEN TEACHERS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL TEACHING FORCE  
IN CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA FOR SELECTED YEARS

	Number of Men	Number of Women	Total	Women as a Percentage of Total
<u>CANADA</u>				
1948-49	21,867	63,468	85,335	74.4
1958-59	37,755	99,859	137,614	72.6
1968-69	85,660	150,807	236,467	63.8
<u>BRITISH COLUMBIA</u>				
1948-49	1,950	3,455	5,405	63.9
1958-59	4,461	6,206	10,667	58.2
1968-69	8,666	10,820	19,486	55.5

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Education Division, Teachers' Salaries and Qualifications, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1956, p. 12.  
Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Education Division, Salaries and Qualifications of Teachers in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, Ottawa, Information Canada, 1971, p. 18.

Relatively few women, in proportion to the number of female school teachers, hold the position of principal in the public schools. When the number of women principals who spend more than fifty per cent of their time in administration, presumably in the larger schools, is compared to the total percentage of female teachers, this disparity becomes even more pronounced. Table II and Table III point out the paucity of women administrators in relation to the total number of school principals in eight provinces of Canada and in British Columbia. Unfortunately, data are not available for Quebec and Ontario.

TABLE II

PRINCIPALS WHO SPEND FIFTY PER CENT OR LESS OF THEIR TIME  
IN ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1968 - 1969

	Number of Men	Number of Women	Total	Women as Percentage of Total
Eight Provinces	4,374	1,829	6,203	29.5
British Columbia	921	188	1,109	17.0

Source: Women's Bureau, Women in the Labour Force 1971,  
Ottawa, Labour Canada, [1972] p. 89.

TABLE III  
 PRINCIPALS WHO SPEND MORE THAN FIFTY PER CENT OF THEIR TIME  
 IN ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1968 - 1969

	Number of Men	Number of Women	Total	Women as Percentage of Total
Eight Provinces	2,913	427	3,340	12.8
British Columbia	829	17	846	2.0

Source: Women's Bureau, Women in the Labour Force 1971,  
 Ottawa, Labour Canada, [1972] p. 89.

From the above tables it can be readily seen that the number of women school principals in Canada, and particularly in British Columbia, is not proportionate to the percentage of women who make up the total teaching force.

#### Statement of the Problem

There are many possible reasons to justify the failure to utilize more fully the woman teacher as a potential resource in the selection of school principals. Attitudes of those engaged in the educational enterprise, such as school trustees, administrators, and teachers, could be one of the major reasons, and could play a considerable role in determining whether or not women should be appointed to the position of school principal. Assuming that attitudes are important, consideration should be given to the following questions:

1. What is the attitude toward the employment of women as school principals of those who are engaged in the educational enterprise?
2. How do the attitudes of school board members compare with others associated with education?
3. How do the attitudes of the schools' administrators, from the District Superintendent down to the individual school principals, compare with others associated with education?
4. How do the attitudes of the female teachers, themselves, compare with others associated with education?
5. How do the attitudes of the male teachers compare with others associated with education?
6. Is there any difference in the attitude of elementary teachers and secondary teachers toward the employment of women as school principals?
7. Is there any difference in attitude between those who have and those who have not worked for a woman school principal?
8. Does the size of the school district make any difference in the attitudes?
9. Is there any difference in attitude of teachers when one takes into consideration the qualifications or experience of those teachers?

#### Limitations of the Study

There are many different groups which are closely associated and intimately concerned with the operation of the public schools in their immediate geographical areas. Since it would not be a

feasible task to identify each group which may have an interest or bearing on this problem, limitations were placed on the groups to be surveyed in an attempt to keep the study within manageable limits.

1. The study is limited to school administrators, teachers, and members of the Board of School Trustees.
2. The study is limited to a random sample drawn from one large urban school district, one medium-sized urban-rural school district, and one smaller rural school district.
3. The study is limited to assessing only the attitudes of the above mentioned groups, even though it is realized that many other factors influence the decisions in the appointments of school principals.
4. The study will not attempt to classify any of the written comments inspired or provoked by the questionnaire, even though they were welcomed by the researcher.

#### Assumptions in the Study

1. It is assumed that attitudes to women as school principals can be measured, and will be distributed along a continuum.
2. It is assumed that the attitude to women as school principals influences to some degree the behaviour of those who are engaged in the selection procedures.

#### Definition of Terms

Attitudes: a relatively persistent, acquired tendency to respond in a consistent way toward a given class of people.

Attitude Scale: a means of obtaining an assessment of the degree of positive or negative affect that individuals may associate with some psychological object, ideal, or idea.

Elementary School: a school which enrolls pupils from kindergarten to grade seven or any portion thereof.

Secondary School: a school which enrolls pupils from grade eight to grade twelve or any portion thereof.

School Board: a group of school trustees duly elected or appointed and acting as a corporate body.

Beginning Teacher: a teacher who, counting the present school year, has had no more than two years teaching experience.

Experienced Teacher: a teacher who, counting the present school year, has had at least three years but no more than thirteen years teaching experience.

Veteran Teacher: a teacher who, counting the present school year, has had fourteen or more years teaching experience.

Administrator: a person occupying the position of District Superintendent, Director of Instruction, or School Principal.

### Significance of the Study

Although many studies along similar lines have been conducted in the past, few have dealt with this topic as it relates to British Columbia. Consequently, the findings may be of assistance to those administrators and authorities charged with the appointment and employment of school principals.

It is incumbent upon educational authorities to reexamine, reevaluate, and reconfirm their position as it pertains to this

theme, particularly in this present era when equal opportunity for both sexes is very topical. It is quite possible, because of preconceived attitudes of those who do the selecting and appointing of school principals, that women with superior qualities to the men are being overlooked in the selection procedures. As a result of this possible oversight, perhaps some of the nation's schools do not have as their principals the persons best able to assume these positions. An awareness of a bias in attitude by those responsible for the selection for this important task may help them correct this.

Although neither the classroom teachers nor the school principals have a formal role in selecting and employing the certified personnel to fill the administrative positions, it is quite possible that the Board of School Trustees, and those immediately responsible to the Board, may be influenced, to some degree, by what they believe to be the opinion of the teachers and principals in the schools. It is hoped that the attitudes of teachers and school principals will be clarified through this study.

As was indicated previously, it is realized that many factors enter into the decision of the appointment of school principals. This study will attempt to offer useful data concerning one of these factors: attitudes toward women, which, it is hoped, will be of benefit to those charged with the selection of the best possible candidate to assume the responsibilities of school principal.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to place the status of the woman school principal in context, this review of literature will concern itself with the status of women generally in an historical perspective. It will then attempt to review the literature available which is germane to the central topic so that a theoretical position may be established.

#### Status of Women - An Historical Perspective

##### Ancient Times

Certainly in antiquity women were not accorded the same rights in society as were men. Throughout her life a woman was supposed to remain absolutely under the power of her father, her husband, or her guardian, and she was permitted to do nothing without their consent. Indeed, as Hecker (1914, p.2) points out, this authority was so great that the father or the husband could, after calling a family council, put the woman to death without the formality of even a public trial.

During Roman times, the lot of the woman improved somewhat. Women could engage freely in many business pursuits, and often were to be found in various kinds of retail trade and commerce, as members of guilds, in the field of medicine, as well as in vaudeville and as

innkeepers. Beauvoir (1953, p. 96) notes that Roman women meddled in politics, plunged into the files of legal papers, disputed with grammarians and rhetoricians, went in passionately for hunting, chariot racing, fencing and wrestling, and were rivals of the men especially in their taste for amusement and in their vices.

There were also many legal qualifications designed to help women evade the strict letter of the law when this, if enforced absolutely, would work an injustice on the women. Laws were often stretched in their favour. Ignorance of the law, if there was no criminal offence involving good morals, was particularly accepted in the case of women "on account of the weakness of the sex" (Paulus, cited by Hecker, p. 33). Even the rights of women to an education were not questioned in Roman times.

### Europe

When the Germanic tribes invaded Europe, the rights of women reverted to the previous status of ancient times. The woman was always to be under guardianship and could never be independent under any conditions. Even during the early Middle Ages, as Canon Law began to assert itself and take over from Common Law, although a woman's worth as a person was recognized, the Christian Church reaffirmed the woman's subjection to man in no uncertain terms. Beauvoir (p. 98) quotes the writings of three church fathers which to some degree reflect the attitudes held during that time: "Adam was led to sin by Eve and not Eve by Adam. It is just and right that woman accept as lord and master him whom she led to sin" (St. Ambrose). "Among all savage beasts none is found so harmful as

woman" (St. John Chrysostom). "It is unchangeable that woman is destined to live under man's influence, and has no authority from her lord" (St. Thomas).

Davis (1971, p. 229), in her assessment of the impact of the Christian Church on the rights of women in Europe states:

To those who have accepted the myth that the church improved the status of women, it will come as a startling revelation to learn that, on the contrary, it was the Christian Church itself which initiated and carried forward the bitter campaign to debase and enslave the women of Europe.

### England

Women's rights in England were slightly different and a little more enlightened than women's rights in the rest of Europe. From very early times the law put the single woman of mature age practically on a par with men so far as her private rights were concerned. Hecker (p. 121) notes that she could hold land, make a will or contract, sue and be sued all of her own initiative without the need of a guardian. However, the status of married women was considerably different, and, under the old Common Law, the husband was very much the lord of all he surveyed. Trevelyan (1952, p. 260) states: "Wife beating was a recognized right of man, and was practised without shame by high as well as by low." But during the reign of Charles the Second, this recognized right of man began to be doubted and a husband's legal authority to administer this type of correction to his wife eventually disappeared.

Beginning with the year 1857, enlightenment in England

progressed considerably, and Hecker (p. 132) reports that certain Acts of Parliament were passed forbidding a husband to seize his wife's earnings and neglect her. A woman was actually allowed to keep her own wages after the desertion of her husband. Since that time, the status of women in Great Britain has gradually but steadily improved, and one of the high points in the quest for the equality of the sexes came with the granting of the franchise in 1920.

#### North America

In North America, the struggle for the improvement of the status of women paralleled closely that of the women of England. In the United States and Canada the women enjoyed practically the same legal rights as men, but by no means the same political, social, educational or professional privileges. In some respects the Canadian women were more fortunate than their counterparts in Britain. Although the Province of Quebec did not grant the franchise to women until 1940, women had attained the provincial franchise in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1916, in British Columbia and Ontario by 1917, and in Nova Scotia by 1918. Also in 1918, the federal franchise was granted to all women, preceding by two years the granting of suffrage in England.

The difficulties encountered in attempting to get equal educational opportunities for women is somewhat similar to the attempts to gain equality for women on the political scene. The affirmation of the rights of women to a higher education is distinctly a movement of the last half of the nineteenth century.

A more enlightened world began slowly to take some thought of women's higher education and to realize that because certain attitudes had been in vogue for a good many centuries, this, in itself, did not necessarily mean that such attitudes were correct. Hecker (p. 143) notes that Scotland led the way and as early as 1868 the University of Edinburgh opened its courses in pharmacy to women.

#### Canada

In Canada, the education of girls was a matter of evident concern and various religious orders were the first ones to be concerned with the education of women. However, good educational opportunities were limited. French (1968, p. 18) indicates that in 1841 a bill in the legislature of Upper Canada urged the setting up of Normal Schools and Model Schools proposing that they should train men to act as teachers and instructors. When the actual Normal School came into being six years later, however, it admitted young women as well as men, although it was clearly understood that the teachers, themselves, in the Normal and Model Schools were to be male.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, an increasing number of women in Canada entered the teaching profession. It was the need for teachers, male or female, that seemed to change the picture and, by 1860, women were attending normal schools in all the provinces.

It was about this time that women were first admitted to the universities in Canada. Through gradual progression and

enlightenment, education came to be considered the right of all, and equal opportunity for education is now fundamental to our society. Women are taking advantage of this opportunity and today the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded by universities in Canada to women is increasing steadily.

TABLE IV

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN CANADA WHO RECEIVED BACCALAUREATE DEGREES FOR SELECTED YEARS

Year	Total Number of Degrees Awarded	Number of Degrees Awarded to Women	Women as Percentage of Total
1930-31	5,290	1,338	25.3
1940-41	6,576	1,582	24.1
1945-46	8,192	2,200	26.9
1950-51	15,754	3,200	20.1
1955-56	13,770	3,151	22.9
1960-61	20,240	5,211	25.7
1965-66	38,470	12,660	32.9

Source: Canada, Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, Ottawa, 1970, p. 170.

In 1968, the Government of Canada set up a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. A total of 167 recommendations were submitted to the Governor-General-In-Council on September 28, 1970. Analyzing the attitudes toward women at the time, the Commissioners stated in the introduction to the report (Canada, 1970, p. xi):

In a dozen succinct words the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has clarified the issue of the rights of women: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Canada is, therefore, committed to a principle that permits no distinction in rights and freedoms between men and women. The principle emphasizes the common status of women and men rather than a separate status for each sex. The stage has been set for a new society equally enjoyed and maintained by both sexes.

But practices and attitudes die slowly...and discrimination against women...still flourishes and prejudice...is very much alive. It is abundantly clear that Canada's commitment is far from being realized.

Typical of the recommendations of the Commissioners to provide equality of the sexes is the recommendation that the federal, provincial and territorial governments should set up committees to review all publications concerned with the choice of occupations and careers. The Commissioners suggest that only those publications which encourage women to consider all occupations, including those that have been traditionally restricted to men, should be selected for use. Another recommendation is that the provinces and territories should direct the attention of guidance counsellors in both the elementary and secondary schools to the importance of encouraging both girls and boys to continue their education according to their individual aptitudes and to consider all occupational fields.

In summing up their report and viewing the attitudes toward women in Canada at the present time, the Commissioners conclude their report with the following comments (Canada, 1970, p. 393):

Women, as they seek equality, must contend with a society conceived and controlled by men. They require a

high degree of resolution to disregard present barriers and to attain the positions which best reflect their ability. But existing structures are not sacrosanct; women must be aware that they are entering a world that can be changed. And men, as they recognize women's claims to equality, may welcome an opportunity to examine Canada's institutions in a new light.

We have indicated some of the characteristics of the society that could emerge. The magnitude of the changes that must be introduced does not dismay us, but we are dismayed that so much has been left undone. In terms of Canada's commitments and the principles on which a democracy is based, what we recommend is no more than simple justice.

Gelber (1971, p. 14), Director of the Women's Bureau of Labour Canada, in a somewhat biting commentary on the attitudes toward women in Canada at the present time is a little more blunt than the Commissioners when she states:

...considerable efforts have been made during the last few years, through legislation and through education, to eliminate discrimination in this land. It is no longer legal, nor is it acceptable, to discriminate on grounds of colour; on grounds of religion; on grounds of racial extraction; or even, in a few cases, on grounds of age.

Yet it is still not recognized that when women are refused opportunities in employment and education; when they are treated less favourably than men in circumstances which should have dictated the same conditions, that this too is discrimination. It is discrimination on the grounds of sex. It is not only in the interests of women that this injustice must be rectified; it is in the interest of our country which boasts a free society.

#### Summary

From the foregoing it can be seen that women's historical quest for equality of the sexes has been long and hard, even bitter at times. Women have not, and even now probably do not, enjoy equal opportunities with men. It is in this context that one must view the position of the woman administrator in education.

### Women School Principals

It is difficult to ascertain the exact date when the position of elementary school principal was first created, but it is known that large city school systems had administrative positions of some type during the first half of the nineteenth century. The duties of these head teachers or principal teachers were largely limited to discipline, routine administrative acts, and grading of pupils in the various classrooms. Principals were expected to carry out regular teaching assignments in addition to performing limited administrative duties as the local representative of the superintendent of schools.

Exactly when the first woman school principal started in the schools of North America is still not clear. In its study of the principalship, the National Education Association (NEA, 1958, p. 110) found that comparable studies of proportions of men and women in principalships were virtually non-existent for the years previous to 1928. Any studies which were available, however, appeared to indicate that the first principalships were held almost entirely by men and that it was late in the nineteenth century before large numbers of women were holding positions as principals. By the year 1928, the number of women holding a supervising principalship comprised approximately 55 per cent of the total number, whereas the men held only about 45 per cent of the available positions. By 1948, in its second study of principalships, the NEA found that a reversal in the

proportion of men and women in the supervising principalship had taken place, and that men were in the majority with 59 per cent of the positions held by men and 41 per cent held by women. Ten years later, in 1958, the men had increased their majority to 62 per cent of the positions while women now occupied only 38 per cent of the supervising principalships.

In teaching principalships, where the principalship required 25 per cent or more of the time spent in teaching, the women still held a lead holding 59 per cent of the positions compared to only 41 per cent for the men. In comparing the combined supervising and teaching principalships, it was found that men held 59 per cent of the principalships while the women held only 41 per cent.

Many recent studies have been concerned about the choice of women as administrators of public schools. Barter (1959), in her study conducted in Michigan, found that a teacher's age, marital status, tenure status, level of education or the size of the community in which he taught had no significant relationships to his attitude to women principals. However, teachers with the least or the most experience were more favourable to women principals than those with a few years' experience. Women teachers were found to be more favourable than men teachers. Men teachers who had previous teaching experience with a woman principal were more favourable than those who had not had previous teaching experience with a woman principal. Barter also found that women teachers who were interested in a principalship

were more favourable to women principals than those who were not interested. However, Barter found that the majority of teachers rated men and women principals equal in both abilities and personal qualities.

In Florida, Hines and Grubman (1956) conducted a study to determine if observations about the effectiveness of democratic leadership were valid in education. Typical key situations were utilized to collect information concerning a principal's behaviour and to classify it as authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire, or nonclassifiable. It was found that women were more democratic by 22 per cent. In effective responses to administrative practices women were ahead of the men, and the women were also found to act situationally more often than men. Parents who rated school teaching effectiveness and principals' personal qualities tended to prefer the woman school administrator over the man, and in the matter of discipline parents approved more of women than men. Women principals were rated ahead in student morale, teacher morale, frequency with which teachers used desirable practices, and programme development. There was a tie in achievement in arithmetic, reading and language. It appeared that good teachers seemed to make more of a difference than the sex of the principal or how the principal operated. The authors concluded that perhaps the competition for administrative positions in both elementary and secondary schools is greater for women than for men, and where women are selected for the principalship, perhaps the calibre is higher. While the results of this Florida

Leadership Study do not constitute a blanket endorsement of women as principals, the authors did express concern that the sex of a principal has been a determining factor in recent years, with men very markedly preferred, although this preference correlates inversely with success on the job.

Hemphill, Griffiths and Frederiksen (1959) conducted a study which was supported by the Co-operative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education and by the Kellogg Foundation. In an attempt to provide information helpful in the solution of the problem of selecting school administrators, they used an "in-basket" approach and included in their study 232 principals from all parts of the United States. Several interesting factors emerged. They found that the work of women principals was characterized to a greater degree than that of men by asking subordinates for information. Women tended to do more work on the "in-basket" items, discussed problems more with their superiors or outsiders, and used the information provided in background materials somewhat more frequently than men. Men, however, made more concluding decisions than did women, followed pre-established structures more often, and had a greater number of terminal actions. Women appeared better able to provide instructional leadership because their knowledge of teaching methods and techniques tended to be rated higher. They also tended to be more concerned with the objectives of teaching, pupil participation, and evaluation of learning either because they were more willing or more able than men to provide

instructional leadership. Thus, if the job of a principal is conceived in a way that values working with teachers and outsiders, being concerned with the objectives of teaching, pupil participation and the evaluation of learning, having knowledge of teaching methods and techniques, and gaining positive reactions from teachers and superiors, the evidence appears to favour women. The authors concluded that, as a class, men were not overwhelmingly superior to women as elementary school principals, and that in considering the question of whether or not men should be appointed as the school principal in preference to women, it would appear that the answer was probably "no". The findings compare favourably to those found in the Florida Leadership Study.

Anderson (1965) found that the principalship was becoming a full time professional position, and that the absence of women in elementary school principalships and central office positions was pronounced. There appeared to be no valid reasons why men were accorded preferential treatment, and no reason why the last stronghold for the woman administrator had fallen. The author expressed concern that to ignore women for administrative positions was to ignore a large and important sector of the talent pool.

Davis (1965) surveyed eighteen large urban school systems in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. A questionnaire was sent to the superintendents of school districts and a different questionnaire was sent to 351 persons appointed to their first

administrative position since 1959. The two groups did not agree as to which factors had been more important in the selection of the principals. The superintendents, without exception, stated that they preferred men to women as school principals except for those schools whose highest grade was two or three. Since the selection policies in most of the school systems were ill-defined and existed only in the minds of those responsible for the selection, the author recommended that, in fairness to all concerned, school boards should commit their selection policies to writing and make them available to their teaching personnel.

In a study conducted in the schools of Detroit as a result of a rapid decline in the number of women principals, Parlato (1965) attempted to determine whether men and women were regarded as equal in administrative capacities by those associated most closely with the principalship. She also wanted to find out whether it was felt by women that there was an attitude of discrimination which militated against their appointment to administrative positions. Although she found that the women were equal in experience, education, physical stamina, and personality factors, the women felt there was a bias in favour of men. Whether the bias was real or imagined, she felt that this might have been a factor in discouraging women from becoming principals. She further suggested that the apathetic attitude of women could have explained the declining status of women in administration.

Morsink (1965) conducted a study in Michigan in which 15

men principals and 15 women principals who were matched as closely as possible regarding grade organization, pupil population, type and size of community, and faculty size were compared in their leader behaviour as perceived by their faculty members. They were all administered the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire, Form XII. On certain dimensions of leader behaviour men and women were not perceived to behave in a significantly different manner. On other dimensions Morsink concluded that if the appropriate secondary school principal was defined as one who most often spoke and acted as representative of the group, was persuasive in argument, emphasized production, maintained cordial relations with superiors, influenced them, and strove for higher status, the findings favoured women as secondary school principals. She was convinced that there was no justification to the argument that male secondary school principals behave more appropriately than women secondary school principals and there was nothing to suggest any valid reason for not employing women.

Randall's Problem Attack Behaviour Inventory was administered to the principals of 30 Texas suburban elementary schools by Hoyle (1965). Women scored significantly higher in Problem Recognition Behaviour, the extent to which a school principal appears to perceive situations that are seen as problems by the staff. There was also a significant difference in favour of the women in Administrator Evaluation Behaviour which measured the extent to which an administrator reviews the results of his

actions. On the other variables of Problem Analysis Behaviour, Hoyle reported that there were no significant differences between the women and men school principals.

Another study of significance in assessing the status of women as school principals was one reported by Lemon (1965). In a study conducted in the state of Kansas, he attempted to assess the attitude of school board members, school administrators and school teachers toward utilizing women in the role of school principals. The study was designed to consider various factors including age, sex, academic level, years of experience, size of school district, responsibility for recruiting, experience in working with a woman principal, and amount of formal education. Lemon found that teachers have a more positive attitude toward employing women as school principals than do school administrators. Those who had previously worked with women school principals appeared to be more favourable than those who had not. Women as a group tended to be more favourably inclined toward women principals than the men as a group. Both the elementary and secondary school groups seemed to have the same attitude to women principals, which tended to negate the notion that the secondary schools needed a male as principal more than the elementary schools.

An investigation by Rosen and Jerdee (1973) examined the way sex-role stereotypes, or the perceptions and expectations of what is appropriate behaviour for males and females, influence the evaluations of male and female supervisory personnel. Their

two manipulated variables were the sex of the supervisor and the sex of the subordinates. Stereotypes of an aggressive threatening role being appropriate for males and a compassionate helping role for females were not upheld by the data. The similarity of ratings by subjects of both sexes provided evidence that men and women share common perceptions and expectations regarding what constitutes appropriate behaviour for males and females in a supervisory capacity.

McIntyre (1965, p. 43), in assessing the whole matter of the apparent disparity in the number of women presently being appointed to the position of principal of a public school, sums up the situation very succinctly. He states:

There is a disturbing tendency to disqualify a large proportion of the possible candidates for elementary school principalships before the race even starts. I refer to women who constitute a great preponderance of the population from which elementary principals are selected.

Why should we automatically disregard such a large segment of our talent pool, as is done in many school systems? Not because of any inherent lack of mental or academic prowess - women in teacher education programs are, on the average, notoriously superior to their classmates. Not because of any research that shows men to be superior to the women in the principalship - in fact, the little evidence that we have suggests just the opposite conclusion. The ~~women-teachers-won't-work-with-a-woman-principal~~ argument has never been substantiated but a comfortable myth, perpetuated by males whose research on the subject probably consists of knowing a woman or two who couldn't get along with anybody.

We have every reason to believe that many promising prospects for the principalship are simply not getting our attention.

One final study reported here is of particular interest in assessing the possible reasons for the paucity of women school principals. Adapting a Work Component Study through factor and item analysis, Miskel and Heller (1972) compiled an Educational Work Component Study consisting of 56 Likert-type items. The questions were designed to measure various factors such as: potential for personal challenge and development, competitiveness desirability and reward of success, tolerance for work pressure, conservative security, and willingness to seek reward in spite of uncertainty. The questionnaire was administered to 703 subjects from three school districts. It was found that the male subjects scored significantly higher in tolerance for work pressure, competitiveness desirability and reward of success, as well as in willingness to seek reward in spite of uncertainty. From these results, the authors concluded that the fact that the male subjects scored higher on these subscales of intrinsic motivation and instability than did females might have helped to explain why men dominate in the number of administrative positions. They expressed the opinion that charges that school districts were unreasonably prejudiced in promoting males to administrative positions must be tempered by the authors' findings.

#### Summary

From an historical perspective, women have not, and possibly still do not, enjoy the same opportunities for advancement as do men, and preferential treatment still may be accorded to the men. Many recent studies have concerned themselves with the appointment

of women as principals of public schools. It is unfortunate, however, that so few studies are available which contain empirical evidence, and that so many that deal with the topic under review contain only unsubstantiated opinion.

The findings of the reported empirical studies indicate that there is no difference between the personal qualities of women school principals and male school principals. Women seem to display more democratic behaviour as they perform their duties than do men, and student and teacher morale certainly seem to be as high in schools where a woman assumes the executive role. Women do appear to be somewhat superior to men when instructional leadership is taken into account, and they also prove to be more competent than men when one considers the objectives of teaching. When compared for leadership behaviour, women were not perceived to perform in a significantly different manner on certain dimensions, while on other dimensions the findings did appear to be in favour of women.

The perceptions by teachers of the performance of women school principals in no way favoured the men, and the abilities of both men and women school principals were rated about even.

It would appear from a review of the literature that women school principals are at least equal, if not superior, to men school principals in their performance of the role as leader of the school. All the various studies reported in this paper seem to indicate that there is no empirical evidence which

suggests in any manner whatsoever that women school principals are inferior to men school principals, or that the principalship of the school will suffer if the appointment is given to a woman.

It is quite significant that, of all the literature which has been published on this important topic, not one piece of research could be found which favours the appointment of a male over a female for the position of school principal. There appears to be no valid reason for not appointing women as school principals at either the elementary or secondary level.

In view of the foregoing, the one surprising fact that emerges from the literature is that the number of women, compared to men, employed as school principals has remained so disproportionately small when this figure is compared to the total number of women who comprise the teaching profession in the public schools.

From the above review of literature, it would appear reasonable to conclude the following:

1. Teachers should be more favourably disposed to the employment of women school principals than administrators.
2. Women teachers should be more favourably disposed to the employment of women school principals than male teachers.
3. Male teachers who have previously worked with a woman school principal should be more favourably disposed to the employment of women school principals than male teachers who have not worked with a woman school principal.
4. Teachers in the elementary school should be as favourably

disposed to the employment of women school principals as the teachers in the secondary school.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was formulated in such a way that the attitudes of School Board Members, administrators, male teachers and female teachers toward women assuming the role of school principal in elementary or secondary public schools could be measured. The instrument (see Appendix, p.73) consisted of twenty-two items to be answered on a five point scale. Other identifying factors were requested from the respondents, and written comments on the back of the answer sheet which had been inspired or provoked by the survey were also welcomed by the researcher. The identifying factors were then considered independently and/or as sub-groups of the four main groups so that an evaluation of the relationship existing between and within these groups could be ascertained.

In the statistical treatment of the data, the regions for the rejection of the null hypothesis were located in both tails of the distribution. The probability level of .05 or less was considered the significant level for sustaining or not sustaining the various hypotheses.

The questionnaire-type opinion survey was distributed to the respondents by mail at the beginning of May, 1973, and the last reply was received on June 8, 1973.

### Sample

In selecting a sample, two factors were considered: there would have to be enough respondents in each category to make the study statistically valid, and, for purposes of generalization, the sample would have to consider the attitudes of those associated with education in a large urban area, a middle-sized urban-rural area, and a smaller rural area. Consequently, to satisfy the above two conditions, it was decided that the sample would be drawn from School District #61 (Greater Victoria), School District #63 (Saanich), and School District #84 (Vancouver Island West).

Once the school districts had been determined, attention was then focused on the actual respondents who would be selected for the study. Because of the comparative ease of communication in the Greater Victoria School District, it was decided to select the sample in Victoria from as many of the public schools as was feasible, and yet keep the size of the sample manageable. Consequently, the sample for Victoria was drawn from 49 schools. It included the principals of those schools as well as male and female elementary and secondary teachers randomly selected from 41 of the schools. In Saanich, the sample was limited to the principal and the staff members of three schools; two elementary schools and one junior secondary school. In Vancouver Island West the sample was limited to the principal and the staff members of one elementary school and one secondary school.

The sample for the members of the School Board included all the members of the Board of School Trustees for the three selected districts. The District Superintendents and any Directors of Instruction in the three selected school districts were also included in the sample.

### Instrument

In a search for an instrument for the study, several factors were considered. The instrument should be one which could be administered easily and completed without too much difficulty for the respondents. Because it was realized that the respondents were engaged in time consuming occupations, it necessarily needed to be one which could be completed fairly quickly if there was to be a reasonably adequate return. The instrument had to be one which could be easily understood by all four selected groups. It was also desirable to have a Likert-type scale in order to provide more general attitudinal information than the simple dichotomy of "yes" or "no" available from a Thurstone-type scale. Finally, the instrument had to be one which was both valid and reliable.

The instrument finally selected (see Appendix, p. 73) was one developed by Donald K. Lemon who designed the instrument in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph. D degree at the University of Kansas. The final draft of his instrument was a questionnaire consisting of twenty-two items which could be responded to on a simple answer sheet capable of being marked

by an optical scanner. The respondents had the choice of the following replies: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. Each of the items had a negative or positive direction and each item could be scored on a scale of one to five depending upon the nature of the item. A system of reverse scoring was used for the negative items. By summing the scores on each return, it was possible to arrange in numerical order the attitudes of the various respondents. Those with the most favourable attitudes would have the highest scores and those with the least favourable attitudes would have the lowest scores. Because his instrument met the previously mentioned criteria, it was decided to use it in its entirety (see Appendix, p. 73).

#### Reliability and Validity

The selected instrument had been subjected to a product-moment correlation coefficient examination and a split-halves technique was applied to provide the reliability estimate for the two half tests. By applying the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula, a reliability factor of .90 for the entire test was established. Thus it would appear that the instrument could be readministered to a different population with a relatively high degree of confidence.

The instrument, after a perusal of the items, appears to measure what it purports to measure. However, since the author did not report a validity coefficient, only face validity is assumed.

### Procedure

Letters requesting permission to conduct the research in the previously mentioned school districts were sent to each of the three District Superintendents (see Appendix, p.77). These letters contained a statement which:

1. explained the nature of the research which would be conducted;
2. indicated who would be requested to participate in the study;
3. indicated what was involved by those who did participate;
4. indicated that all replies would remain anonymous.

Permission was received from Mr. R. S. Boyle, District Superintendent of School District #84, Mr. E. E. Lewis, District Superintendent of School District #63, and from the Research Department of School District #61 to conduct the study in those selected school districts.

Because of the nature of the study, it was essential that there be sufficient respondents in the category of teachers who had previously worked with a woman school principal. Since there was no knowledge of the number of teachers who fulfilled this requirement, letters were sent to the principals of the schools of Greater Victoria which contained the above statements plus a request for the names of members of their staffs who had previously worked with a woman school principal. A total of 131 names were submitted to the researcher. An attempt was made to involve as many schools as possible. The names of 25 teachers

who had previously worked with a woman school principal were randomly selected from the list of names submitted by the school principals, and the names of 25 teachers who had not previously worked with a woman school principal were randomly selected from the Directory of Personnel mimeographed by the Greater Victoria School Board.

The opinion survey was then sent to the selected teachers, to the administrators, and to the members of the Board of School Trustees of the three selected school districts. Forming part of the instrument was a section which elicited supplementary information. The respondents were all requested to indicate, by a response position on the answer sheet, their sex, their role, and their school district. For those respondents who were not school board members or district supervisory personnel, there was a further request to indicate their teaching experience, the level at which they performed their duties, whether or not they had previously worked for a woman school principal, and their qualifications as determined by the number of years completed at university. Accompanying each opinion survey was a letter containing the information initially circulated to the District Superintendents and containing a further request that the survey be returned within one week's time. Table V summarizes the composition of the sample groups.

TABLE V  
COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE GROUPS

	School Trustees	Administrators	Teachers	Total
School District #61 (Urban)	9	53	50	112
School District #63 (Urban-Rural)	7	5	35	47
School District #84 (Rural)	5	3	20	28
	—	—	—	—
Total	21	61	105	187

A total of 187 questionnaires were sent to those selected for the sample. Out of this number a total of 151, or 81 per cent, were returned to the researcher. Two others were returned with the notation that the respondents chose not to participate in the study.

#### Statistical Tests

In treating the data obtained, a decision had to be made as to whether the appropriate parametric or non-parametric statistics would be employed in analysing the responses. The decision depended upon whether or not there was a normal distribution since this factor is basic to the use of parametric statistics. If the assumption of normal distribution could not be satisfied,

a suitable non-parametric analysis would be selected.

Because it was decided that the obtained data met the requisite assumption of normalcy in distribution, it was decided to employ the appropriate parametric One-Way Analysis of Variance to test all hypotheses. The results were further subjected to a post hoc treatment of the Scheffe Multiple Comparison of Means to determine where, if any, significant differences occurred among the various groups.

#### Hypotheses

- H-1 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among School Board member respondents, school administrator respondents, female teacher respondents, and male teacher respondents as measured by the opinion survey.
- H-2 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the total male group respondents and the total female group respondents as measured by the opinion survey.
- H-3 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the total

elementary school group respondents and the total secondary school group respondents as measured by the opinion survey.

- H-4 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among the beginning teacher group of respondents, the experienced teacher group of respondents, and the veteran teacher group of respondents as measured by the opinion survey.
- H-5 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between those teacher respondents who have previously worked with a woman school principal and those teacher respondents who have not previously worked with a woman school principal as measured by the opinion survey.
- H-6 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among those respondents who perform their duties in School District #61 (Greater Victoria), School District #63 (Saanich), and School District #84 (Vancouver Island West) as measured by the

opinion survey.

H-7 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among those teacher respondents who have completed the equivalent of two years of university training, three years of university training, four years of university training, five years of university training, and six or more years of university training as measured by the opinion survey.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

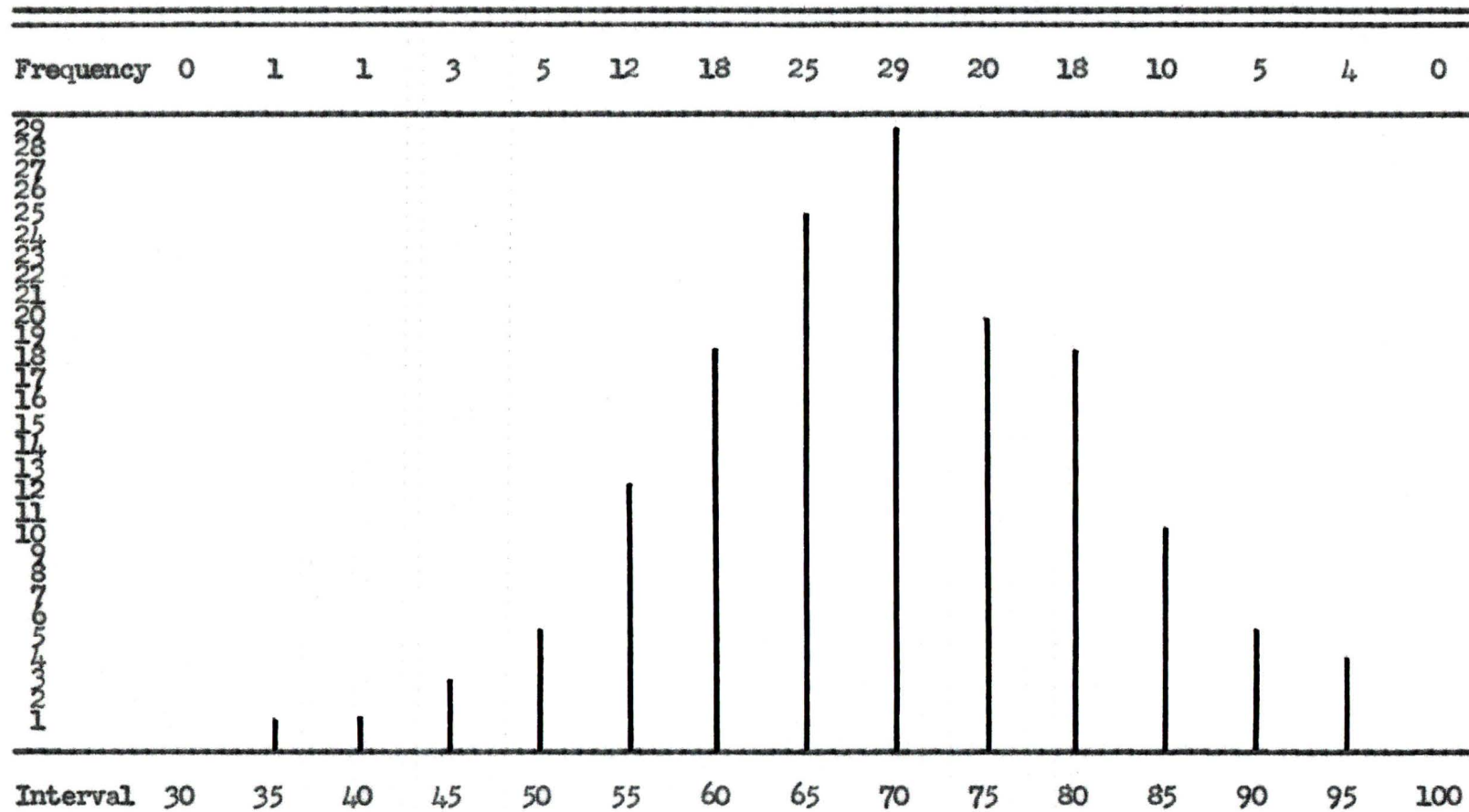
The returned answer sheets of the respondents were first marked by the use of an optical scanner. Since it was necessary, before analysing the data with a parametric statistic, to satisfy the requisite assumption of normalcy of distribution, the total raw scores were subjected to a review for frequency distribution. Table VI presents a histogram of the obtained total raw scores.

Since there appeared to be a normal distribution of total raw scores, the results were subjected to further statistical procedures through the use of the parametric One-Way Analysis of Variance. When there were more than two groups and the hypotheses were not sustained, contingent hypotheses were developed and were subjected to the post hoc treatment of the Scheffe Multiple Comparison of Means test to determine where the differences existed.

#### Hypothesis 1

H 1 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among School Board member respondents, school administrator respondents, female teacher respondents, and male teacher respondents as measured by the

TABLE VI  
 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL SCORES



opinion survey.

TABLE VII  
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 1

Group	n	Mean
School Board Members	16	72.50
School Administrators	53	64.91
Female School Teachers	48	75.94
Male School Teachers	33	66.06
Homogeneity of Variance	$\chi^2 = .546$	$p = .909$
n = 150	df = 3	F = 10.75
		$p = .001^*$

\* Significant at the .01 level of confidence

An examination of the data in Table VII shows that there is a significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among the School Board member respondents, school administrator respondents, female school teacher respondents, and male school teacher respondents.

HYPOTHESIS 1 IS THEREFORE NOT SUSTAINED.

Contingent hypotheses follow which were tested to determine where the differences among the four sample groups existed.

Contingent Hypothesis 1<sub>1</sub>

H 1<sub>1</sub> There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the school administrator respondents and the female school teacher respondents as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE VIII

RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF MEANS TEST  
FOR CONTINGENT HYPOTHESIS 1<sub>1</sub>

Group	n	Mean
School Administrators	53	64.91
Female School Teachers	48	75.94

p = .001\*

\* Significant at the .01 level of confidence

An examination of the data in Table VIII shows that there is a significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the school administrator respondents and the female school teacher respondents. The difference is in favour of the female school teachers.

CONTINGENT HYPOTHESIS 1<sub>1</sub> IS THEREFORE NOT SUSTAINED.

Contingent Hypothesis 1<sub>2</sub>

H 1<sub>2</sub> There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the female school teacher respondents and the male school teacher respondents as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE IX  
RESULTS OF THE SCHEFFE MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF MEANS TEST  
FOR CONTINGENT HYPOTHESIS 1<sub>2</sub>

Group	n	Mean
Female School Teachers	48	75.94
Male School Teachers	33	66.06

p = .001\*

\* Significant at the .01 level of confidence

An examination of the data in Table IX shows that there is a significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the female and the male teacher respondents. The difference is in favour of the female school teachers.

CONTINGENT HYPOTHESIS 1<sub>2</sub> IS THEREFORE NOT SUSTAINED.

Hypothesis 2

H 2 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the total male group respondents and the total female group respondents as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE X  
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 2

Group	n	Mean
Total Male Group	97	65.95
Total Female Group	53	76.00
Homogeneity of Variance	$\chi^2 = .226$	$p = .635$
n = 150	df = 1	F = 30.74
		p = .001 *

\* Significant at the .01 level of confidence

An examination of the data in Table X shows that there is a significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the total male group respondents and the total female group respondents. The difference is in favour of the total female group.

HYPOTHESIS 2 IS THEREFORE NOT SUSTAINED.

Hypothesis 3

- H 3 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the total elementary school group respondents and the total secondary school group respondents as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE XI  
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 3

Group	n	Mean
Total Elementary School Group	65	67.31
Total Secondary School Group	60	71.22
Homogeneity of Variance	$\chi^2 = .349$	$p = .555$
n = 125	df = 1	F = 3.36
		p = .069

An examination of the data in Table XI shows that there is no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between the total elementary school group respondents and the

total secondary school group respondents.

HYPOTHESIS 3 IS THEREFORE SUSTAINED.

Hypothesis 4

H 4 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among the beginning teacher group of respondents, the experienced teacher group of respondents and the veteran teacher group of respondents as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE XII  
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 4

Group	n	Mean
Beginning Teacher Group	13	69.69
Experienced Teacher Group	46	72.26
Veteran Teacher Group	66	66.94
Homogeneity of Variance	$\chi^2 = 4.316$	$p = .115$
n = 125	df = 2	$F = 2.74$ $p = .069$

An examination of the data in Table XII shows that there is no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) in the verbalized attitudes

toward the employment of women as school principals among the beginning teacher group of respondents, the experienced teacher group of respondents, and the veteran teacher group of respondents.

HYPOTHESIS 4 IS THEREFORE SUSTAINED.

#### Hypothesis 5

H 5 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between those teacher respondents who have previously worked with a woman school principal and those teacher respondents who have not previously worked with a woman school principal as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE XIII  
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 5

Group	n	Mean
Those who have worked	49	70.12
Those who have not worked	78	68.67
Homogeneity of variance	$\chi^2 = .437$	$p = .508$
n = 127	df = 1	$F = .44$
		$p = .507$

An examination of the data in Table XIII shows that there is no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals between those teacher respondents who have previously worked with a woman school principal and those teacher respondents who have not previously worked with a woman school principal. HYPOTHESIS 5 IS THEREFORE SUSTAINED.

#### Hypothesis 6

H 6 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among those respondents who perform their duties in School District #61 (Greater Victoria), School District #63 (Saanich), and School District #84 (Vancouver

Island West) as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE XIV  
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 6

Group	n	Mean
School District #61	94	67.79
School District #63	31	71.65
School District #84	26	73.27
Homogeneity of Variance	$\chi^2 = 2.465$	$p = .292$
n = 151	df = 2	$F = 3.01$
		$p = .052$

An examination of the data in Table XIV shows there is no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among those respondents who perform their duties in School District #61, School District #63, and School District #84.

HYPOTHESIS 6 IS THEREFORE SUSTAINED.

#### Hypothesis 7

H 7 There will be no significant differences in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among those teacher respondents who have completed the equivalent

of two years of university training, three years of university training, four years of university training, five years of university training, and six or more years of university training as measured by the opinion survey.

TABLE XV

RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TEST FOR  
HYPOTHESIS 7

Group	n	Mean
Two Years University	5	70.20
Three Years University	16	74.88
Four Years University	19	64.89
Five Years University	53	69.79
Six or More Years University	34	67.97
Homogeneity of Variance	$\chi^2 = 5.203$	$p = .267$
$n = 127$	$df = 4$	$F = 1.68$
		$p = .160$

An examination of the data in Table XV shows that there is no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) in the verbalized attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals among those teacher respondents who have completed the equivalent of two years of university training, three years

of university training, four years of university training, five years of university training, and six or more years of university training.

HYPOTHESIS 7 IS THEREFORE SUSTAINED.

Summary

The following table is presented as a summary of the hypothesis testing:

TABLE XVI  
SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis	Groups Compared	p	Ordered Means- Highest to Lowest	Findings
1	School Board Administrators Male Teachers Female Teachers	.001 *	Female Teachers School Board Male Teachers Administrators	<u>Not Sustained</u>
1 <sub>1</sub>	Administrators Female Teachers	.001 *	Female Teachers Administrators	<u>Not Sustained</u>
1 <sub>2</sub>	Male Teachers Female Teachers	.001 *	Female Teachers Male Teachers	<u>Not Sustained</u>
2	Male Group Female Group	.001 *	Female Group Male Group	<u>Not Sustained</u>
3	Elementary Group Secondary Group	.069	Secondary Group Elementary Group	Sustained

TABLE XVI (Continued)

Hypothesis	Groups Compared	p	Ordered Means— Highest to Lowest	Findings
4	Beginning Teachers Experienced Teachers Veteran Teachers	.069	Experienced Teachers Beginning Teachers Veteran Teachers	Sustained
5	Worked with a Woman Not Worked with a Woman	.507	Worked with a Woman Not Worked with a Woman	Sustained
6	School District #61 School District #63 School District #84	.052	School District #84 School District #63 School District #61	Sustained
7	Two Years University Three Years University Four Years University Five Years University Six or More Years University	.160	Three Years University Two Years University Five Years University Six or More Years University Four Years University	Sustained

\* Significant at the .01 level of confidence

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Conclusions

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the data in Chapter IV appears to be the obvious dichotomy which results from a comparison of attitudes by sex. The significant difference ( $p = .000003$ ) indicates that the total group of women in the sample had a markedly more favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than did the total group of men. As a result, the notion that women prefer to work for a male administrator is seriously challenged, if not refuted. An analysis of the individual responses indicates that there is a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in 16 of the 22 items responded to, and in only six of the items, particularly those dealing with equal opportunity for women as school principals, was there any general agreement.

In comparing the attitudes of School Board members, administrators, female teachers, and male teachers, the data indicates that a significant difference ( $p = .000005$ ) in attitudes toward the employment of women as school principals exists among these four groups. An analysis of the individual responses in this particular comparison indicates that there is a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in 14 of the 22 items. Just how much the dichotomy of sex, mentioned in the previous paragraph, influenced the results is not clear but there is

no doubt that there is some pervading effect or interaction. This is obvious when, in considering the attitudes of the female teachers as compared to the male teachers or the administrator group, a significant difference ( $p < .01$ ) in attitude prevails. In comparing the School Board respondents with the female teacher respondents, there was a much greater similarity of views. There was a similar agreement of views if one considered the attitudes of the administrators and the male teachers, but it could be argued that these two particular groups were drawn from practically the same population. In comparing the School Board respondents with the administrator respondents, although the results were not statistically significant, there was certainly a tendency for the School Board members to have a much more favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than the administrator group. Comparing the administrators and the male teachers with the School Board and female teachers, a wide disparity of attitudes prevails, but again, since so few male members are represented in the second grouping, this could be argued as a reflection of the dichotomy of sex.

The hypothesis of no statistically significant differences occurring between the elementary teachers and the secondary teachers was sustained. While the secondary teachers tended to have a slightly more favourable attitude, a significant difference in attitude applied to only three of the individual items. In analysing these three items, although it can not be

definitely ascertained, it is suspected that the differences which occur might be influenced, to some extent, by the perception of the elementary school teachers of a younger person occupying the executive position. From this review, it could be suggested that the secondary teachers, in particular, do not feel the necessity for a male to always assume the principalship of a secondary school.

No significant differences were found in the general comparison of beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and veteran teachers although some differences were found in three individual items. Generally, the experienced teachers appeared to have the most favourable responses with the veteran teachers having the least favourable attitudes. On only the one item pertaining to the long term policy of restricting administrative positions to men did the veteran teachers have the highest mean, and on fourteen of the twenty-two items they had the most conservative score. This might possibly indicate that the veteran teachers were less willing to experience a change in the sex of the principal than the other two groups because of a reluctance to change an already established concept. The beginning group of teachers was also less favourable to a woman school principal than the experienced teachers, and this could perhaps be traceable to their having had a male administrator when they were students, and their desire to operate within pre-established structures in their first two years in the teaching profession. Possibly the experienced teachers, who

have witnessed and evaluated many changes within the educational system, and probably constitute a younger group than the veteran teachers, are more ready to experience a change in the sex of the educational leader of the school than are the beginning and veteran teachers, because they are less conservative in their approach to education. However, the number of years of teaching experience, as a factor influencing attitudes toward women as school principals, does not appear to be significant.

In the comparison of those teachers who have previously worked with a woman school principal and those who have not, there was the greatest amount of agreement of all the evaluations made in the study. While those who had previously worked with a woman school principal tended to have the more favourable attitudes, the difference in attitude was not pronounced. On only the one item which dealt with women administrators being more inclined to praise the deserving teacher was there any significant difference, and it is suspected that the reason for this difference could be that those who had not worked with a woman school principal did not have the experience on which to base their opinion. Thus actual practice determined the response resulting in a higher mean for those who had the experience, while those who did not probably responded conservatively to an assumption.

In the comparison of the three school districts, ranging from a large urban district to a smaller rural district, which were sampled to determine whether the size of the school district

influenced the attitude toward the employment of women as school principals, the null hypothesis was sustained because the probability statistic ( $p = .052$ ) was just slightly in excess of the accepted level of confidence. However, there was a strong indication that the most favourable attitudes were held by those in the smallest school district and the least favourable attitudes were held in the largest school district. This tends to negate the often-held assumption that the larger school districts are more amenable to the employment of women as school principals. If one is concerned about attitudes, it would appear that the smaller school districts would be more responsive to a woman as school principal than the larger school districts.

The final comparison of the study concerned itself with the attitudes of teachers compared with their qualifications as determined by the number of years of completed university training. No statistically significant differences were found, and no apparent pattern emerged from the analysis. Those with two or three years university training had the most favourable attitudes while those with four years of university training had the least favourable attitudes. Those with the highest qualifications expressed attitudes which fell between the other two groupings.

### Discussion

Three factors in particular appear to have some influence on the attitudes toward the employment of women as school

principals by those who are most closely associated with the educational enterprise. The most predominant factor is the sex of the individual respondent. In this study the findings seem to imply that the women associated with education have a much more favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than do the men who are associated with education. Just why this is so is not evident from the statistical treatment of the data. It is suspected, however, that in the present era, when there is so much general expression about the status of women; when the policies, concerns, and actions of women's liberation associations have been brought more to the attention of the public through the various communication media; when recommendations from a Royal Commission set up to study the status of women in Canada suggest a greater equality of opportunity for women; when the British Columbia teaching profession, itself, has set up a task force to improve the status of the majority of its members; that these factors, among others, have helped to engender a much greater feeling of determination among the female member respondents to achieve equality of opportunity. This study suggests that the appointment of women as school principals would be endorsed by the majority of the members of the profession, and that a favourable attitude is presently held by those responsible for the selection procedure, the members of the School Board.

The second factor which emerges from the study is that one's

perception of the role of the school principal appears to influence his or her attitude toward the employment of women as school principals. An analysis of the data indicates that if the male teachers and female teachers are combined into a single grouping, their attitude is quite similar to the attitude of the School Board member respondents, while the attitude of the administrator group stands out as being dissimilar to the other two groupings. The analysis does not give any indication of why there should be such a discrepancy in attitude, but it could be the difference in the matter of the perception of the role of the administrator by the three groups. It is possible, of course, that the dissimilarity is simply a matter of the polarization because of sex differences, and that this is more conclusive proof of the validity of the assumption in the preceding paragraph. However, it is suspected that some of the difference, at least, is attributable to the difference in the perception of role expectations and role performance.

The third factor emerging from this study is the consistency with which the size of the school district appeared to have some influence on the attitudes of the respondents. It is possible, again, that the perception of the role of school principal differs considerably from district to district depending upon its size, or whether it is predominantly urban or rural. It is suggested that in a larger school district, the position of school principal is perceived in such a way as to expect a more formalized and more

structured relationship to exist in the educational hierarchy, whereas in a smaller rural district the organization of the line and staff relationships permits a much more flexible organization to operate. It is quite possible that women school principals are perceived in such a way as to operate more effectively in a less formal, less structured hierarchy, which may, in part, explain the differences in the obtained results.

One other interesting matter emerging from the study is the surprisingly similar attitudes displayed by those who have previously worked with a woman school principal and those who have not. It would appear from the results that those respondents who had previously worked with a woman as school principal perceived her to operate quite as effectively in any given situation as did men principals, to have provided her staff as much educational leadership, and to have had the same educational expectations for the pupils in her school as did her male counterparts.

The findings in this study are, in many respects, quite consistent with the literature which has been reviewed. That women have a more favourable attitude toward women school principals than men is again confirmed. It is also confirmed that teachers have a more positive attitude toward women school principals than administrators. That the smaller the school district, the more positive the attitude is consistent with previous findings, as is the fact that elementary and

secondary teachers have somewhat the same attitudes.

Applying these factors to the British Columbia educational scene, the attitudes of the different groups and sub-groups at the present time are not significantly different from the attitudes of similar groups in other parts of North America.

The findings also confirm the fact that there is no valid reason, so far as attitudes are concerned, for not appointing women to the position of either elementary or secondary school principalships. It is acknowledged, however, that there may be valid non-attitudinal reasons why women constitute a minority in administrative positions in public schools.

#### Conclusions and Discussions - Summary

The following is an attempt to state more concisely the major findings of this study.

1. Of the four selected groups, female teachers have the most favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals.
2. School Board members rank second in their attitude toward the employment of women as school principals.
3. Male teachers have a less favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than either the female teachers or the School Board members.
4. The administrator grouping (District Superintendents, Directors of Instruction, and school principals) have the least positive attitude toward the employment of women as school principals.

5. The total female population sampled has a much more favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than the total male population sampled.
6. Although not statistically significant, the secondary teacher group has a slightly more favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than the elementary teacher group.
7. The experienced teacher group has a slightly more favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals than the beginning teachers, and a somewhat more favourable attitude than the veteran teachers.
8. There were no significant differences in the attitude toward the employment of women as school principals between those who had previously worked with a woman school principal and those who had not.
9. Although not statistically significant, the smaller the population of the school district, the more favourable was the attitude of the respondents toward the employment of women as school principals.
10. There were no significant differences in the attitude toward the employment of women as school principals when the total teacher group is compared by qualifications as determined by the number of years of completed university training.

### Implications

There are certain implications applicable to the British Columbia educational scene which are contained in the findings of this study.

1. That women have a favourable attitude toward the employment of women as school principals is recognized from this study, and it would appear that more women principals could be appointed to this executive position with the approval of the majority of the profession. However, if more women are appointed to the position of school principal, they may have to contend with the less positive attitude of their male counterparts.

2. The number of women school principals in any district is determined by the School Board through the authority granted to them by the Public Schools Act. It is possible that, in the past, the School Board has been governed to a great extent by the attitudes of the administrator group rather than by the attitudes of the total teaching profession. If the School Board followed their own inclinations and those of the total teaching profession, it is conceivable that more women would be appointed to the position of school principal.

3. If principals are elected to the position by staff members, which is under active consideration in some school districts, and if the number of women on a staff constitutes a majority, it is quite realistic to expect an increase in the number of women assuming the role of school principal.

4. If a woman is interested in seeking a principalship, it would appear that she would have a better opportunity to assume the role of school principal in a smaller school district rather than in a larger school district.

5. It would appear that, in view of the favourable attitude of the School Board members, if more women applied for the position of school principal, more women would be appointed.

6. Since there seems to be a discrepancy in attitudes between the School Board members and the administrator group, greater communication of role perceptions and role expectations between these two groups might achieve a more closely related attitude.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

As a result of the nature of the opinion survey, many questions which relate to the employment of women as school principal remain unanswered. Further research in the following areas may shed light on the reasons why there are so few women principals in the public schools of British Columbia.

1. How consistent is the actual practice of appointing women as school principals with the written policy of School Boards?

2. In the absence of written policy, how consistent is the publicly expressed attitude of the School Boards reflected in the appointment practices?

3. Do women teachers feel that a real or imaginary bias exists, and is this the reason why apparently so few apply for the positions of school principal?

4. Are there other quite valid reasons why so few women apparently apply for executive positions such as:

a. many women prefer teaching in a classroom to assuming an executive position.

b. many women feel that there is too much responsibility involved and they have other commitments, such as their family, which to them are more important.

c. many women demonstrate a reluctance to assume the role of school principal because of the possibility of an interrupted career caused by marriage.

5. Are there differences in role perceptions and role expectations among the teachers, administrators, and school board members?

6. To what extent do other valid non-attitudinal reasons such as relative competitiveness, motivation, life-styles, circumstances, biological and cultural strictures contribute to the paucity of women in school administrative positions?

7. Is there an optimum proportion of female teachers to male teachers on a school staff which would favour the appointment of a female principal in preference to a male principal?

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## Appendix A

**Directions:**

The following statements have to do with opinions regarding the qualifications and characteristics of a person who is to be appointed to an administrative position. Please respond on the printed UVIC answer sheet to all the statements and be as candid as possible.

Please read each statement and decide whether you strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree with what is said. Using an HB pencil, fill in between the dotted lines on the answer sheet under the appropriate response.

If you strongly agree, darken in response A.

If you agree, darken in response B.

If you are undecided, darken in response C.

If you disagree, darken in response D.

If you strongly disagree, darken in response E.

1. Women tend to make decisions on the basis of emotion, rather than on the basis of knowledge, reason and common sense.
2. If an equally qualified man and woman apply for an administrative position, the man should be appointed.
3. Women ought not to expect to achieve as high a status as men in the teaching profession.
4. Women prefer to leave the administration of the schools to the men.
5. Women administrators are more inclined to praise the deserving teacher than are men administrators.
6. The presence of a woman in a job that is typically thought of as a man's job makes the job seem less important.
7. The male is associated with the leadership role in our society and is therefore a more appropriate person to fill an administrative position.
8. Women administrators find it much easier than men administrators to establish a positive and rational relationship with their employees.
9. Men object to being subordinated to a woman.
10. More women should be encouraged to seek a professional career in school administration.

11. Good teaching is more appreciated by women administrators.
12. Teachers receive more help from women administrators who supervise them.
13. Married women have home and family responsibilities that prevent them from making a total commitment to education.
14. Women are not stable long-term employees because they follow their husbands when transfers occur.
15. Women prefer to be supervised by men.
16. The temperament and training of women principals enables them to deal more effectively with students.
17. The father figure is an important need in schools today, and the administrative role lends itself to this need.
18. Women belong in the home.
19. It is an unwise long-term policy to restrict administrative positions to men.
20. Women are not stable enough to make institutional decisions, particularly under stress.
21. Women usually have had a more extensive background of experience and can bring a more comprehensive outlook to school problems.
22. When making administrative decisions, women fail to keep a perspective which includes the total school progress.

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23. If you are a female, darken in response A.  
If you are a male, darken in response B.
24. If you are a school board member, darken in response A.  
If you are a school administrator, darken in response B.  
If you are a teacher, darken in response C.
25. If you perform your duties in District #61, darken in response A.  
If you perform your duties in District #63, darken in response B.  
If you perform your duties in District #81, darken in response C.

If you are not a school board member or district supervisory personnel, would you please respond to the following four questions.

26. Counting this present school year, if you have been teaching:  
for two years or less, darken in response A.  
for at least three years but not more than thirteen years,  
darken in response B.  
for fourteen or more years, darken in response C.
27. If you perform your duties:  
in the elementary school, darken in response A.  
in the secondary school, darken in response B.
28. If you have at any time worked for a woman school principal, darken  
in response A.  
If you have not worked for a woman school principal, darken in  
response B.
29. If, for your teaching certificate, you took teacher training:  
plus 1 year or university (EB), darken in response A.  
plus 2 years of university (EA), darken in response B.  
plus 3 years of university (PC), darken in response C.  
plus 4 years of university (PB), darken in response D.  
plus 5 or more years of university (PA or PA+), darken  
in response E.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Should you wish to add your own comments, inspired or provoked by this opinion survey, I shall welcome them. Please put them on the back of the answer sheet.

**Appendix B**

2944 Queenston Street,  
Victoria, B.C.,  
26th February, 1973.

Mr. E. E. Lewis,  
District Superintendent of Schools,  
9751 - 3rd Street,  
Sidney, B.C.

Dear Mr. Lewis:

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of an MA degree in educational administration at the University of Victoria, I am in the process of writing a thesis which is concerned with the differentiated attitudes of various groups of people associated with education toward the employment of women as school principals. To complete this research, I would very much appreciate your assistance.

I would like your permission to send an opinion survey to each of your school board members, administrative staff (district superintendent, directors of instruction and school principals), and to members of the teaching staff of your district. This opinion survey consists of their reactions to twenty-two statements and should take no longer than ten minutes to complete. A letter of explanation and an answer sheet will be sent with the questionnaire and the directions for completion should be self-explanatory. These questionnaires would be mailed directly to the people concerned and would be mailed back to me in a self-addressed stamped envelope. All replies would remain anonymous.

If you would be willing to assist me in this research by granting permission to conduct the above survey, it would be very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

VITA

Surname: McKINNON Given Names: DONALD FINDLAY

Place of Birth: VERNON, B. C. Date of Birth: AUGUST 18, 1928

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

<u>VICTORIA COLLEGE</u>	<u>1945 to 1946</u>
<u>UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA</u>	<u>1947 to 1948</u>
<u>VANCOUVER NORMAL SCHOOL</u>	<u>1948 to 1949</u>
<u>UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA - Part-time</u>	<u>1956 to 1960</u>

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

<u>B. Ed. (Secondary)</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>University of British Columbia</u>
<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>
<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>_____</u>

Honors and Awards:

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Publications:

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Title of Thesis

A STUDY OF SELECTED GROUP ATTITUDES TOWARD THE

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AS EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

Author

  
Signature

DONALD FINDLAY MCKINNON

Name

February 4, 1974.  
Date